

“Monterey Herald”, 11/26/2017, by Sharon Noguchi, Bay Area News Group:

Armen and Grigor had traveled to Monterey, in advance of a family wedding, and spent Thursday spearfishing off shore from the picturesque Lone Cypress Tree. They returned Friday to an area near Stillwater Cove. Armen had no luck, but Grigor snagged two nice-sized lingcod and a cabezon, then directed his dad to his fishing spot.

While his dad went off in search of prey, Grigor took photos with an underwater camera, then dove in again with his spear. It was then he saw the great white--and, he told his dad, the shark saw him and appeared to swim away.

Grigor surfaced to warn his father of the shark, and while he scanned the water waiting for his dad to surface, the shark returned from behind and attacked.

“The shark grabbed him and didn’t let him go, and took at least two bites”—mid-thigh and below the knee, Armen Azatian said his son told him. “He tried to fight with the shark. I don’t think he could do much, maybe pushing, moving his legs.” Grigor had lost track of his spear.

But he managed to free himself, then swam about 20 yards to the dinghy. His father surfaced about 30 yards away and reached the boat shortly after.

Laying with his mangled leg in the boat, Grigor asked that his constricting wetsuit be cut open—then directed his father in how to undo the lock on his knife.

“He was very calm,” Dr. Azatian said. “He just said he cannot breathe well.” His dad grabbed a float line and wrapped a tourniquet around his son’s leg.

“I was just trying to keep calm to help him somehow.:

But if the humans were astonishingly collected in their response, their devices were not cooperating. Armen Azatian’s iPhone balked when he pressed 911, telling him “call dismissed.” A brand-new marine radio displayed the proper channel but emitted no sound. Grigor recommended they motor their Zodiac in to Pebble Beach, about a 10-minute ride away.

Along the way, Azatian asked his son, “How’s the pain?”

“And he would say, ‘It’s OK,’” he recalled. “I see it’s not OK. The whole right leg is torn apart and bloody.”

At the pier, they shouted to fishermen on the pier to call 911, and heard that authorities already had been alerted. Shortly after beaching their boat, they were met by two off-duty sheriff deputies, one trained in emergency medicine, who began first aid. Shortly after, paramedics arrived, then whisked Grigor Azatian to Natividad Medical Center in Salinas.

There he underwent a two-hour surgery.

“That was the longest waiting time in my entire life,” Armen Azatian said. “It was so horrible.”

A surgeon emerged and said he was guardedly optimistic, and that Grigor had not suffered severe tissue loss.

A second surgery Sunday was successful, and another will be performed later this week.