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Mark the Shark Finds Floating Brick of Cocaine While Fishing Off Miami

BY BRITTANY SHAMMAS

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Mark "the Shark" Quartiano in his office.

Photo by Stian Roenning

"Nothing to see here!" famed charter captain Mark "the Shark" Quartiano hollered this morning as his crew scooped what appears to be a bale of cocaine out of the waters off Miami.

The love-him-or-hate-him shark fisherman, [profiled](#) earlier this year by *New Times*, was taking clients fishing around 8 a.m. when he noticed something bobbing in the water and turned back. His first mate used a net to bring the green barnacle-studded package aboard the *Striker-1*. It was about a foot-and-a-half by a foot and weighed about 12 pounds.

"I've found marijuana, but never cocaine like this," Quartiano tells *New Times*. "One of my friends said — he was an old smuggler back in the day — that it could be cash, lots of cash. So I don't know, we'll have to see, but if it's cash, it belongs to me."

He laughs. Right after making the find, he says, he called the U.S. Coast Guard. He says they quickly began searching the area and took the package off his hands. Of course, the prolific Instagrammer first snapped a photo of himself holding the catch. Later, he uploaded a video of his crew hauling it in.



Mark the Shark with his "#veryrare" catch.

Courtesy of Mark "the Shark" Quartiano

"GUESS THE COAST GUARD MISSED THIS!" he wrote, adding hashtags including #BRICK, #VERYRARE, and #CLASSIC.

Quartiano, an old-school fisherman who delights in rankling conservationists, has been a charter captain since 1965 and counts Rosie O'Donnell, Will Smith, and Robert De Niro among his past clients. He's also made appearances on *Shark Week*, ESPN, and *Inside Edition*, among other TV shows. Over a lifetime of fishing, he says, he's killed thousands of sharks, though nowadays he releases most of them.

Today his customers reeled in a big hammerhead shark, he says. The cocaine — or cash — is more of a rare find for him, and he says he's eager to hear exactly what it is.

"It's worth a lot of money street value," Quartiano says. Then, playfully, he adds, "I could use some renovations for my boat. We'll see."

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