

The Story of Our Shark

The talented folks in the 129th photo lab created this iconic image that has been seen around the world, and is actually on Snopes!

(<http://www.snopes.com/photos/animals/shark.asp>).

This photograph has frequently been credited to *National Geographic* magazine or *Geo*, a similar German language publication, and mailed under titles such as “Really Bad Day” or “Jaws 2001” or “Photo of the Year”. Circulation began back in August 2001. *National Geographic* publicly disavowed the photo and the claimed award as a hoax.¹

The image was created by combining two real, but unrelated photographs – a picture of a great white shark taken in False Bay South Africa by South African photographer [Charles Maxwell](#), and an Air Force photo of an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter from the 129th Rescue Wing, Moffett FAF (our California National Guard Unit) snapped by Lance Cheung (with San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge in the background).

According to Wikipedia, the photo has even been discussed in a marketing book, to teach lessons in influence,² and in a book on teaching reading, to teach about critical thinking.³

For more interesting reading about our shark attack, Google “[helicopter shark picture](#)”.

1. [Shark "Photo of the Year" Is E-Mail Hoax, *National Geographic*, March 8, 2005.](#)
2. Ira Matathia and Marian L. Salzman (2003). *Buzz: Harness the Power of Influence and Create Demand*. John Wiley and Sons. ISBN 0471273457. http://books.google.com/books?id=sf85DYe9140C&pg=PA9&dq=helicopter+shark+photo&as_brr=0&ei=t3noRrjqA6jupQLUnsCGAw&sig=LQc6fwKm-cMI009QjyXXznVi03s. "At some point in 2002, you may have received an e-mail from a friend pointing you to an incredible photograph of a shark seemingly jumping out of the ocean ..."

3. Cris Tovani (Stenhouse Publishers). *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?: Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12*. Stenhouse Publishers. [ISBN 1571103767](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/9781571103767).
http://books.google.com/books?id=Ous2ti3Nq7IC&pg=PT72&dq=helicopter+shark+bridge+photo&as_brr=0&ei=9KroRrxRgdKmAumJ5J4E&sig=rOe-TelOeKS_thAsSpAWmIfMlkg. "This photo has been nominated as National Geographic's Photo of the Year." "See," says Mallory. "The words say that it's a real photo." "So what? ..."