

# Death trap in Maputo

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DURBAN. — Yachtsman Ron Mitchell pretended to be dead after a shot from a robber's gun glanced off his watch and grazed his stomach in a dark back street of the Mozambican capital, Maputo.

While he lay motionless and terrified he could hear the voices of his attackers nearby and steeled himself for a shot in the back. It never came.

A couple of metres away lay the body of his friend, Colin Lawrence, who was shot through the heart.

After his arrival at Louis Botha airport, with his left arm heavily plastered, Ron recounted the tragedy: "Five of us left Durban on Colin's yacht, Moonshine, two weeks ago and dived around Inhaca island. It was really great stuff. We spearfished and the weather was fantastic," he said.

On Thursday night Ron, Colin and two of the crew, Jannie Smit and his son Bruce, caught a taxi to the popular Mini Golf nightclub.

"Jannie and Bruce left and around

midnight and Colin and I tried to get a taxi back to the boat. We waited more than 40 minutes — then decided to walk."

After some time the pair realised they had company.

"I told Colin to walk faster but suddenly there were five guys in front of us. One man walked up to me with a knife and said 'Give me your money or die'.

"I threw him my wallet then heard two quick shots. One of the bullets hit my diving watch and was deflected, grazing my stomach, and I collapsed."

Ron realised the only way he would stay alive was to play dead and he lay motionless.

"After a while they left and I went over to Colin. He had been shot in the chest and I could see immediately that he was dead."

The distraught yachtsman was operated on at a clinic and his arm put in plaster.

"I really cried for Colin — he was such a great guy. We were chatting away during the walk to the boat and then he was dead," he said.