

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q1 This is an electronically recorded interview between Senior Constable David Upston, and, of the Sydney Water Police and Kevan Pearce on Friday, the 23rd of the 4th, '99 at the Adelaide C.I.B, South Australia. The time on my watch is now 10.43am and also present, seated directly opposite me is Detective Senior Constable Stuart Gray from the Bega Detectives. Kevan, for the purpose of the interview would you like to state your full name, please?

A Kevan Pearce.

Q2 And your date of birth?

A 28th of the 3rd, '59.

Q3 And your address?

A 69 Road, Westbourne Park.

Q4 And your occupation?

A A company director.

Q5 O.K. Kevan, as I explained to you earlier prior to the interview, Detective Senior Constable Gray and I are making inquiries into the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and we're speaking to people either directly or indirectly involved in the race of the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and as we spoke earlier and you told us that you were a competitor in the race on the yacht Ausmaid? Is that correct.

A Yes, it is.

Q6 Could you firstly tell me your sailing experiences?

A I've been sailing for 10 years, crewing on, on boats, racing out of South Australia Head, you know, just sort of the weekend racing, you know, locally at Port Lincoln sort of thing over the years. I did my first Sydney to Hobart in 1993 on a boat then I also did the Sydney to Hobart in 1994. I was still, kept on crewing through all that period on, on different boats, then in early '97 I bought my first boat, which is a 36 footer which I then entered the Southern Cross Cup and the Sydney to Hobart Race in '97 which we finished and then obviously kept, brought it back to South Australia and kept on racing with that then, then went off and did the Sydney to Gold Coast Race in July of '98 and Hamilton Island Race Week in '98 and then brought the boat back to South Australia then in October '98 I bought Ausmaid with the intention, which we did, was to race in the Telstra Cup in Sydney and once again do Hobarts and obviously continue on in that sort of cycle, so - - -

Q7 Yeah.

A That's a - - -

Q8 That's very good.

A - - - brief overview of what I've done.

Q9 O.K. What type of vessel is Ausmaid?

A It's a, a 47 launched in 1994.

Q10 O.K. And you entered the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race in a particular division?

A I.M.S. division.

Q11 I.M.S. division. O.K. I show you a, an I.M.S. certificate which is issued by the Australian Yachting Federation.

A Yeah.

Q12 Are you familiar with the certificate?

A Yes, Yeah. Yes, yes.

Q13 O.K. I point to two areas that there's the stability in ex of 134.3.

A Yes.

Q14 And also the calculated limit of positive stability 135.4 degrees.

A Right.

Q15 What can you tell me about those two figures?

A They're, that's we, we have the boats measured and there's quite a complicated measuring system and complicated formulas where we, you know, I've been involved where they put, I, I would say put a weight out either side on the end of, where we use spinnaker poles and they sort of do measurements with the boat. The boat is basically empty when it's done and from those measurements they come up with these, you know, using, I suppose you could almost say they're formulas or secret formulas, I don't know how the formulas work.

Q16 Yeah.

A They come up with the information on that and the stabilities obviously the, the 134 makes it a very stiff boat - - -

Q17 Mmm.

-
A - - - with the, yeah, I know that it's, it's all relevant to entering a race, say that, I know the Hobart stability is 115 the minimum, the Gold Coast race was a minimum stability of 110 so from my knowledge of that there it makes, it means we've got a fairly stiff boat.

Q18 Yeah - - -

A How there derive at that figure exactly from the complicated formula, I do not know but I know and I've been involved in, two or three times when they've measured different boats, so, yeah, it's a measurement off the boat, etc and they use a formula to come up with those figures.

Q19 O.K. So really it well and truly falls within the category of a category 1 race?

A Oh, yeah, we'd be, if we wanted we could do category 0 with that stability which is 125, which is, you know, that's the highest.

Q20 O.K. All right. Now, you entered the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and you left Sydney on Boxing Day?

A Yes, I did.

Q21 At the, the start of the race, 1 o'clock. All right. Well, let me take you to the 27th.

A Right.

Q22 Where you're sailing down the coast.

A Yes.

Q23 And your experience there with weather and sea conditions or an approaching storm. What can you tell me about that?

A Well, we, we knew of the, we, we knew that the weather was going, I mean, obviously when we set off we had the spinnaker up and we had like a dream run for the first afternoon into the evening. We knew that there was a front coming and we was actually I suppose it, it was our gain planned on that first evening to push the boat fairly hard as you know the, we sat down and talked of, you know, wanting to break out of the pack sort of thing and establish ourselves in a good position. So we were pushing the boat fairly hard with the spinnaker up. We knew the front was coming and I believe it was about 1 o'clock in the, on the, the morning of the 27th or thereabouts, I can't remember exactly the time that, you know, we dropped the spinnaker and we went straight to a number four headsail which is a very small one and a reef in the main. That was straight away because we knew that, you know, we didn't bother with going down the sails as the front was coming. We went straight to the four and as far as I can remember we spent that whole night with everyone on the rail, we were just sitting on the side of the boat, basically just going as hard as we could with the four up and a, and a reef in the main, so we didn't have that much sail but it was, you know, it was blowing quite hard and was quite rough. That morning it continued like that, I got, I,

I'm not sure what time but we put a second reef in the main on the morning of the 27th and then a little bit later than that we also went from the number four to the storm jib. It was still obviously, you know, it was blowing very hard. From there we went about midday I would say on the 27th. We actually did away with the main sail and we spent about 5 hours approximately with a storm jib only and then from there on we sort of went back through the sequence of, you know, you put the main up with two reefs, main with one reef and a number four and that was basically what we did through the storm. But all that time, you know, that, the worst of it was on the afternoon of the 27th but we, we still kept racing and pushing the boat, well, we was pushing it hard. Outside of that well, I mean, we didn't have any problems outside of the chap who, who hurt himself. I mean, every crew member was fine. I think it was only one lad who was really physically sea sick we didn't even have people sea sick.

Q24 Right. The fellow that hurt himself, who was that?

A That was Scott Natrass.

Q25 Right. And, and what happened to him?

A He, he fell onto, onto a, a main sheet winch, he just fell over and it just obviously hit him on the ribs.

Q26 Mmm.

A So while he, like, he'd been, he'd been wounded very very badly so obviously hurt him. From there he went down and was in a bunk.

Q27 Right.

A On which Tim sort of gave him, looked after him, gave him a bit of medication etc.

Q28 All right. And he's O.K. now?

A He's fine, yeah, he's on, he's back sailing with us all the time.

Q29 Excellent.

A Twice, twice to the jib a day sort of thing.

Q30 All right. Now you've mentioned seasickness, with seasickness of the crew did that interfere all with the routine of the boat?

A No, not at all, no. No. We have, we had a watch system on the boat of, there was three, the watches, there were three watches and during the day we were doing 3 hours on deck, 3 hours off, 3 hours standby, in a system like that and you know, everyone sort of, when the time came they swapped over no problems. In the evenings it reduced from 3 hours to 2 hours, 2 hours on, 2 hours off, 2 hours standby, so and, and the navigator was separate entirely from the watch system and not once did the watch system break down.

Q31 Mmm.

A It was the, you know, when it's time to change, it changed.

Q32 Right.

A Perfectly.

Q33 What's the length of your boat again?

A 47 feet.

Q34 O.K. Was it the case with a, with a routine of changing the crew all the time that people were fed and

- - -

A Yeah. We, we, we, we, actually we had a hot meal nearly every night of the race - - -

Q35 Mmm.

A - - - even on the 26th on the 27th, we did, although we were pretty hungry during the day 'cause it wasn't too pleasant but you know, we had, even had a hot meal that night.

Q36 Mmm.

A So, you know, we were always fed.

Q37 So none of the crew were fatigued at all, there was no problem with that?

A There, there was one chap who, he was, he was sick - - -

Q38 Mmm.

A - - - he was physically sick, you know, so he would've, I, I can't speak for him but I only imagine he would've been a bit fatigued but he, he still put out 100 per cent only looking back on what happened now.

Q39 Mmm. And then, and then you continued on through after the storm, past Bass Strait, through Bass Strait and down into Hobart?

A Yeah. And it was pretty uneventful from there - - -

Q40 Right.

A - - - once we sort of, you know, through the Bass Strait.

Q41 Yeah. How did you end up as far as the positioning in the race?

A We were third across the line, first in our division and second on, overall in handicap.

Q42 So you'd be pretty happy with that result?

A Oh, yeah, yeah, very happy.

Q43 O.K. The, and what can you tell me about the weather conditions that you experienced through the race, or in that, or in that particular storm cell?

A Yeah. I think the strongest gusts we believed that we saw was, you know, probably 70 knots somewhere in that region. I mean there was a lot of, a lot of wind around sort of 50 knots. The sea, it's very hard to judge, talking about it afterwards with the guys, we, imagine a lot of the seas were about 6 metres high. Certainly didn't see anything over 8 metres.

Q44 O.K. And what sort of instrumentation did you have to measure the wind?

A We've got a, like a, a B and G setup, 690, so, the standard thing on top of the mast and everything so - -

-

Q45 Was it a digital readout or an analogue readout.

A A digital, yeah.

Q46 O.K. Are they recorded at all?

A I don't think so.

Q47 You haven't got them anywhere that, on any other electronic device that you kept the recordings of the -

- -

A No, no, it wouldn't be, no.

Q48 O.K.

A No, I know you can set up for that but I don't think we worried about it.

Q49 Right. Do you know the, while we're still talking about wind and wind instruments do you know the accuracy of that, that gauge? Do you know if it's got a plus or minus factor?

A I, I, no I don't know, no.

Q50 O.K.

A I, I imagine it to be fairly accurate.

Q51 All right. And the sea state, how did you gauge the sea state, I think in the wave heights?

A Oh, that's, you know, I mean, that's the sort of thing we would talk about afterwards. I mean at the time you're looking at it and I, I've certainly seen a lot worse seas than that. I was in the '93 Hobart at, obviously from memory, 'cause it was a long time ago but '93 was certainly a lot worse than that, the size of the seas. Sure it was a bit confused at times but it, probably not the worst I've ever seen.

Q52 Mmm. Did you attend the weather briefing at the C.Y.C.A. in Sydney prior to the race.

A No, I, I was in Adelaide then, we had, one of the helmsmen, Sebastian, he went to that and our navigator, Craig was there I believe and another guy Colin. So I, I believe there was three guys there.

Q53 And did they give you then a briefing after that or did you also obtain weather information from an outside source.

A No, the, they gave the whole, the whole crew on the day just to let us know what was gunna happen. I know Colin and Craig there's a little tent up, setup there at the C.Y.C. They went in and spoke to people personally there to try and get some information on the weather. So we basically knew what, what time the front was coming and I think we've pretty well got it spot on time wise of when it was gunna come. They'd also for the week before because of, you know, it's rather awkward we're here in Sydney - - -

Q54 Mmm.

A - - - some of the crew were in Adelaide and there was a, a meeting between some of them in Adelaide, they'd be watching obviously on, using the Internet, you know, watching the weather and things. So getting whatever information they could re currents, etc, so there was guys doing that in Adelaide as well.

Q55 When you, when you say, Getting information off the internet - - -

A They were looking for the currents more than anything.

Q56 Right.

A There's a, one, one of the crew members in particular is very keen on that sort of thing.

Q57 Mmm.

-
A And you know, I was using that all the time, and three of the crew members, Tim, Colin and Craig actually had a meeting here, you know, to decide exactly which, how east, east of the rum line would be etc. So, yeah, they'd put a lot of effort and thought into that before we left.

Q58 O.K. And where, whereabouts did you get that information. Was that the Bureau of, Bureau of Meteorology web site or did you obtain it from somewhere else?

A I, I they would certainly have used it the bureau's one and I can't speak for them but knowing them - - -

Q59 No.

A - - - they would have hunted down every bit of information they could.

Q60 Right. And do you think that information assisted you with your tactical - - -

A Oh, yes, yes - - -

Q60 - - - in a tactical sense?

A - - - yes. Yeah.

Q61 O.K. You've got a crew that are very experienced - - -

A Yes.

Q61 - - - and have sailed have a number of races including the Fast Net Race, did you say?

A The Whitbread.

Q62 The Whitbread.

A I'm not sure of Fast Net. They may have, Harvey may have done a Fast Net, I'm not really sure but they

certainly have three guys on board who've done the Whitbread.

Q63 O.K.

A Two of them did the, the whole, all the way around.

Q64 All right. With, with safety equipment, all your safety equipment complies with the - - -

A Yes, yes, the, we had a going over before we left.

Q65 Before you left here?

A Before, oh, well, it was obviously inspected here but we had the safety officer at our local club to just sort of tick it and sign it. But we were inspected in, in Sydney and we was inspected three times I think because we did the Telstra Cup, they come over and come around and check your sails and make sure you've got the stamp and they're measured. So even on the morning of the race there was someone on board but I think he was actually only checking the measurements of the sails.

Q66 Oh, O.K.

A I remember saying, Who's that, you know, I don't recognise you. There was certainly, but, when I saw him, when I sort of walked on the boat I think he was only checking the sails.

Q67 Yeah.

A I, I'm not quite sure

Q68 Part of the requirement to enter the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race is to obtain a, a safety certificate.

A Yes.

Q69 How, how long prior to the race was that completed,
that - - -

A Our, our safety certificate was, obviously we bought,
bought the boat in October, it was bought in Melbourne,
we brought it back to Adelaide and that was done before
we, it left on about the 1st of December to go round to
Sydney.

Q70 Mmm.

A So it was done some time in November with the safety
officer here in Adelaide which we'd just get a copy of
the New South Wales safety one which is probably
similar to ours.

Q71 Yeah.

A And we've got all the gear. I mean you have to have
it, all the gear's there.

Q72 O.K. With your lifeline's and, or the safety harnesses
and lanyards attached - - -

A Mmm.

Q73 What, what brand are they, do you know?

A I, I wouldn't know the brand offhand, I think it, it
could be a Bourke, they're the standard, you know,
they're orange - - -

Q74 Mmm.

A - - - the 2 metre lead - - -

Q75 Yeah.

A - - - I think it'd be a Bourke, I'm not sure of the
exact brand.

Q76 O.K. With safety harnesses and - - -

A Mmm.

Q77 How, how many crew did you have?

A 11.

Q78 And you supplied the eleven safety harnesses - - -

A Yes. Yes.

Q78 - - - to the boat?

A It was actually 12 on there.

Q79 Right.

A Actually the boat came with the 12 harnesses and the 12 life jackets, the smaller type that inflate up.

Q80 Oh, O.K.

A And they were tested before we, we'd have to have them tested yearly so that was done in the November

Q81 The inflatable life - - -

A Life jacket.

Q81 - - - the, the P.F.D's - - -

A Yes.

Q81 - - - were checked?

A Yes.

Q82 O.K. Totally different to the P.F.D's - - -

A Yes.

Q82 - - - I'm talking about the safety harnesses?

A Yes. Oh, yes, sorry, I got off subject there.

Q83 Yeah, the safety harnesses. What, what brand are they, do you know?

A No, as I said before - - -

Q84 O.K.

A I think, I think it's, it could be a Bourke, I'm not sure.

Q85 Oh, O.K. And are you aware of any compliance labelling on those at all?

A Yes, there, there is one there, standards, is whatever.

Q86 Yeah.

A Yeah. 'Cause I know some that don't meet the standards or something.

Q87 Really?

A I - - -

Q88 What can you tell me about that?

A I don't that, I've only heard about that but - - -

Q89 Well, what have you heard about that?

A Just some older ones around you've got to be careful if, you know, you haven't got some older ones. You know, I don't know about that - - -

Q90 Yeah.

A - - - numbers of standards and things as - - -

Q91 Yeah.

A - - - long as we make sure what's on board the boat. A bit like expiry dates on things, isn't it?

Q92 Yes.

A I mean, you've got to make sure you get the right one?

Q93 Right. With, with that in mind, did, did any of the crew bring their own safety harness to be used that was more of a - - -

A Yeah. There's some - - -
Q93 - - - fit?
A - - - I mean there would've been some there with the,
the harness already in the jacket.
Q94 Yes. So, irrespective of that you still supply - - -
A Oh, you needs, 12 - - -
Q94 - - - enough for everyone on the boat?
A Yes, there's 12 sets there.
Q95 Were you aware of any flare display or life raft
display held at the C.Y.C. prior to the race?
A No, I wasn't, no.
Q96 O.K. Have any, or have you, or can you speak for any
of your crew that have deployed a life raft before?
A I, I certainly haven't. I couldn't speak for the crew.
Q97 Mmm.
A I could, I, I'd imagine it would be, when I think about
it, I think there could be a couple that have - - -
Q98 Mmm.
A - - - but I can't speak for them.
Q99 Have you ever fired a flare or been present when flare
firing has been carried out?
A Yes, I have, yes.
Q100 And where was that taken place?
A That was in, in waters off South Australia, in the
gulf, at the bottom of the gulf we had a, a few years
back now we lost a rudder on a boat and a tricky
situation.
Q101 All right.

A We brought out some red and white flares and, interesting experience, yes.

Q102 O.K. So, you, you're aware of the, the operation of flares?

A Let me say I know one thing for sure, you read the instructions before you let them off because I remember when we was there it was a little bit tricky getting them to go.

Q103 O.K. So you had troubles?

A I, I wasn't actually the guy doing it but - - -

Q104 Yeah.

A - - - I was alongside a chap doing it and I can remember we had a little bit of trouble - - -

Q105 O.K.

A - - - head first you know sure we can all do it, let's just read it first but

Q106 Do you hold regular safety talks on board your boat prior to races or do you assume everyone knows basically what their - - -

A We don't actually have a - - -

Q106 - - - job is?

A We don't actually have a, a safety talk as such. What we have done, though, we've put one charge, one chap in charge of safety care, just like a safety officer and you know, it's up to him to make sure it's all there and in place rather than say thinking Joe Blow's, you know, the next guy along line's done it. Yeah, it's, it's, he's a designated job - - -

Q107 Mmm.

A - - - is to make sure the safety gear's there and up to date and, you know, everything complies.

Q108 O.K. Stuart?

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q109 Yeah. Kevan - - -

A Yes.

Q109 - - - in relation to the storm, did you, you mentioned you came into it on, just sort of on time.

A Well, what we thought, yeah. - - -

Q109 - - - on time.

A Yeah. I mean, gettin' a bit fuzzy with times now but -
- -

Q110 Yeah. That information so far as the time's concerned, was that given at the briefing or was that a subsequent radio message or audio update.

A Well, we, there, we, we did get one weather update where they forecast 50 knots. I think that was on the afternoon of the 26th. As far as I can remember. Whether that came from the briefing or not I - - -

Q111 Right.

A - - - really, you'd have to talk to Craig, 'cause the navigator is not here at the moment unfortunately.

Q112 That's fine. Now, did the, you said the storm, you saw the storm build.

A Well, it was dark, no.

Q113 It was dark, O.K.

A It was dark, it was, you know so we didn't - - -
Q114 Right.
A - - - see it but we knew, we knew, I mean, we, we could
tell by the way the wind was clocking round - - -
Q115 Yeah.
A - - - fairly quickly and then we knew it was going to
be right on her nose soon so that's when as I said we
went straight for a number four, we didn't sort of work
our way down the sails, put a number four up and got
everyone sort of, you know we all put harnesses
on at dusk anyway - - -
Q116 Yeah.
A - - - and went straight for the reef straight away so
we didn't - - -
Q117 Right.
A - - - in the middle of the storm having to do it, we
were ready, we'd done it, we knew it was going to be
there we were ready, for it.
Q118 Yeah. Now, what time, what do you think the duration
of the storm was when it hit you?
A Look, the actual worst of the storm was, was on the
afternoon of the 27th so the worst part of it for us
would be when we had a, a storm jib only up which is
about, I believe about 5 hours in, roughly from midday
to 5 o'clock in the afternoon.
Q119 Now, the life raft that you carry in your boat, what
sort of life raft is it
A There's two.

Q120 Right.

A Two six man ones, the R.F.D - - -

Q121 Right.

A - - - soft packs.

Q122 Right. And whereabouts are they stowed on the boat?

A If you go down, like companionway stairs there's one either side.

Q123 Right.

A - - - at the bottom of 'em.

Q124 Can you tell me if, if you and your crew had a man overboard routine worked out?

A Not as such, no, no, we, I mean, that sort of thing was discussed 'cause we, we had a guy on board, Albie, Albie Pratt, who actually went overboard during the Whitbread on Kaverna just in the Bass Straight and, and one of the things he suggested is to make, make sure we had a strobe light on, so - - -

Q125 Right.

A - - - you know, well, I actually have, had little torches in my pocket but a lot of the guys went out and bought strobe lights particularly for that 'cause he reckons that's what saved him when he went overboard - - -

Q126 Yeah.

A - - - in, in the Whitbread.

Q127 O.K. When, when I just take you back to the weather, the wind conditions - - -

A Yes.

Q127 - - - were those, you mentioned gusts of up to 70 knots and constant speed, say 55 - - -

A Yeah.

Q127 - - - plus.

A Yeah. You know, 50 knot, from memory - - -

Q128 Yeah.

A - - - you know, I'm not sort of watchin' the all the time - - -

Q129 No.

A - - - but you know, 50 knotters, yeah.

Q130 Yeah.

A Certainly, as, you know, they were certainly in the high 30's a lot, you know, gusting to 50 and worst we saw was probably 70 knots.

Q131 How long did that 70 knots blow for, do you recall?

A Not long.

Q132 Just a gust?

A A gust, yeah, a gust. I, I mean the worst, most of the time was the 50-ish but, you know, a lot of the time it was in the high thirties.

Q133 Mmm.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q134 Mmm.

A Mmm.

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q135 All right. Is there anything else or to, to, to tell us about the race or anything that you feel might assist us in, within our inquiries?

A Not really, I mean, I initially said I mean, the race for us was, we just kept racing really and, you know, we sort of, I suppose, missed the dramas or we didn't have the dramas of other people and, and one of the key things I believe is that we had extremely experienced crew. You know, we weren't there for a holiday or a cruise, we were there, I wanted to win.

Q136 Mmm.

A And I mean if it meant I had to have outside help of experienced people at, the bottom line is I wanted to win.

Q137 Mmm.

A And so I made sure I had, you know, the best crew I could lay my hands on.

Q138 Mmm. Did you pay any of your crew to be on board?

A Yes.

Q139 O.K. I won't ask you any more about that - - -

A Yeah.

Q140 - - - but that's, that's O.K. No, no, that's fine, I don't have any further questions - - -

A O.K.

Q140 - - - about that.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q141 Just one thing, did you guys here any Maydays from any yachts?

A No, no.

Q142 None at all?

A No. Didn't see any flares either, I mean.

Q143 Right.

A The majority of the race we didn't see anyone.

Q144 Right.

A The boat we saw probably the most of would be Nokia, 'cause we actually passed it on the morning of the 27th, you know, and we sort of sailed right past and left them behind and then on the last day we saw a little bit of Ragamuffin in the distance, just like, you know, sort of there somewhere.

Q145 Yeah.

A And that, that's sort of that's about all we saw until we came in to Hobart.

Q146 O.K. Just, just on that, with the, the Maydays, you, you didn't hear any distress calls at all?

A No, we actually had a little bit of trouble with our radio on the morning of the 27th. We didn't hear anything.

Q147 O.K. Well, what can you tell me about the difficulties you had with your radio?

A Oh, our aerial had broken.

Q148 Yes.

A So, we, we could only, and both V.H.F. and H.F. had broken. We actually had a handheld V.H.F. which we, on the morning of the 27th we, we were circled by an A.B.C. helicopter so we tried to raise them on that, whether they heard us or not I don't know. As soon as the weather sort of improved and we were able to we, we gerry rigged another aerial up using a spare so

-
there was a, a little bit of a period there where I suppose we had a radio contact but we did and we missed the scheds, I think two scheds, but in between we did get, pass on our position to other boats which we believed were then passed on to let people know fine.

Q149 O.K. With the - - -

A

Q150 Is it, is it the case where you, it's a requirement that you carry two H.F. aerials?

A That's right, we had two but 'cause of the conditions it wasn't quite the time to rig another one up but we had like a spare which as soon as the conditions allowed, yeah, we hoisted every time there was a sched and the radio was fine then.

Q151 All right. What type of batteries have you got on your vessel?

A There's, there's three and they're those, oh, they're dry cell ones, they're, they're the, a dry cell battery.

Q152 So they're completely sealed?

A Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah, they're huge - - -

Q153 Yeah.

A - - - sort of huge ones there.

Q154 They're not a gel acid type of battery?

A I don't know about that, no.

Q155 No. But they are sealed?

A They're sealed and, yeah, they hold a lot of, I mean, we don't every a problem with them going flat.

Q156 Yeah.

A We could, we could actually go for a whole day and there - - -

Q157 Mmm.

A - - - still no problem there, they could just go and go and go.

Q158 Right. Did you turn your radio off after each sched?

A No, there's a radio on all the time.

Q159 So you leave it on all the time?

A Oh, yes, yeah, there's a V.H.F. runs on it all the time.

Q160 Right.

A actually broke the, we actually broke the V.H.F. aerial as well.

Q161 Right.

A So it was completely snapped off.

Q162 O.K. Just one thing, did have contact with next of kin when you were at sea during the race, during the race?

A No, we didn't have, no we didn't have, no.

Q163 O.K.

A Do you know if your next of kin had any problems finding out details about your, your safety and your, your condition.

Q164 I believe so. Are you able to sort of relate that to me?

A I, I believe my, my wife, you know, and, was having trouble finding out because we'd missed two scheds and
- - -

Q165 Yes.

A - - - that's the only positions they give out is what you give at sched, whether you've contacted anyone in between.

Q166 Yeah.

A And I've been led to believe that after a while there was just, there wasn't information coming out like, where we were at the time, because they hadn't heard from us but all they knew is they hadn't heard from us but in fact we'd, you know, somewhere in time the scheds we had got our position out to other boats.

Q167 Yeah.

A We've relayed it on, well, we hoped they relayed it on.

Q168 So

A Oh, yes, yeah, yeah, yeah, I mean for a, a while they thought we were missing but - - -

Q169 Yeah.

A - - - we weren't. I mean, the A.B.C. helicopter circled us on the morning of - - -

Q170 Yeah.

A - - - at about 10.00am in the morning of the 27th, circled us for a while and even the, you know, A.B.C..... joking on the side - - -

Q171 Yeah.

A - - - so they knew we were there.

Q172 Mmm.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q173 Yeah. O.K.

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q174 All right. The, the time on my watch is now 11.11am
and this interview is now concluded.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED