DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q1 This is an electronically recorded interview between Detective Senior Constable Stuart Gray and Senior, yeah, Senior Constable Daryl Jones at the Victorian Police Airwing, Essendon on Saturday the 17th of April, 1999. Also present, seated directly opposite me is Senior Constable Dave Upston from the New South Wales Water Police and to my right Sergeant Bob Piva, that's P-I-V-A. The time by my watch is now 3 minutes past 11.00.

Q2 As I have already explained to you, Daryl, Senior Constable Upston and myself are making inquiries in relation to the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. We've been tasked to speak to rescue organisations and those involved in any of the rescues that took place on the 27th, 28th off the south-east coast of New South Wales and Victoria. For the purpose of the record if I could just get you to state your full name?

A Yeah, full name is Daryl Anthony Jones.

Q3 Your date of birth?

A 19th of the 11th, '56.

Q4 And your work address?

A Work address is the Victoria Police Airwing, hangar 104, Lionel Street, Essendon Airport.

Q5 And occupation, you're a police pilot?

A Police pilot, Yes.

Q6 O.K. I wonder if you could just give me some background so far as your flying experience is concerned?

A About 12 years ago I've I transferred from street policing to the police airwing, I trained up as a, what we call an observer, a winch operator, winch crewman, all the different courses and things involved in being an observer. About 4 years after I'd arrived here, I don't know whether it was a silly idea or the right idea but I got the idea of paying for my own licence. so I went and trained, got my commercial helicopter licence and then bided my time here for about another 4 years until the pilot's position became vacant and gained a pilot's position at the airwing. Spent the first three years of that position flying out single engine Squirrel aircraft and approximately 18 months ago was endorsed on our twin engine, Dorphine and then 6 months ago did command instrument reading. And that's the basics of what I've done for the last 12 years.

Q7 O.K. Insofar as the Polair 1 which was the helicopter used during the operation 27th, 28th, what type of aircraft is that?

A It's an Aerospacial which is a French company, Dorphine, S-A-3-6-5 is the code for it. It's a twin engined medium sized helicopter. It has a, an air speed of 120 knots and capacity of fuel of about, it's full, full fuel 2 and a half hours endurance, winch

equipped, flare thermal emptying equipped and we equip it also with a night sun searchlight.

Q8 What other equipment's on board so far as homing in on E.P.I.R.B's and that, distress signals?

A We do have a, a homer built in on the, on the dash which can be used. It's not really one of the greatest pieces of equipment and we do have a piece of equipment that we didn't have on the particular day, another beacon tracker which we can use which is very good in giving us direction and we, once we get close we have to use search type patterns to actually narrow down the exact position.

Q9 And what's the range of the aircraft?

Q10 Range of the aircraft, well, we always talk in, in flight time with aircraft - - -

Q11 Right.

A - - - but 2 and a half hours at, at 120 knots which is approximately 230 K's an hour so you'd be looking at about 460 plus another half an hour's worth would be about 580 K's roughly - - -

Q12 Right.

A - - - would be the range, yeah.

Q13 O.K. If I could take you to the morning of the 27th which would be a Sunday perhaps you could take us from there in your own words, the events?

A O.K. Sunday the 27th of December I commenced duty at, I think it was 9 o'clock actually. I was working with Senior Constables David Key and Barry Barclay and we

were rostered to work at the Dorphine on police patrol which is basically metropolitan patrol. At the start of the shift the aircraft is set up with various rescue equipment, strops and harnesses and stretchers to carry out rescues if required. As I said before the aircraft's winch equipped so the winch is checked, the aircraft is checked by myself. We go through all those sort of preliminaries and then we went out and did some metro patrolling. At approximately 3.50pm on that afternoon the airwing here received a phone call from AusSAR in, in Canberra, the Australian Search and Rescue Centre, requesting our attendance at Mallacoota re numerous E.P.I.R.B's had been going off, apparently involved in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. At that stage we didn't know whether there were any other aircraft involved but we had the request so we made the efforts to get organised and get going to Mallacoota that afternoon. Weather conditions weren't really good. The cloud base was down to around 1,000 to 1500 feet and I, we made our way from Essendon here to Latrobe Valley Aerodrome where we topped up with fuel to get us to Mallacoota. Weather was gradually getting a little bit worse or the cloud base was getting a bit worse towards Latrobe Valley so from Latrobe Valley I decided that we would go to Mallacoota under the instrument flight rules which basically is meaning flying in the cloud on instruments. We departed Latrobe Valley, I climbed to 5,000 and we flew on

instruments to Mallacoota. Enroute as I've mentioned our grounds, our normal air speed's 120 knots. We were actually getting a speed across the ground going by our global positioning system that, of 205 knots so at that stage I knew that we were heading into something rather interesting. We had, when you've got 120 knots plus 85 knots of wind up the tail you're getting the 205 knots and that, that was interesting to instantly see that on the G.P.S. that we had that sort of wind speed behind us. Over the top of Mallacoota we became visual and, at 5,000 so I, I did a visual descent into Mallacoota Aerodrome. We landed there, we organised our equipment and looked at what sort of fuel we might need and contacted AusSAR on the phone to find out what tasks they had for us. One can't be 100 per cent sure on what tasks we had. I was given a couple of positions to, well, I was given a G.P.S. position to, to dial in and track for, for one particular yacht. I'm not, as I say, I'm not - - -

Q14 Yeah. That's all right.

A - - - too clear on that. But I know that I dialled in one position, started to track for that offshore. We we're then given a second position which cancelled off the first one, asked to go to a second position to another yacht and as I dialled in the position for that on the G.P.S. and started to track for that we were given a third one. And the third one was to a man washed overboard from the yacht Kingara. Dialled in

that position and made my way out in that direction. It took us about 15 to 20 minutes, or 15 to 17 minutes I should say, to get to that position. Once over the top of that position using the G.P.S. I narrowed us right down to the, virtually exactly point. We couldn't see any yachts or anything in that position. I decided I'd start and commence a, an expanding circle search around that position and as I turned to the south we spotted a flare. And I think it was Barry actually called out that he had a flare in sight. I looked up, I saw the flare so we tracked straight towards that flare. That turned out to be the yacht Kingara. We tried to raise them on the radio and we got an answer which very hopeful so we were able to talk to them and ask them where their man washed overboard, in what direction he, he might've been. They gave us a, a rough direction, out to the west of the yacht and they stated he was about 300 metres away. I turned to the west and moved out to the west and we started to, to basically do a, an eyeball search of the, of the sea looking for this person. At first, after a couple of minutes we spotted a, one of those life rings off, that you see on ships and yachts, one of those orange rings and we thought that there was someone in there but because of the sea state the, there were actually waves splashing up inside this ring and so we determined that there wasn't a person with that. I started to move to the north and because of

the wind, as I said, 85 knots previously, rather than turn the machine and fly north I, I just side slipped it north keeping the nose into the wind all the time. I started to move north, I was just going to quietly drift left and right and try and move forward and just start a, a good search of the area. As I tipped the machine over to move to the right Barry called out and said, I've got him, I've got him, and I said, Whereabouts, and he said, Out to the left further, so I immediately turned the machine to the left, slide slipped it left, and that was how we found the, John Campbell, the American, off Kingara. We got ourselves set up very quickly. We, previously I think the two boys in the back had already got wetsuits on and got themselves organised for a winch. We immediately went into a winch and the aircraft's equipped with a thing called a radalt which I can probably show to you a bit later on. The radalt is a radio altimeter which gives you your, it measures height above whatever surface you're over. I set myself 100 foot for the, on the radalt for a, a winching height and we came over the, over to John Campbell and Barry and David went into the winch. Barry was conning me into position, I was trying to hold the machine. When you're trying to hover out over water you've got no reference to hover the aircraft. Basically what you'll do is pick a blade of grass or a leaf on a tree or some point and hold that point in the same spot in the windscreen or in the

chin bubble of the aircraft and that's, that's what you use as your hover reference. Of course, out over the water, with the sea moving there's, there's nothing sitting nice and still that you can hover by so I was totally reliant on Barry conning me into position all the time. He was continually talking me, Move left, move right, move forward, move back, whatever. That was very, very hard work, I, I can't say it enough I suppose because of those sort of winds you're not really hovering as such, you're trying to match the speed of the aircraft with the speed of the wind to hold the same position over, over a point. We did that and I noted on the radalt that it would go from 100 feet and drop right down to 10 feet at times as waves were going underneath us so I was a bit sort of in awe that we had 90 foot waves passing underneath us. At one stage we were sitting there, because of those sort of waves Barry had advised me that he had to winch out a lot of winch cable, a lot of extra cable into the water because Dave was going up and down these waves and there was no way we could keep a little bit of slack on the cable, you just had to give him all the cable and leave him to his own devices basically. And I don't know how long, a couple of minutes or a couple of seconds, but I could sense something building, I could see something building, I wasn't particularly, didn't see a wall of water but I, I said to Barry, How much cable have you got paid out, and he said, I've got

heaps, you know, I said, All right, I've got to climb. I pulled the machine up to about 160 feet on the radalt and there was just like this wall of water went under us, the radalt came up to 10 feet, it stayed there for probably 2 or 300 metres of water and then just dropped back down to 160 feet again. So that was a little bit exciting there for a few minutes. We, not long after that I, I'd, after that wave had gone I came back down to 100 feet and we finished the winch, got John Campbell on board, at the top of the winch they had a winch freeze. I tried to recycle power to the winch. That didn't seem to fix it. I tried again and Barry gave me the command to recycle. It's a practice with our winching, winching procedures but I'd already done it twice just on the, off my own bat to try and get this thing to work. I recycled again on Barry's command the third time, still it wouldn't work. Barry advised me that John Campbell, well, his words were, We're gunna lose this bloke, and he, he said that he was slipping, starting to slip out of the harness. Barry leant out, as far as I know he leant out and bear hugged John Campbell and somehow dragged him in. I recycled the winch for a fourth time and we got a response out of it then so they were able to complete the winch. I still had basically a whole position with 85 knot winds for me to, normally once they're at the door we can start and move slowly away and start to accelerate while they're being pulled in the door but

I couldn't do that because I was very conscious of the fact I still had two people outside the aircraft and if I was going to start and fly forward and increase my speed they were looking at greater air speeds against their own bodies and, you know, I could've run a danger of, of losing them off, off the step due to the wind or anything. So I had to hold position there until Barry confirmed that they were inside. Once they were in the door and he was, he's told me they were secure I started to move forward. I punched up Mallacoota on the G.P.S. and started to turn in that direction and head back that way which was virtually about 10 or 15 degrees off the direction of the wind. I would say that the wind was coming from about 260 degrees. Mallacoota was about 275 so we were virtually into the head wind all the way. While Barry was securing the hook back outside the aircraft and closing the rear door I was starting to accelerate, took the machine up to cruising speed of 120 knots, checked the G.P.S. and we had 65 nautical miles to get back into Mallacoota. That equates to about 135, 140 K's out to sea that, where we were. I hadn't realised that before that point that we were that far out at that stage, it had taken us such a short time to get out there, because hindsight I realise that we had such a strong tail wind it got us out there in minutes. That was pretty much it from there, from there on. The, the trip back in of course was very slow. I had 80 minutes of fuel and I

had 40 minutes to get back to Mallacoota according to the G.P.S. I was starting to correlate the clock, the fuel gauge and the G.P.S. on the way back in. I'd flown for half an hour at one stage. I'd used up 40 minutes of the 80 minutes fuel I had and I still had 40 minutes to get back into Mallacoota. So a few of those figures were not, starting not to add up. As we were getting closer and closer we could start and see land come into sight, Gabo Island was in sight, the figures were going the wrong way. We were starting to look like we were gunna run out of fuel before we got to land. I had, had to about, I think it's, at that stage I had 30 minutes of fuel on board and about 35 minutes to get back to Mallacoota so it wasn't looking particularly healthy. A lot of, a lot of things were starting to run through my mind. I was getting very very worried of course but I was also starting to try and work out what do I do here, how do I do this. I'd remembered from, through a bit of experience that if I lower the power requirements on the aircraft I can just ..... them off just gradually maintain the same air speed but not be putting as high a demand on the fuel. So I started doing that. Just millimetre by millimetre lowered the collective, reducing the power but maintaining the same air speed. Another plan I came up with which I did put into practice was I, as Gabo Island came down out to our right I thought I'll, I'll beat this wind I'll use it to my advantage. So I kept

Gabo Island coming in on the right and when I thought it was the right moment I turned the aircraft right and we were about 8 miles out to sea at that stage and I think it had, took us about 15, 20 seconds and we were over, over the edge of Gabo Island just by using the wind to blow us across there. I then hugged the coastline all the way around, keeping an eye on the fuel gauges. As we crossed over the Mallacoota inlet with the township about a mile in front of us the fuel warning light on number one engine came on and stayed on and I thought that's it, we won't be going to the airport, we're going to the footy oval in town. We got over the inlet, over the edge of town and I just went straight into the oval and, and landed on the oval. As, as the wheels were touching down the fuel gauge light on number, or the warning light on number 2 was starting to flicker at that stage. With these aircraft, when those lights come on you've got five minutes left and then you've exhausted the fuel. So we ran pretty tight and that was basically the conditions. I think in fact that a couple of times there we had wind gusts of around 110 knots which had, which had really mucked up all the calculations. We landed on the oval, I distinctly remember that Dave, Barry and myself got out of the aircraft once I'd shut it down, we walked about 10 metres in front of it and the three of us stood there in a, in almost like a huddle, shaking like leaves and didn't say a word but just

stood there for a couple of minutes and just tried to settle down a bit. And we'd already made radio calls about what had happened as far as the rescue and that we required an ambulance down at the Mallacoota Oval. When the radio ambulance turned up a few minutes after we'd landed Dave went off and had a shower and he settled down and Barry and I helped load up John Campbell in the ambulance. As I, as we did that something else that I, I still can't get over it at times, there was about 300 people there 'cause it's holiday time, there was a lot of people at Mallacoota, there was about 3 or 400 people standing around the oval just watching what was going on and as we pulled, pulled John Campbell out of the machine and put him on the stretcher and put him in the ambulance they all broke out in cheers and clapping and that was a bit of a lump to the throat. We then stood down, advised AusSAR over the phone just to tidy up any loose ends there and they said, Yeah, fine, knock off for the night, we want you in the morning again. We spent the night at the Mallacoota Police Station. We were up the next morning, did all our inspections on the aircraft, prepared, and they asked us to head out, and I think the first thing was to go and look for the Winston Churchill. Again, as we were on the way out to that they then diverted us, asked us to go over to look for one that had come up missing that they hadn't heard from overnight, the B-52. We started to head in that

direction, again with G.P.S. positions and then we were re-diverted from that to assist the Southcare Rescue helicopter, remove people from a yacht called the Midnight Special and we were given the position on that. I didn't hear anything of Southcare on the radio during that time. We headed out to Midnight Special which was 55 miles out to sea from memory. Got there and found the yacht and there were four persons sitting on the yacht there. Went into, again got ourselves set up, Dave volunteered to go back down on the wire. He said, Well, I did it last night, I might as well continue with that. Barry was, stayed as the operator. Got into a position over, to winch the Midnight Special and commenced to winch. Conditions at that time compared to Sunday night were about half. We, were down to about 55 knot winds, swells up to about 50 or 60 feet. So, in, in a way, we sort of commented on the way out to Midnight Special, we thought that this was a bit like a mill pond compared to the night before, even though the, the conditions were really bad on Monday morning it was nothin' like Sunday night. We winched up three of those men off the yacht. The procedure we used was that Barry would put Dave in the water at the back of the yacht. It had been, the mast had been broken, sails ripped, there were bits of wire, sails, ropes, all sorts of things, all around the yacht, we just couldn't, and with the swell we couldn't put Dave onto the yacht itself to winch. So we put him

into the back of water, or in the water at the back of the yacht. He would then call one of those blokes into the water, they'd come across to him, hook them up, bring them up and then do the next one. After we'd done three Barry said to me, Go for a fly, and I said, We've only got three, what do you mean go for a fly, and he said, Go for a fly, Dave needs a bit of a spell. And at that stage I looked back and I saw Dave basically vomiting clear salt, sea water and he could hardly breath, he was just about totally out of breath. So I did, basically a circuit around the yacht just give him a couple of minutes, he settled down and Barry checked with him, I heard him verbally check with him, Are you O.K, are you right to go, and he said, Yeah, yeah. So we went down and we got the last bloke off the yacht and then went back into Mallacoota into the football oval again where they had Red Cross had set up a bit of a centre to look after the people. After that one we contacted AusSAR again, What was the next task, and they sent us out to do a search pattern for the B-52. We were given a search pattern to do there. No, sorry, we, yeah, we went out for a beacon actually for the B-52. We saw the Channel 2 helicopter out over that area and between the two of us we did a lot of criss-crossing in search patterns trying to pick up where this, exactly where this beacon was. It was a very weak signal and we really couldn't locate it. We tried all sorts of search patterns, detuning our radios

and everything to, to try and narrow it right down to a particular spot. We, I, I believe we got to an area of probably about 50 square metres but we couldn't find anything. There was no debris, no flotsum, no nothing floating on the water so we just didn't find a thing. It was just bare sea, sea water and nothing else. After we spent time on that we again needed another refuel. We went back in to Mallacoota, refuelled the aircraft, rang AusSAR and they asked us to go out and commence search for B-52. They'd organised the number of aircraft, certain search areas and we were given one of them and went out and started on that. We got that three quarters done and we needed a refuel and we also had a message from the airwing here that there was a relief pilot available that had arrived at Merimbula and was available. So we made the decision that we'd go to Merimbula, get some fuel at Merimbula and change pilots, 'cause by that time I was getting pretty close to needing a break, which we did, swapped over pilots and then I remained at Merimbula for about an hour and a half while the other pilot finished off that search area. Then they came back, refuelled put me on board, we went down to Mallacoota to do a bit more recruit change and on the way were advised by AusSAR that, that we were stood down, we were free to go home. That's pretty much it for 2 days - - -

Q15 O.K.

A - - - in a nutshell.

Q16 Now you had a couple of bouts of cramping in - - -

A Oh, I was getting a bit of, yeah, very tight. You get very tense I suppose when you, when you're hovering and under those conditions it was, I think that the outside air temperature was about 3 degrees and I was sweating like mad.

Q17 Mmm.

A But, yeah, I was cramping up a little bit but not too bad. I was certainly getting very tired, or, not very tired but getting fairly weary with the the intensity of, of what was involved.

Q18 Mmm.

A There's, it was quite a high pressure job. And we've - - -

Q19 Mmm.

A - - - we've never experienced anything like this here, I've certainly never even experienced conditions like that in, in the 12 years I've been at the airwing. It's certainly one out of the box I suppose you'd say.

Q20 Now so far as the operation ..... rescues, did you at any time as the captain of the aircraft it was a very dangerous situation, did you ever consider that, consider that you shouldn't go or - - -

A On the way down from Latrobe Valley to Mallacoota on the Sunday afternoon, having that sort of ground speed and the conditions that were involved I was a bit concerned. I was getting a bit nervous about just what we were going into.

Q21 Mmm.

A The, I suppose, I don't know how to say it but the way I look at is that there was a job to be done, we're the people that are trained to do it and we have a look at it at least, and I think we owe it to anyone that's in trouble to at least have a bit of a look.

Q22 Mmm.

A I was prepared to, to have a go. The cloud base was, wasn't too bad out over the water and we, were operating between 100 and 500 feet over the water and the cloud base was 1000 and up so there were, there were rain showers moving through the area down to a, a cloud base of 1,000 feet and at other times you, you'd have no cloud for 5,000 feet - - -

Q23 Mmm.

A - - - as the weather was moving through. I suppose, yeah, well, I was certainly worried, I was certainly concerned about it and I was very much on edge, you know, the engines on these aircraft can be a bit susceptible to, to flaming out with water ingestion and with those sort of conditions the amount of spray and spin drift off the, off the waves was phenomenal. I was very concerned that I could have a flame out at any time with those sort of conditions. I just worried generally about the whole thing I think. You know, worried about Dave going down into those conditions and into that sort of water, worried that, worried I suppose about Barry being able to maintain a position

in the, in the back door because at times we were getting buffeted around and knocked about fairly severely and there was hard work just tryin' to keep that machine - - -

Q24 Mmm.

A - - - in that position or keep it stabilised sometimes.

Q25 So there was certainly some risks involved in the whole thing?

A Oh, yeah, yeah, it was a very high risk incident - - -

Q26 Yeah.

A - - - for sure, extremely high risk. We have a saying here I think too, at times we go to some of these sort of jobs, nothing a severe as what this has been as I say but, we sometimes have the question, well, who rescues the rescuers, you know, if we were to go down. I think most of us do have the attitude that with the experience that we have over the years and the knowledge we build up we have a look, we give it our best shot.

Q27 Yeah.

A At any time if any one of us, any one of the three of says, No, we can't do this, I'm not comfortable, I'm not happy, or I, I'm just no way, then that's it, we, we'll have to, we pull out. In that situation on the Sunday night I think in a way the weather caught us out a little bit.

Q28 Mmm.

A I, I would say that we were out in that position of that yacht and that man overboard in such a short time we didn't really, it didn't gel on us right at that moment just how quickly we'd, we'd arrived and how, what sort of circumstances we were in. By that time of course, we're there so - - -

Q29 Mmm.

A - - - you've got to, I think in a way, push the fear off to one side and concentrate on what you're doing.

Q30 Mmm.

A And that's what's gunna save you is to concentrate on the job you do, follow the procedures you know and - - -

Q31 Mmm.

A - - - use every bit of training experience you've got and it should get you through.

Q32 Just for the layman, could you explain the procedure if a winchman or if the aircraft suffers some difficulty in the, when there's a crewman on the end of a winch. What actions can be taken?

A Depends on the, depending on the, the failure that you might have of the aircraft or the incident that happens. The winch is equipped where either the winch operator at the rear door or myself as piloting command are able to fire a, a pyrotechnic device and that will instantly cut the cable. So in those circumstances if, if we had an engine failure out there, I would have had no option but to cut the cable and that would've left

two out in the water. And probably two of us going down in a sinking helicopter as well. If it's extremely high risk and, you know, there's a chance of failure of anything at any time but that's the only option you've got? If it's, if it's a case of an engine failure I still have one good one and I can fly away. We may be able to try to recover our wind ..... but generally everything will happen so fast that you, you're not going to have any options at all and you've only got the one.

Q33 In ideal conditions if you have a flame out and you're on one engine you can, the aircraft will fly fairly well?

A The aircraft will fly quite happily on one engine, yeah.

Q34 In the conditions you were in, if you were minus an engine it would've been somewhat more difficult.

A Yeah. I would suggest that if we had've, had've lost one engine out there with those winds on one engine the aircraft will probably cruise at about 90 knots, 95 knots and if we're having a, a head wind of up to 110 knots at times then we'll, we're going to be going backwards which means further out to sea.

Q35 Mmm.

A So there's, if we'd have lost your engine there's a good chance we wouldn't be here now.

Q36 O.K.

A Simple as that.

Q37 Is the aircraft equipped with floats or - - -

A No, there's no flotation equipment on the aircraft.

Q38 Right.

A That's not required in Australia due to the fact that we've got two engines - - -

Q39 Right.

A - - - basically.

Q40 O.K. At any stage on your return trip to Mallacoota on the first occasion when you were having problems with your fuel did you ever discuss a ditching procedure between the three of you?

A We did, well, I did make mention of the fact that we may have to ditch the aircraft, we're running out of fuel fairly rapidly. I did discuss it, I did mention it to the, to Dave and Barry. They were well aware of it. I had no idea until a couple of days later when we were back here that Dave and Barry had actually been getting organised to ditch.

Q41 Mmm.

A I had no idea that they'd been hooking themselves together and, and had the raft ready and that. I think they probably didn't say anything because I was a bit busy out the front - - -

Q42 Mmm.

A - - - basically.

Q43 O.K.

A Mmm.

Q44 That's fine. Dave?

Q45 When, when you did your initial flight checks did you do, or obtain any weather briefings?

A Yeah. Standard procedure here is at the start of the day we, we'll obtain weather forecasts and those weather forecasts generally last 12 hours. But they're only issued by the weather bureau at certain times and I think one of the first times in the day is around about 6.00am local time. The next time's about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. So at 9 o'clock that morning when we started work the weather forecast that I, I obtained was the 6.00am one and really didn't see anything untoward in that. I didn't study the weather for the Mallacoota area or anything really because of the fact that we were from Metropolitan Patrol and there were no requests for us to go on a search at that stage of the day. So our day went on fairly as standard until late that afternoon.

Q46 Were they, the weather forecasts, indicating any type of wind strengths, any, either a gale warning or a storm warning?

A The aviation forecast won't issue storm warnings or gale warnings they'll issue a direction in wind speed and they generally issue up to a maximum of 42 knots. Beyond that they will have some sort of warning about severe winds but no wind speeds above 42, is generally the way that we will get those. Honestly, I, I can't remember the forecast for the day. I didn't even think

about hanging on to it. It went in the bin a couple of days later, or the afternoon when we got back I didn't even think about it at that time.

Q47 That's all right. From your point of view do you have any recommendations so far as future yacht races, not the organisation of yacht races but from your point of view in rescues, identification, you know, that sort of thing?

A Yeah. I think, I don't think there's too much I could say, I, as far as the E.P.I.R.B's go the, the, they have a new frequency that's come in and it's 406 megahertz and I've, I've learnt that with that frequency they can add identifiers to it and that sort of thing. Now, I think that's probably one of the best things that could come in recently. To be able to, for the satellites to be able to pick up an E.P.I.R.B. or aircraft be able to pick up an E.P.I.R.B on that frequency, listen to it and hear that that's the yacht B-52 or whatever or - - -

Q48 Mmm.

A - - - it would be very good I think, well, in this sort of incidence it would've been extremely helpful. Also mentioned to us at one stage that they had about 9 E.P.I.R.B's going off at the same time. They're all in the one area and they didn't have a clue who was who, what was what - - -

Q49 Mmm.

A - - - which does make life difficult too. Because normally over the years all we ever get one yacht sinking so there's one E.P.I.R.B. and that's pretty to work, work by. As far as equipment and that goes I, I don't feel that I can say terribly much. I'm, I'm not a yacht person.

Q50 Mmm.

A I'm not very big on the water at all and the equipment that they, they had I couldn't comment on. Of course, I've seen media reports and things about bottoms falling out of life rafts and, and other bits and pieces but I think for those sort of conditions you'd have to have a second yacht with all the right sort of gear to protect you in, when those conditions come up and they were one out of the box. There was no other way to describe it. They were just something horrendous that I don't think anybody would believe would've been possible in a way.

Q51 Mmm.

A So - - -

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q52 O.K?

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSON

Yeah.

Q53 Nothing further?

A I can't think of anything further.

Q54 O.K. The time is now 11.42. This interview is concluded.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED