Just When You Thought It Was Safe To Go Back In The Water

Michael Capuzzo tells the harrowing story of the real-life Jaws that helped inspire Peter Benchley's classic novel (and movie). Modern science now tells us that shark attacks are exceedingly rare and limited to just a few species. Yet they do occur, and one of the most terrifying episodes of fatal attacks occurred near the New Jersey shore in 1916, when a renegade great white shark went on a man-eating spree that left three adults and one boy dead. Capuzzo likens the sharks abnormal behavior to that of a person who goes off the deep end and starts shooting. Whatever its motives, the shark captivated the public's imagination along the Eastern seaboard, devastated the resort economy, and even drew the attention of President Woodrow Wilson. Close to Shore is a bit slow to get going and could have been a much shorter book. There is a fair amount of stage setting, and the first shark attack doesn't occur until about one-third of the way through the narrative. But Capuzzo does much with limited source
material and includes lots of interesting asides on everything from the lore of sea monsters to the bathing-suit fashions of the day to nearly everything science knows about great whites, which, it turns out, is surprisingly little. Alternating from the victims perspectives to the sharks, Capuzzos descriptions of the attacks are a blend of horrors and thrills: Charles Bruder felt a slight vacuum tug in the motion of the sea, noted it as a passing current, the pull of a wave, the tickle of undertow. He could not have heard the faint, sucking rush of water not far beneath him. He couldn't have seen or heard what was hurtling from the murk at astonishing speed, jaws unhinging, widening, for the enormous first bite. It was the classic attack that no other creature in nature could make—a bomb from the depths. If this book were on any other subject, it would make for good beach reading. --John J. Miller

There was so much about this book that I enjoyed. To numerous to mention...but I will say, Mr. Capuzzo certainly interpreted that Nature positively owes us nothing, providing an amazing juxtaposition of those early Victorian Days down at the Jersey Shore, when women were not allowed to show their bodies in public, to a primitive medical knowledge, not to mention...primordial data of the ocean & sharks at that particular time.

This true account chronicle was brought to life, with a brash intrusion to feeling safe and the misunderstanding of the utility of force behind the jaws of sharks and the ability of some of their species to adapt to fresh water. Found this shark to be a decisive strategic eating machine offering no negotiations.

You should read this simply to imagine how things were then, and how far we've come to now.

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