

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q1 This is an electronically recorded interview between Senior Constable Upston and Peter Carter on Monday, the 26th of the 4th, 1999 at Mooloolaba Yacht Club in Queensland. The time by my watch is now 9.43am and also present seated directly opposite me is Detective Senior Constable Gray from Bega Detectives. Peter, for the purpose of this interview, could you please state your full name?

A Peter John Carter.

Q2 And your address?

A 78 Mountain Ash Drive, Mountain Creek.

Q3 And your date of birth?

A 12th of the 4th, '48.

Q4 O.K. Peter, as I explained to you prior to the commencement of the interview, Detective Senior Constable Gray and I are making inquiries into the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, and we have been tasked by the New South Wales State Coroner to speak to people either directly or indirectly involved in the race, and I understand that you were a competitor in the race. Is that correct?

A That's true.

Q5 And the name of your vessel?

A It was Midnight Special.

Q6 And I understand that you were a part owner of that yacht?

A That's right.

Q7 And you, the names of the other owners are?

A There's David Leslie, Peter Baines and Billy

Q8 O.K. I'll get the other names off you at the conclusion of the interview. Could you please give me your sailing experience?

A Well, I've sailed in about five races to, from here to Airlie Beach, I've done one Gladstone and I've done the Sydney/Mooloolaba, and plus, you know, plenty of club racing and whatever. So I've been sailing for, I sailed as a kid and, and I came to Queensland when I was about 22 so I, I stopped sailing for about 15 years and then I've been back sailing again since then.

Q9 O.K. And I understand that you were a Commodore of the Mooloolaba Yacht Club?

A Yeah. I've been Commodore for the last 3 years, the previous last 3 years, yeah.

Q10 And what position do you hold in the club now as far as an administrative point of view?

A I'm the immediate past Commodore and I'm, I'm in charge of the building and grounds.

Q11 O.K. Can you describe Midnight Special?

A It was a 40 foot Jarkin, it was a sloop boat, racing boat.

Q12 O.K. And the, that vessel has now sunk - - -

A It has, yeah.

Q12 - - - as a result of - - -

A I believe it has, yeah.

Q12 - - - as a result of the, the harsh storms that were experienced off the coast of, east coast of New South Wales and Victoria?

A Yeah. That's true. Yeah.

Q13 O.K. Peter, what we'll do is take you to Sunday, the 27th of December, 1998.

A Right.

Q14 After you commenced the race on the previous Saturday, on the Saturday, the 26th, and you were sailing down the coast and you experienced severe storm conditions. Could you just let me, talk about the approaching storm and what happened after that?

A Well, the morning, Sunday morning was, was reasonably quiet and then it was, I think it hit about midday. It hit fairly quickly, the wind gathered, would have gathered full speed in about an hour, I'd say. So we were still sailing, it came from the south-west so were still sailing towards Hobart and I think we, we sailed on. We, we pulled the, it got severe so we pulled the main down and we were on a storm jib. And I think it was about, when did we turn? About 5 o'clock. We, we made a tack, we made a decision that, that it was getting a bit beyond us, we were about 38 miles into the Bass Strait. The decision was to either sail 120 miles to lee of Flinders or, or

turn and go 38 nautical miles to the lee of Gabo Island. So the crew made a decision, we all made, talked about it and made a decision to take the 38 miles. It was, it was really getting up at that stage. It was, we, we reckoned it was blowing about 80 knots and the seas were pretty, pretty ferocious. So I'm not quite sure of the time, it was about 3 o'clock I think or 4 o'clock, some time like that, we made, we made the turn, made a, did a tack and, and headed towards, on that tack towards Gabo. We had to keep sailing up over the waves so you, so that the opposite tack was pretty much the, we were pretty much heading in the right direction when we were on the opposite tack. So, and there was about, I still had my watch set on Queensland time, not on New South Wales time, it was about half past 8.00 at night when the boat got rolled, first rolled over, and I was up on deck steering it at the time.

Q15 O.K. Did you see the wave approaching?

A No. No. Well, I couldn't, it was dark actually by that time. While it was light you could, you could see the waves coming and you could steer around them a little bit and you had a bit of a chance and the boat, but well, we got knocked down a few times but the boat was generally sailing pretty well, standing it pretty well. Guys were getting knocked down, knocked around a bit down

inside. I'd broken a few ribs on Sunday morning from a sail change so I was a bit sore, but when you're up on deck, well, the wind, it was just howling, you, you, you had to, you know, protect your face, it was just getting sand blasted from the spray and the wind. So you could last about an hour on the steering and then you'd sort of just about had it. So unfortunately while I was steering a big wave came and the boat, from recollection the boat just got rolled over. I got pelted, I was hooked on the mast and I got thrown against the boom that was already lashed down and that's what, when I got hurt in my back. And the boat did a roll over at 360 and that smashed the mast and sort of wrapped the mast around the boat and so when it rolled back up again, which was fairly quickly, we then had to clear the mast, and I think by the time we got the mast cleared away, well, the first thing was that we had to, it was half full of water and we had to make sure that the boat was, well, it wasn't sinking. So I actually got on the bilge pump at the back and the other guys baled the boat out and we were pretty satisfied the boat was O.K. The, the, the wave hit the side of the boat with such force that it actually smashed the, the cabin side in, deformed the glass deck on the boat, it hit it that hard, and it smashed all the windows out of the side,

port side of the boat and it also tore a fairly big hole in top, cabin top where the mast, where the mast went over. So we cleared the mast off and threw it over the side. That was about half past 10.00 or so we had that cleared away, and I was, my back was that sore that I just sort of lay in the bottom of the boat there. The guys, I, I didn't actually help them cut the mast away, the other guys did that. And we actually had the, we did actually get the motor going again then and the tiller was busted off, but we tried to motor but there was too much water coming in the boat, through the holes in the boat. So we decided to lash the tiller, what was left of the tiller, over a bit and we were just sort of heading into the, into the seas and the boat was, the boat held pretty well in that, those conditions. So we basically decided to let it drift in those conditions. That was, that was the best, it was handling that the best. So we let off the, the E.P.I.R.Bs and some flares, etc. Our radio was out then because it's, it's up in the rigging, the H.F. radio, so it goes out. All the, all the G.P.S's and etc. were out then, they were all wet.

We had some hand held ones but I think when the boat rolled over they got lost in the bottom of the boat somewhere. But anyway it was blowing south-westerly so we were blown away from the

shore and we actually drifted about 40 or 50 miles during the night apparently. So about first, no, before first light or just on first light there was a plane came over and I was lying downstairs but they let off some flares and that, and it came light and the plane could see us and it dipped its wings and so on. So they, they sort of located us with the plane. And I think about half past 6.00 or around about that time, or 7.00, that the helicopter arrived and so we were all fairly relieved. The boat had got knocked around a bit during the night but it, it, it survived it fairly well and all the guys sort of lay down the bottom of the boat and they were reasonably O.K. So when the helicopter arrived I was still lying in the boat. There was six, there was six of us downstairs and David Leslie, he was the first one off the boat, he was the doctor because we had a few injuries and he sorted out with the chopper what had to happen. He actually had to jump off the back of the boat and, and he was probably about 200 metres away from the boat before they actually lifted him up and we were in the bottom of the boat saying, Holy hell, have they got him yet? We were a bit worried about this, of course.

And so, and then a big wave came and rolled the boat over again. The boat actually stayed upside down, we reckon, we worked it out, about a minute

or so. There's two guys on deck and they were trapped on deck and there was six of us in the cabin. So there was one up, six in the cabin and two on deck so when I sort of surfaced I thought, Well, this might be it, might be goin' down here. Then I said, Hang on a minute, no, it's got air inside the boat, it's got an air pocket, and then you sort of turn around and you think, oh well, I might have to dive through the hatch here, might be the only way out of this. Unbeknownst to me, one of the guys had already done that and got stuck in the hatchway, couldn't get out. Anyway the next thing the boat rolled back over again, and it was more than half full of water then. And so the chopper was there to rescue us, so we just started to get off the boat in an order. So I think Roger Barnett went, was next, well, he went next, and then Ian Griffiths went, and then I went, and then Trevor MacDonald. So there were, they, they winched five of us up and then the chopper left, and we thought, oh, you know, what's going to happen to the other four? But when I was in the chopper they told us another one was coming, and apparently it took them 20 minutes but then the other guys were lifted off. So, and apparently the boat sank, or they told us it sank just after the last guy got lifted off. So we were lucky.

Q16 O.K. When, is your normal position as helmsman in the boat?

A I, I share, normally it's Ian Griffiths is the main steerer and I'm probably the second steerer but we all, the five owners sort of all have a bit of a steer. In any long race there's, there's, certainly on watches you spread it around a little bit. But, yeah, I would be the second steerer.

Q17 And how many people were on the boat altogether?

A Nine on the boat

Q18 Nine, O.K. You mentioned the winds, wind speeds up to 80 knots. Was that what you saw on the instrumentation?

A No. We, the, the wind vane got blown off the top of the mast. I think it was registering about 60 knots or something, then it got, it just got blown clean off the top of the mast and I, I could, from my experience there was more wind later when we were, than when that got blown off. So it was, certainly came up worse and the seas certainly came up worse.

Q19 So that was broken as a result of the wind?

A Yeah. It just, it just got sort of pushed off the top of the mast, yeah.

Q20 What type of instrument is that, do you know?

A They're, they're Navico instruments, I think.

Q21 Navico?

A Yeah.

Q22 And you were, you were observing the registration of that on, on the instruments at the time when it was being, when it blowed off?

A Well, I can't think ... I was - - -

Q23 Yeah.

A - - - but I think it stopped on that or the, the guy said it registered 60 knots when it got blown off.

Q24 O.K. What sort of wave types were you experiencing, do you believe?

A I reckon they were, you know, a good 15 metre waves.

Q25 O.K. And how did you gauge that, based just on your experience or the wave - - -

A Oh, well, it's not, well just, there's nothing to tell you what a wave was - - -

Q26 Yeah.

A - - - it's basically coming from your experience, a wave measures half its height, but, like, we were, you know, if you were, we were travelling, we were sort of, you know, sailing up and over the wave and down the other side, is it going to flick the boat off the top a bit? No. No. If a real bad break came you'd probably have about 2 metres of white water on the top of the wave and you'd just roll on sort of, you know, 500 metres or more so while you could see them you could dip around them a little bit.

Q27 Mmm.

A But, yeah, they were, they were big waves. And they get short there, because you've got a, a 4 knot current that comes down the coast and you've got that south-easterly coming across there and it also drops off from, off the, the, over the east coast drop off from, I think it goes from 60 metres to 300 metres deep. So you've got a rush of water coming over the top of that through the Bass Strait. That's why it, it gets like it does, yeah. It's a nasty bit of water.

Q28 All right. All right. You mentioned, just going quickly back to the, the wind speed. At 60 knots, ... you saw that, was that constant wind for a period of greater than 10 minutes?

A Oh, yeah, more, it was just happening all the time.

Q29 Yeah.

A Yeah.

Q30 O.K. Did you attend the weather, the weather briefing at the C.Y.C. prior to the race?

A I did, yeah.

Q31 O.K. And you, were you informed about certain conditions?

A At the briefing they said to us that it was a, you know, it's a bit long range forecast for them, but they were saying to us that we'd start in a north-easterly, then we'd, by late in the afternoon we'd

get a southerly change and that would be a bit rough. And then there was a high coming across the, the Tasman and, and if you sail across there in a high you sail across there in, in good weather. So we were sort of, we felt that, from what they were forecasting, that by the time we got there, seeing that we were in a southerly situation, we might have had good weather across the, the Bass Strait. That was the feeling when we left the meeting, but of course that, that was totally wrong.

Q32 If you were, if you were, if you were to understand winds experienced between 50 and 55 knots from the Weather Bureau, that was the forecast what normal winds would you expect with those?

A I think in Queensland if they, if they, the Weather Bureau gives you a, a strong wind warning out here, the winds never attain strong wind warning, generally they don't attain strong wind warning. So we would, we'd presume from here that they won't be any more than that, that's the extreme.

Q33 All right.

A But that wasn't the case either.

Q34 If you would have thought the wind was going to exceed those, what would your thoughts have been with the crew, do you think?

A I think that if we knew it was going to be more than 50 knots, that we would have been, you know, back in Eden a bit quicker.

Q35 Mmm. Did you hear at any time of any reports of stronger winds experienced from other vessels?

A Well, we were told it was 50, they were expecting 50 knots. That was the weather forecast, but there was a boat in front of us, Sword of Orion, that was 10 miles in front of us and we were listening to what he was saying. When the critical time came, he was saying that they were experiencing about 70 to 75 knot winds where they were, it was extremely rough. We were 10 miles behind him. This is before we'd actually made the decision to turn, I think, and he, he, he said that they should, you know, every skipper should consider his position, and then we had a spiel from the Young Endeavour of the same thing, it was your, it was our decision to decide what we were going to do. So they were, they were the main factors, I think, that, that made us decide to turn and come back. We, we didn't know where the storm was, the centre of the storm. With him in front of us 10 miles, getting worse or as bad as we were, we presumed that the storm was in front of us. We couldn't, we didn't get any weather report from Sayonara or Brindabella or we couldn't, we didn't know what was happening way up

in front. So if, if we, if we would have known it was only 50 up there, we might have kept going and sailed through it, but we didn't know what was up there and we were, we only had Sword of Orion 10 miles in front of us, then we were starting to have boats getting into trouble around us. You know, we're hearing Maydays and distress, distress calls, so they were all the things that made us decide to take the 38 mile option than the 120 mile option.

Q36 Mmm.

A 'Cause we didn't exactly know where the main, the middle of the storm was, and we thought could be south, and the Bass Strait gets a bit worse and we thought it probably might get a bit worse as we got into it a bit further, so - - -

Q37 O.K. And you mentioned you rolled the first time, what was the period of roll for the first time, you thought?

A Oh, well, what happened to me is I just, I just remember I was sitting low in the cockpit and just steering the boat and the boat was, was going quite well and the other guy was just there keeping an eye on the compass and I was keeping direction. And then all of a sudden I just got thrown against the boom and then, then there was a big heap of water, had a bit of a swim, and I came up and there was rigging and everything all over

my head so, of course, my first thing was to get out of that rigging before I got my head cut off.

So I, I think it rolled over fairly quickly, probably, you know, 30 seconds or something like that. I didn't seem to be in the water long.

Q38

Mmm.

A

A bit hard to reckon.

Q39

Yeah.

A

..... those things when you think about it, but it was fairly quick, that one, it didn't stay upside down or anything, just rolled straight over.

Q40

Did you have a harness on at the time?

A

Yeah, I did, yeah.

Q41

Did everyone have their harnesses on - - -

A

Yeah.

Q41

- - - that were on deck?

A

Yeah.

Q42

Were you wearing a life jacket, a, correction, a P.F.D?

A

No. I would have just had my wet weather gear and a harness on.

Q43

Is it the case that you rarely wear a P.F.D. in those conditions?

A

I'd never before in any of the races that I've been in put a life jacket on. We had life jackets in the boat but, and this was probably the worst we'd ever sailed in so it was the, I mean, the harness is the thing that, that saves you. If you

fall over the side even with a life jacket on, your chances of, well, it'll help your chance of survival, there's no risk about that, but - - -

Q44 Mmm.

A - - - you know, don't leave the boat.

Q45 Mmm.

A That's the story.

Q46 What type of harness do you have?

A They're, they're the standard ones that were in the boat, round, clip round your, round your shoulders and then clip on in front. I found the harness was quite, quite good. Had a long, it was about a metre and a half, I suppose, of cord on it. I actually had it doubled around the rail and back onto me when I was sitting in the boat steering, so I didn't have a real long tether on it. I decided to hook onto strong points in the boat even though we had the lifelines. On the boat one of the lifelines got, actually got ripped off when the mast, when the boat rolled over and so, but we had strong points in the boat and so I just clipped onto that, yeah. So it helped me to be secured.

Q47 Mmm. So the case is that if you were hooked onto one of those, the jack stay or the, or the line running fore and aft there's a good chance that you'd be washed away?

A You could, you could get washed over the side of

the boat and still be hooked up and then you'd have to get back on the boat again. It's extremely difficult to get back on a boat when it's - - -

Q48 Mmm.

A - - - when it's doing over 9 knots, just the force of water pulling you behind the boat. The harness would probably hold you, no problem.

Q49 Mmm.

A But you, you'll need a lot of assistance getting back on the boat.

Q50 Mmm.

A This harness was an external one, it wasn't part of the, the life jacket. It was a, a proper external harness and it was, I had it on firm.

Q51 Yeah. Do you know what brand that was?

A No, no, I don't.

Q52 O.K. How much water do you think was in the boat at the time of the first roll?

A It was about, been half full, there was about a third to a half, somewhere there.

Q53 Right.

A There would have been 2 feet of water

Q54 And after you got back on, you said that - - -

A It was uprighted.

Q55 Pardon?

A Up.

Q56 Right. When, after the second roll and you were still on the deck, the first roll and you were still on the deck, the boat rolled again?

A No. Not, no. It, it rolled the first time, then we sat there all night, and then it rolled just before we got, before the helicopter got us off.

Q57 Thanks. Well, then, were you laying on, on the deck?

A When, after the first roll I got out of the mast, with the rigging over me and I actually went down to the, I unhooked and held on and went down the back of the boat, and there's a bilge pump with a handle there and I got on the bilge pump. That was the first thing I did after the boat rolled back up again. The other guys were in the cabin then, well, we, we dealt with the water first 'cause first of all we had to make sure the boat was, wasn't going to sink. The life raft was up on deck and it was ready to go. We just ascertained whether the boat was going to sink or it wasn't going to sink, and that's where we were.

But the boat was O.K.

Q58 How many life rafts did you have on deck?

A There's a nine, one nine man life raft.

Q59 So just the one?

A Just the one,

Q60 Yeah.

A It's a new one.

Q61 Yeah.

A We bought it new when we bought the boat. We had, this was, we've had the boat nearly 12 months so -
- -

Q62 Right. With the, the radio, when you said she rolled and your aerials were on the - - -

A They were on the mast head, on the back stay.

Q63 They were on the back stay?

A So that, that gets wiped off when the mast gets wiped off.

Q64 Is it the case that you're, you're required to carry a reserve aerial?

A Yeah. There was some reserve aerials in the boat, and they, but they hook onto the V.H.F.

Q65 Mmm.

A But there was, they all got a fair dousing with water so I doubt, even if you had the other aerial up, you would have heard anything.

Q66 Right. Do you have a portable V.H.F. aerial, radio?

A No. Didn't have a portable, no.

Q67 Do you have an E.P.I.R.B. in the life raft?

A I haven't looked - - -

Q68 That you know of?

A I don't, I don't, I'm not sure what's in that life raft. I think, I don't know what they have in there, but I don't think they did have an E.P.I.R.B in them.

Q69 Mmm.

A I had a personal E.P.I.R.B. on me. It was something I decided to take with me when I was going to Hobart and I had it in my jacket. The, the, the E.P.I.R.B. that was in the boat, which is the right boat, and a couple of the other guys had personal E.P.I.R.Bs on them as well.

Q70 Mmm.

A So if we were in the life raft I'd have been able to flick my personal E.P.I.R.B, it worked the same.

Q71 O.K.

A There's no doubt that the E.P.I.R.B. was the thing that worked in that whole set up.

Q72 And do you know the frequency of the E.P.I.R.B. that you had fired at the - - -

A I'm not I'm not sure 1-3-7s or

Q73 Yeah. O.K. Would 1-2-1 or 2-4-3 ring a bell, megahertz? It doesn't matter.

A It doesn't

Q74 Yeah. O.K. Have you ever fired a flare before?

A Well, I didn't fire any in this case, but I haven't fired a flare, no, but I've had some demonstrations of them so I, I basically knew how to fire them.

Q75 Have you ever been present when a life raft or a flare firing, a, a life raft has been deployed?

A No, I hadn't before, not before the race, no. I

knew that, I knew what procedure was, though, just to throw them over the side of the boat, but - - -

Q76 Yeah.

A - - - had to have it hooked onto the boat.

Q77 Yeah.

A It's got a line that's hooked onto the boat.

Q78 Yeah.

A It's already on the boat so it should go over the side and should just

Q79 But are you aware how much line is in that life raft?

A I knew that it had a fair length of line in it. I was told afterwards that, that that line would break if the boat sunk. If it was still hooked onto the boat, that it, it would break and the life raft wouldn't go down, but I didn't know that beforehand.

Q80 Mmm. O.K. Stuart?

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q81 Peter, was there any sea sickness on board the boat?

A Yes. There was a bit of sea sickness, yeah.

Q82 Did that cause any problems with the routine on the boat?

A No, not really, there was only one guy that was, oh, one guy that was sick. But there was a few injuries so they were, those guys stayed down. But no, the sea sickness didn't cause any great

problems

Q83 And what was your specific injury?

A Well, I'd had a, I'd a few broken ribs that I'd got on, suspected that were broken on the Sunday morning early - - -

Q84 Right.

A - - - early in the morning and then once the, once I'd, the boat had rolled the first time I'd, I'd, it hurt my back. So which was, I had a crushed vertebra, that's why I got out of it, I had a lot of pain.

Q85 Right.

A So my back was, well, I had a lot pain in my back.

Q86 What's the prognosis of that injury? Is, is everything getting better now or - - -

A Well, it is now. I've been, I was 3 weeks in, in the spinal unit in Royal, the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney. I've had a brace on up til Easter time, and now I've just discarded the brace. But I, I'm still, they say to me that it'll take 6 months for an 80 or a 90 per cent recovery and 12 months for a 100 per cent recovery. It just takes time to heal. The back actually, vertebra actually doesn't come back again, it stays squashed, but it has to heal up - - -

Q87 Right.

A - - - all around it so it takes some time for it

to heal up, yeah.

Q88 Right. Now on the second roll, what was the inversion time?

A Upside down?

Q89 Yeah.

A About a minute.

Q90 Right.

A We reckon.

Q91 I'll show you a certificate here, Peter, and it's, oh, first of all, you sailed in an I.M.S. division?

A We did in that one, yeah.

Q92 O.K. And I show you a certificate which was issued by the Australian Yachting Federation and it's for the yacht, Midnight Special.

A Yeah.

Q93 And your stability index is, I'll point to an area of 122.5.

A Right.

Q94 Do you understand, and also I point to another area where it says, Calculated Limit of Positive Stability, of 123.5 degrees.

A Right.

Q95 Do you understand what they mean?

A Well, they're the righting, they're basically the righting moments of the boat, yeah. I mean, I'm not right up with them but I believe they're, they're fairly reasonable as far as that boat's

concerned.

Q96 And you're, you're aware of a Category 1 race, the requirement for an, for a, for that vessel to enter an I.M.S. certificate, an I.M.S. Category is 115 degrees. Are you aware of that?

A I knew it made the, made the category,

Q97 Right. So it shows - - -

A Yeah. David Leslie is actually the guy that looked after the ... certificates and everything on the boat. W we all had a little job to do - -
-

Q98 Yeah.

A - - - on the boat with the five of us and he looked after those certificates and made sure that everything was up to date. He looked after the medical kit and Roger, who runs Mooloolaba Radio, he serviced all the E.P.I.R.B's and everything so everything was, the boat was, in my, to my belief the boat was in, in a very good condition, or its the best condition I've ever been in to sail in that race. It was, we'd left nothing to chance. We'd put all the storm sails up here before we left, we had 'em altered so that they, that they, there wasn't going to be any problems with them if we had to use them 'cause we realised that, you know, Sydney to Hobart race, that somewhere in the race it's going to blow a fair bit. It's going to be a bit uncomfortable so we might have to use our

gear. So we made sure that everything, before the boat left here, that everything was in its best condition.

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q99 O.K. Now as far as the, the crew list is concerned, the, the, the nine that sailed on it, they were the ones that were entered on the crew list?

A Yeah. The, the nine guys that sailed on the boat, we'd been sailing for nearly, with that group, for 12 months. So we've had, we'd been up to Hamilton earlier in the year, we'd done Sydney to Mooloolaba earlier in the year. So they'd all, we'd all sailed together for a bit, yeah. The boat, we were going quite well actually in the race, we were up, doing quite well. You know, we've all had, between the lot of us, a fair bit of experience there.

Q100 All right. Is there anything that you'd like to now add that you feel may assist us in the inquiry as to where we can suggest improvements? Can you see any downfalls that you might like to add?

A Well, of course, naturally the weather reporting is always a, I don't know whether that can be improved or not. If we'd, if we'd known that it was going to be blowing that hard, we wouldn't've probably been out there.

Q101 Mmm.

A We're not suicidal. It's a sport, it's not a, it's not anything else and sometimes it does, you know, you're racing and, I think the boats'll handle 50 knots without any problem. I've been in 50 knots and raced with 50 knots and I don't specifically get worried if it's up around that range breeze. After 50 knots, you know, it, it, it's harder on the boats then. You know, I think you've got to realise that you, you're out there, it is your decision to, to either go on or retire or whatever. It's, no one else can really make that decision for you. Maybe that race, but the worst part of that race is the crossing of the Bass Strait. I don't know that there's, maybe there's an opportunity where they can, if it was really bad, they could stop, they could run the race past Eden and if it was not too good they could, they'd have the ability to stop it there and restart it again. A lot of boats I know sail wide in that race, go right out, because the race is from Sydney to Hobart. And I mean, that doesn't mean anything, you can, you can do whatever you like if you're the Race Committee. So other than that, I, I don't think I've got much to, to offer. I don't, I don't think there's a real lot wrong with modern racing boats. I don't think they're specifically built to sail in 80 knots. If they were, well, you'll never, you'll

never have a, an ocean racing fleet, it just won't happen because that's not, that's not the prime principle of it, right? So that's about all I could add there. It was, it was a freak, I believe that storm was something that was a freak arrangement and, you know, it, it, it came quickly and was, was a 9-9-6 low apparently, so it's not something that happens every day of the week. It hadn't happened in the, in that race in 54 years.

So I guess we were at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Q102 O.K. Nothing else to add to that then?

A No.

Q103 The time by my watch is now 10.17am. This interview is now concluded.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED