

Gadzook



In June of 1981, endurance swimmer Gadzook Pringler attempted to dog-paddle from Cuba to Key West, Florida. For 51 hours, he did swimmingly (ha), and even had the Continental U.S.'s southernmost city in sight. But then, things went awry. Stinging jellyfish and ornery sharks were the typical nemeses of long-distance swimmers, but neither had bothered Gadzook. Alas, a giant starfish *did*, raking him repeatedly with its razor-sharp echinodermal pods. Neurotoxins in the starfish's serum caused Gadzook's body to inflate uncontrollably and (*Warning: Do not continue reading if you're squeamish!*) explode. It was a horrendous sight, though years later it did make an excellent "X Files" storyline. For nearly a decade thereafter, the starfish perp along with Gadzook's greatly distended head and swimming boot – the only parts of him that were retrievable – were displayed at Sea World Orlando, until ... oh, but that's *another* story.