

# Apparent shark attack kills honeymooner, fuels fear in Hawaii

By Pete Thomas,  
Los Angeles Times

It was a honeymoon in Hawaii Mark Monazzami will never forget, no matter how hard he tries. He emerged from the hospital Thursday and planned to join the search for his wife in the beautiful waters off Maui. It was there, he said, that she bled to death after the shark took off her arm.

Skeptics might wonder about such a tale. There are no eyewitnesses to the assault, and no body. But there are few doubters in Hawaii, where two other attacks have been reported recently, and where tiger sharks were hunted earlier in the decade to reduce the threat of strikes on humans.

Most of all, there is Monazzami's story, in which a tiny kayak was pitted against howling trade winds. Maui police say that at this point they have no reason to doubt the story, and they hope others will pay heed.

A naturalized citizen of Iranian descent, Manouchehr Monazzami-Taghadomi, 39, who goes by the name Mark, has lived in California for 20 years. He had visited and corresponded with Nahid Davoodabai, a 29-year-old Iranian gynecologist, often in recent years. He finally asked her to marry him in December 1997.

She accepted, and the two took their vows that winter in Iran. She remained for several months to sell her clinic. He returned to California and began the paperwork his wife would need when she emigrated.

When that finally happened last summer, they planned a spring honeymoon to the scenic shore of Lahaina, Maui. Monazzami, a consultant company employee and a frequent visitor to Hawaii, wanted to treat his wife to a week in paradise.

Genice Jacobs, a colleague of

Monazzami, said the couple was looking forward to their romantic getaway. "He's just a really sweet guy and if you looked in eyes all could see was love and passion for his wife."

On March 13, they checked into a small condominium resort just beyond the beach on the popular corridor between Kaanapali and Kapalua, north of Lahaina. In an interview from his hospital bed this week, Monazzami recalled how they lounged in the sun, snorkeled, and took long walks on the beach.

Others were paddling around on kayaks and it looked like fun, Monazzami said, so they decided to give it a try. They reserved a two-seat hard-plastic ocean kayak on March 17 and picked it up the next morning. Unlike kayaks in which paddlers sit inside the shell, the seats of this version are on the exterior of molded plastic bodies. The vessel is tippy in choppy waters, but easy to maneuver and fast. In warm coastal waters, it is an ideal craft.

Wearing only swimsuits and life jackets, they set out at about noon in an area south of Lahaina called Ukumehame. The weather was ideal and their kayak glided swiftly across the ocean with little effort. In all, they had paddled for about three hours, Monazzami said, before taking a long rest on the beach.

Monazzami's arms were weary and he was content to remain on the beach, he said, but his wife persuaded him to climb aboard the kayak one more time. It was 4 p.m., and the water immediately beyond the beach was still relatively calm. Offshore, a small craft advisory had been issued to boaters. From the beach, a keen and knowing eye might have seen the telltale "wind line" beyond the area protected by the mountains.

Off they went, not getting very far,

Monazzami said, before a big wind "came out of nowhere" and began pushing them farther from the beach. Within moments, they were 2,000 yards offshore with nobody in sight. Since their kayak was rented on an unlimited basis and no one was expecting them ashore, Monazzami realized that their chances of rescue that night were slim.

The chop made it difficult to keep the vessel upright, especially with the onset of darkness. They began to capsize frequently, but soon found that it felt warmer in the water, anyway. Temperatures above and below the surface were about the same, in the low to mid-70s, but in the water they were out of the wind.

At some point during the night, however, Monazzami became concerned about the possibility of a shark attack, and said so to his wife. Her response, he said, was that being warm was more important than worrying about sharks. Moments later, it was Davoodabai who cried out, "Shark!"

In an instant, she was pulled under. She surfaced almost immediately, complaining with remarkable calm that her left arm was missing. He reached out to help her and clutched at the wound near her shoulder, but all he could feel was tissue and flesh. Blood rushed through his fingers.

Holding her by the right arm, he climbed back onto the vessel and pulled her aboard. He tried to stop the bleeding using the string from his swim trunks as a tourniquet, but the damage was too extensive. She drifted in and out of consciousness, at one point telling her husband that she could feel her fingers. "I said, 'No, honey, you don't have an arm,'" Monazzami said.

About 30 minutes passed before Davoodabai started feeling severe

pain, Monazzami said. "She started screaming from the bottom of her heart, and I was going crazy because I couldn't do anything to help her." Suddenly, the screaming stopped. Davoodabai was dead. Dizzy from grief and exhaustion, Monazzami shifted his weight and his kayak capsized again. He let go of her body, and she drifted into the blackness.

Monazzami said he climbed back onto the kayak. No long caring if he lived or died, he said, he stretched out and let the current take him where it may. He awoke to the sound of his vessel bumping against a rocky shore. Then a wave flipped the kayak and spilled Monazzami into the water. He lost his shorts struggling to get himself on the beach.

The current had deposited him on Kahoolawe, a small island 12 miles southwest of Maui. The island, until recently used for target practice by the U.S. Navy, has been uninhabited for years. It was Friday morning, March 19, when he landed. One of the first things he saw were military helicopters buzzing over the mountain tops.

Weary and feeling faint for lack of food and water, he spent most of the day resting on the beach, covering himself with trash in an attempt to get out of the wind, vowing to climb the mountain on Saturday morning. The next day, he said he found a pair of old sandals. "I spent five or six hours hiking. I went all the way to top of mountain and nothing."

Monazzami said he never ate, but it rained Saturday and he drank from pools formed in the rocks. "Before that I was very close to drinking sea water," he said. Late Saturday afternoon, he got lost and was started to discover a satellite dish atop an old military bunker.

It was dark by time he reached the

building, but it afforded him some protection until morning. At daybreak Sunday, Monazzami fiddled with some of the equipment he found in the bunker, but found all of it useless. Until he found the phone.

It was concealed in a small casing on the wall. He followed the wire to a jack and plugged in the line. There was a dial tone. He dialed 911. "The guy answered and that's when I burst (into tears)," Monazzami said. "All the pain of not having my wife hit me."

Keith Keau, enforcement chief for the Maui division of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, was involved in the rescue effort. "When we found him he was totally dehydrated and in shock."

Monazzami's kayak was retrieved from a nearby beach on Monday and not found to have any damage "other than scratches and dents caused by the rocks," Keau said. On Wednesday afternoon, while searching for the body off the shore of Kahoolawe, investigators from the Maui County Police Department found a blue life jacket "similar to the one reportedly worn by Davoodabai."

Asked if the vest had tooth marks or blood stains on it, Lt. Glenn Cuomo would only say, "It's still being examined." The case is being treated as a missing person investigation by the criminal investigations department of the police department, according to Capt. Victor Tengan. "That's just standard procedure," he explained, adding that at this point there is no reason to doubt Monazzami's story.

Monazzami was discharged from the hospital Thursday afternoon and had planned on joining police in the search for his wife's body on Friday. The apparent attack on Davoodabai is the third shark attack this month.

On the morning of March 5, Maui resident Robin Knutson, 29, was bitten in the leg while swimming 300 yards off Kaanapali with her boyfriend. She remains hospitalized with extensive injuries and faces possible amputation.

Three days later, an Arizona tourist, Jonathan Allen, 18, was bitten while bodyboarding off Kauai. He suffered only minor injuries and was treated and released.

At least the first two attacks were blamed on tiger sharks, the top predator in Hawaiian waters. Tiger sharks can measure 20 feet or longer. They feed primarily during the night or at dawn or dusk on reef fish and sea turtles. They typically move into deeper water during the day.

While shark attacks on swimmers and surfers in Hawaii average about two per year, the state hasn't had a full-blown shark scare since 1992-93, when a series of attacks within a very short span off Oahu led to the organization of a state task force and the first shark control program since the mid 1970s. John Naughton, a National Marine Fisheries Service biologist and shark expert based in Honolulu, believes Hawaii's waters remain safe for those who swim or surf responsibly, in daylight hours and away from murky areas such as river mouths, which often attract feeding sharks.

He pointed out that the two recent attacks, on the swimmer and kayaker, involved "high-risk" circumstances. As for the most recent incident, Naughton said, "We have made some recommendations to people who rent kayaks that they should certainly warn tourists about the possible dangers, and not to rent them when there are hazardous winds and large surf."

As for those who find themselves adrift in a kayak in the middle of the night, Naughton cautioned, "Stay on the vessel at all costs."

## Mother's loss in a foreign land becomes a public loss

By Bettina Boxall,  
Los Angeles Times

MODESTO, Calif. — A housekeeper at the motel that has been Raquel Pelosso's home these grim weeks pressed \$100 into her hand and kissed her on the cheek. A waitress from the motel restaurant gave her \$40 and a hug. A woman she had never seen before handed her a potted lily and then walked away in tears.

It was the day after authorities told Pelosso that one of two bodies found in a charred rental car a week ago was that of her 16-year-old daughter Silvina. Pelosso looked numb and slightly dazed Saturday as she returned the hugs and nodded at the words of sympathy.

Pelosso's wrenching personal tragedy has become in some small sense the public's as well, played out on television and in newspaper headlines about the California vacation that ended in death not only for her daughter but for her lifelong

friend, Carole Sund, and Sund's daughter, 15-year-old Juliana.

The crime has also been major news in Argentina. On Friday, shortly after airing an interview with Silvina's weary father when he returned to Argentina, television stations interrupted live coverage of Kosovo and political turmoil in Paraguay to transmit the announcement by the FBI of the discovery of the third and final corpse in Yosemite.

"The End of Hope," was the front-page headline in the Pagina 12 newspaper Saturday.

Raquel Pelosso has been somewhat overwhelmed by the gifts and money, intended to help defray the expense of her weeks away from Argentina. "People don't show their feelings that way in Argentina. I'm really surprised," she said quietly as she sat in the Holiday Inn where she and the Sunds' relatives have stayed since shortly after the trio disappeared in February.

A few feet away, in a room off the

motel's indoor pool, was a room full of flowers for Pelosso and the Sunds' family. Two-dozen volunteers have taken hundreds of messages and calls from the public. "I really feel uneasy getting so many presents," Pelosso confessed. "I do appreciate it but I'm trying to understand how it works."

Pelosso and Carole Sund's parents, Carole and Francis Carrington, have said they will remain in Modesto until they can take the remains of their relatives home. Authorities, who have made no arrests in the case, have indicated the bodies will likely be released this week. The remains of Silvina and Carole Sund were found in the trunk of the rental car the trio had taken on their trip to Yosemite. It had been burned and abandoned on a dirt road in Long Barn. Juliana's body was discovered last week near a reservoir, 30 miles away.

When Pelosso said goodbye to Silvina in December, she thought a little bit about earthquakes, but the idea that her youngest daughter would

fall victim to a violent crime never crossed her mind. After all, she was sending Silvina to the home of a dear, lifelong friend.

Pelosso and Carole Sund met as teen-agers, when they were exchange students. Pelosso had spent some time in Michigan and Sund stayed with Pelosso's family in Argentina for six months in 1973. "We had a great time together. She had a sense of humor," remembered Pelosso.

When Carole returned to California, they kept in touch, writing and calling. In the mid 1980s, Sund took Juliana, then a toddler, on a 10-week visit to Argentina. It was summer and the Pelossos rented a house in the hills. They took the children to the river and hiked. The little girls hit it off immediately.

Despite the great distance and only occasional meetings, Sund and Pelosso maintained a strong friendship over the years. They had long phone conversations in which Pelosso could tell Sund things she

told no one else.

"I always found her really wise," said Pelosso. The girls saw mutual family photos of each other but that was about their only communication. When it was time for Silvina's teenage trip to America, she decided she did not want to go on an organized tour as her older sister Paula had. "She wanted to see how things worked in another country," Pelosso said. "She wanted to share a life."

So Sund invited her. And late last year, Silvina, described as a shy and serious girl, set off for three months with the Sund family. Just as her mother had taken an instant liking to Sund, so Silvina became friends with Juliana. "I thought it was going to be a hard time for both of them but they got along as Carole and I had 20 years before," Pelosso said. Juliana was already making plans to visit Argentina this summer.

The trip to Yosemite was all carefully planned, to be followed by a tour of the Grand Canyon with

Sund's husband Jens and the Sunds' other three children. But Sund and the girls never showed up at San Francisco International Airport, where they were supposed to rendezvous with the family Feb. 16.

When she first heard of their disappearance, Pelosso assumed the three had been in a car crash. But then Sund's wallet was found in Modesto, suggesting a more sinister fate and setting off a massive, FBI-led search.

The crime has struck a profound chord in Argentina for several reasons. The disappearance, torture and murder of young people at the hands of the military was tragically routine during the 1970s dictatorship. Pelosso's mother expressed a common sentiment: It is hard to believe that the family survived the terror of the 1970s only to lose their daughter 20 years later in a seemingly safe area of California.

## Kevorkian is convicted of second-degree murder

By Eric Slater,  
Los Angeles Times

PONTIAC, Mich. — Jack Kevorkian, the eccentric former pathologist who for a decade defined and drove the national debate over assisted suicide, was convicted late Friday of second-degree murder in the death of a terminally ill man who had asked for his help.

Separated from the courtroom gallery by a wall of 10 deputy sheriffs, the diminutive Kevorkian, 70, stood blank-faced, clasping his hands as the jury foreman declared him guilty of murdering Thomas Youk. He also was found guilty of delivery of a controlled substance.

Youk's wife, Melody, who had hoped to testify on Kevorkian's behalf, closed her eyes and shook her head slightly. On the other side of the courtroom, the sister of a 34-year-old woman Kevorkian helped die in 1997 let out a cheerful "Yes!" Under Michigan law, the retired physician could receive 10 to 25 years in prison on the murder charge, and another seven for using secobarbital to kill Youk.

Noting that Kevorkian previously had assisted in ending patients' lives while awaiting trial on assisted suicide charges, prosecutors asked that his bond be revoked and he be held over for sentencing. Kevorkian's attorneys promised he

would obey all laws and asked that he remain free.

"Can I have your word?" Oakland County Circuit Judge Jessica Cooper asked Kevorkian. "I kept my word until now, and I'll keep it," Kevorkian said. Cooper allowed him to remain free until his scheduled sentencing April 14.

Kevorkian's lawyers pledged to appeal the verdict, but he is almost certain to be imprisoned pending the outcome of any appeals. "We believe it is certainly injustice to try and equate an act of compassion with an act of murder," attorney David Gorosh said after the verdict. "He was invited into the Youk home. Certainly (Youk) had every right to end that pain, as every American does. Dr. Kevorkian will be lauded as a hero in history."

Oakland County prosecutor David Gorcyca, who has received numerous threats since filing the murder charges, said that the jury had granted him his "ultimate wish." "It has never been my intent to participate in the martyrdom of Dr. Kevorkian," Gorcyca said. "The verdict stands for the sanctity of human life. Whether you agree or not with the verdict, what Dr. Kevorkian did to Tom Youk, in the state of Michigan, was second-degree murder."

Unable to control his movements or even swallow, and afraid of choking to death on his own saliva,

Youk, 52, was in the latter stages of Lou Gehrig's disease when he summoned Kevorkian Sept. 15. Recording their meeting on video, Kevorkian presented Youk a consent form, which he signed. Then he asked Youk to think about his decision, saying: "Let's not hurry into this."

Two days later, Youk was ready to go, both his wife and brother Terry said this week as they watched the trial unfold. In the videotape that prosecutors played for the jury, Youk was seen sitting in a chair, clad in a plaid shirt, his eyeglasses on. Kevorkian searched for a vein, then gave Youk the first of three injections that rendered him unconscious and then stopped his breathing and his heart.

The act marked a milestone in Kevorkian's tireless crusade to legalize euthanasia: He himself injected Youk with the fatal drug cocktail, rather than employing his so-called suicide machine, which allowed some 130 other patients to administer the drugs themselves.

CBS aired an edited version of the tape on its popular Sunday night program "60 Minutes," along with an interview in which Kevorkian challenged prosecutors to charge him. They did. And a man who shuns worldly possessions, living mostly off Social Security checks and the generosity of friends, had shouldered

the debate forward once again.

The division over the issue was evident all week at the Oakland County courthouse. A group called Not Dead Yet, made up of disabled people who contend euthanasia generally and Kevorkian specifically targets people depressed over their disability, protested daily.

Cooper ruled that testimony from the Youk family would be unfairly prejudicial in a murder case, and they were not allowed to take the stand. That left Kevorkian with no witnesses and none of the emotional testimony that helped make four previous juries unwilling to imprison him for carrying out the last wishes of people in agony.

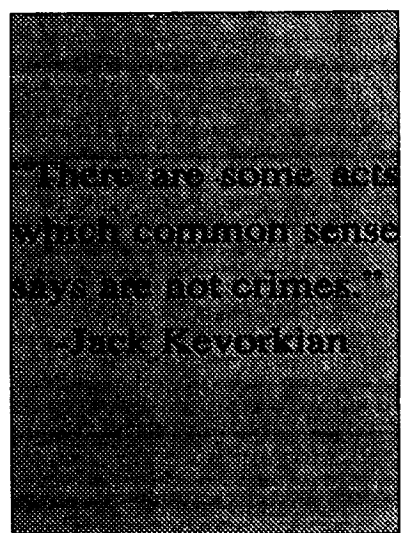
Additionally, Kevorkian insisted on acting as his own attorney, a move that prompted his longtime attorney, Geoffrey Fieger, to cut ties with the former pathologist, saying: "I don't let my clients commit their own assisted suicide."

Having promised to starve to death in prison if convicted, Kevorkian seemed to be doing just that during the trial, some observers said, his only defense being a scattershot closing statement that centered around his intent to end Youk's suffering, not kill him, and the philosophical rightness of euthanasia.

"There are some acts which

common sense says are not crimes," he told the jury. Then, first thing Friday morning, as the jury began its second day of deliberations, Kevorkian stunned the courtroom by asking to have his attorneys handle the rest of the case.

After Cooper agreed, Gorosh filed a motion to dismiss the case. When prosecutor John Skrzyński had objected during Kevorkian's closing argument that the defense was introducing new material, he had suggested in front of jurors that Kevorkian should have taken the stand in his own defense, Gorosh argued. Cooper dismissed the motion for a mistrial. After 12 hours of deliberations the jury sent a note saying it had reached a verdict.



## Learning to grin: Big Mac and a side of smiles

Los Angeles Times

TOKYO — Some foreign companies, such as McDonald's Corp., put such a premium on smiling faces in Japan these days that they discriminate against poker faces in the hiring process. How? In interviews, job applicants are asked to describe their most pleasant experience, and managers evaluate whether their faces reflect the pleasure they're discussing, says Yuichiro Koiso, dean of the company's training institute, known as Hamburger University. If otherwise qualified but unable to crack a smile, they're banished to a job making burgers instead of meeting customers.

After all, employees must provide friendliness at the price promised on menus at each of the chain's nearly 3,000 restaurants in Japan: "Smiles, 0 yen."

Training for managers includes spying on competitors to evaluate both the frequency and the quality of their employees' smiles, Koiso says. "We discuss what type of smile is good and bad, and through the discussion group they find common themes, such as eye contact and the smile's timing."