

# **MICK FANNING SHARK ATTACK**

*Deep water moving in the bg*



*The bg changes to solid color. Shark animation is chasing surfer*

“I hope I see a shark when I’m  
webcasting from the water.  
How cool would that be?”

*-Zander Morton*

Just the other day I was joking with Peter Mel in the competitors area overlooking J-Bay, and he told me: “I hope I see a shark when I’m webcasting from the water. How cool would that be?”

Pretty damn cool. Because what sells better than sex? Sharks. And today, in front of a live audience, Peter not only saw a shark while webcasting from the water — but four minutes into the final versus Julian Wilson he saw a shark attack Mick Fanning.

I watched it unfold in slow motion from the balcony of the competitors area and it all seemed surreal. Like, how could this be happening? I saw splashing and I saw Mick disappear, only to reappear without his board, swimming towards the beach. Had he lost a leg? An arm? Those were valid questions. The crowd was screaming. Horrified. Everyone feared the worst. It took about half a minute and thumbs up from the Ski for us to realize that Mick was, in fact, OK. Alive. All limbs in tact





1) It was the best possible thing to happen to the WSL. Had Mick been injured, (or worse), I wouldn't consider saying that. But Mick is physically OK. And remember when I said sharks sell? Well, yeah. This scene will be on CNN and ESPN and to the greater public, Mick Fanning will forever be remembered as the surfer that was attacked in a 'CT competition at a notoriously sharky wave in South Africa. Forget his three world titles. White Lightning? After today he's Great White Lightning. Last week the Discovery Channel sensationalized sharks during "Shark Week" and tried to scare the shit out of everyone. With all the attacks in North Carolina, West OZ and Reunion Island, sharks were already on our minds. And now, in front of a live audience, we saw one attack a three-time world champion. Talk about not

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2) It didn't exactly "attack" Mick. I spoke with one local afterward, who's been surfing J-Bay for 21 years. "If that shark wanted to attack him, it would've," he told me. "I think it was coming in to check Mick out, got caught in his leash, thrashed around and then took off." After re-watching the WSL's video, I think I agree. I'm not downplaying it. Not saying Mick wasn't in danger. Might that shark have been planning — or even trying — to bite Mick? Yes. But let's not forget: As sharky as J-Bay is perceived to be, nobody has ever been bitten at Supers and other than one swimmer, there hasn't been a death at J-Bay. Rosy Hodge told me Greg Emslie had a similar shark "encounter" some time back, and he said that once the adrenaline wore off it was tough to handle mentally. I'm sure Mick can relate.v

*Video of Mick Fanning got attack by shark*

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A few minutes after the encounter, this is what Mick had to say:

“I’m tripping. On the boat I was still full of adrenalin, and then I saw Ace [Buchan], Jarrad [Howse] and Fletch [Rip Curl tour manager], and that’s when it all just kicked in. And then I saw the footage. I’m totally fine, got nothing wrong with me, just a small depression ding in my board, but I’m just totally tripping out. It’s weird, I was cruising, waiting for my opportunity and I knew Julian was down the point and I was just about to start paddling, and I had this instinct that something was behind me, and all of a sudden I started getting pulled underwater and the thing came up. I was on my board and I saw the whole thing just thrashing around. I was being dragged underwater by my legrope. I felt like I punched it in the back a couple of times. It was dragging me underwater and then I felt my legrope break and I just started swimming. I was screaming. I was yelling at Jules to move as well but he was coming at me, what a legend he is, and then I turned around in case he [the shark] was coming for another go at me, and then the skis and the boat and all of that was right there. I just can’t believe it. It’s so gnarly. At this point, I’m happy to not ever compete again. [laughing through tears] Seriously, to walk away from that, I’m just stoked to...[big sigh]. I just want to let all my friends and family know I’m OK. It’s all just kind of setting in now.”

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*When scroll: the text is fading and the image appear on top of the text.*

And just now, with a few friends gathered around at a very intimate BBQ, Mick wanted to make sure everyone knows how much of a legend Julian is, and reckons Jules flying over to help gave him the energy to fight that shark off. There were other speeches and maybe even a few tears. This is a day we'll always remember, and thankfully, a day when everything turned out OK. Who won? We all did. Mick is alive. He beat the ocean's scariest competitor in the biggest heat of his life. — Zander Morton

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