

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q1 This is an electronically recorded interview between Detective Senior Constable Stuart Gray and Mr Robert Badenach at the Hobart Police Station on Monday, the 4th of January, 1999. Also present and seated to my left is Senior Constable David Upston, from the New South Wales Water Police. As I've already explained to you, Mr Badenach, we're making inquiries in relation to the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, and in particular your position as race director at this end, so to speak. If I could just get you to please state your full name?

A Robert John Badenach.

Q2 And your date of birth?

A 22nd of February, 1944.

Q3 And your date of birth, sorry, your address?

A

Q4 Your address?

A 34 Red Chapel Avenue, Sandy Bay in Tasmania.

Q5 O.K. I failed to state the time which is 10 minutes past 11.00. O.K. I'm just wondering if it's possible if you could give us some background in regards to your own involvement with the Tasmanian Yacht Club?

A Sure. I'm, I've been a member of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania for 34 years. I've recently completed a, a stint as, I joined the, was elected to the board in 1988 and I served as rear commodore or vice commodore and commodore of the club, and at, at the conclusion of my term as commodore the then race director, Rowen

Johnson decided after 25 Sydney Hobart's that he would, was going to step down and I, I was shanghaied into the position which, I really didn't mind doing, but - - -
Q6 Right.

A - - - so, I've been the race director for the race from the Hobart end since, this is my second race. I commenced duties in the, for the 1997 race.

Q7 O.K. Now, so far as sailing experience?

A I have been sailing since I was 13 years of age. I currently own a motor boat and I also have a share in a, in a racing yacht called, Apoxy Warrior.

Q8 O.K. Now, if I could just get you to, to explain to us on tape, basically your role as the race director from the Hobart side of things.

A Right. Well, our, basically our role is that, is that we work in conjunction with the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia who, who are the organisers of the race. Our responsibility is that we finish the race and that after the start and after the morning sked, the 3.00am sked on the 27th, the race, control of the race moves to Hobart and that is run from the, our board room at the club, which is set up with phones, radio communications to monitor the race. That centre is manned 24 hours a day and in that, in, in the actual race centre itself is the actual race director, Phil Thompson from the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, there is Mark Robertson who is their computer guru, he's in there. Howard Elliot, who's on the, is also on

the race committee, he's in there, plus Sam Hughes, as we affectionately call him, Safety Sam from our, he's from Ausmar in, in Canberra, and that's how the race is monitored. We do have a radio room which we have two radio operators manning the radio, but we do have difficulty with communications with the radio relay ship when she's up on the New South Wales coast, we've, we've got to address the problem we've got with our, with our antenna, I think that needs to, but, but that's relayed via any communications that we had during the, during the race, so for safety matters, they were, were relayed direct to the club via, via phone from Canberra, so that the whole situation was, was monitored in Hobart. That, that, that side of the race we're also responsible for finishing the race, we man the finishing box, we provide patrol boats to, to, to berth the crews, moor the boats, and generally, and we also run an information centre on the, on the docks which provides information to the competitors. And that's, that's our, that's our major role, as I said we work in close co-operation with the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia.

Q9 Right. So far as the actual race itself, and there was a, as you know there were six, you know, deceased so to speak - - -

A Mm.

Q9 - - - and two are still missing at sea. Are you able to tell me how the situation worked down here with next

of kin, from your side of things?

A Yes. I can tell you that. It, that I on the Sunday night, well, as events started to unfold on that, that Sunday, I, I spoke to, I spoke to a, the representative, perhaps if I can just go back one
- - -

Q10 Yeah.

A - - - there's a, there's a sheet, there's a crew list, which is provided - - -

Q11 Yeah.

A - - - and on that sheet there's the next of kin, a contact point for that person.

Q12 Right.

A So, rather than ringing 10 crew members you ring one person. On the, on the Sunday night I rang the representative of Sword Of Orion, Winston Churchill, I, there's, all the boats that were, were, put sort of in a, which we considered to be in sort of, some sort of trouble.

Q13 Right.

A We, we had a, we had some sheets of paper up on the, up on the wall of the, the race centre which we had, you know, urgent, less urgent, you know.

Q14 Yeah.

A So, we had three groups.

Q15 Yeah.

A We were swapping between them and that's, that's basically the, the contact was made with, with a

representative of all these boats that we considered that, that were, that were, you know, in some, some, some trouble. The, I didn't, my sheet, I made a detailed note of sheets and times when we, and they, they are in the control, they, they're with the race director, they're in Sydney now, but - - -

Q16 All right.

A - - - but they're, I kept a, kept a sheet of who I contacted and we, we wrote on these sheets on the wall as well what time we made contact. But I did speak to, in fact I spoke to, to John Winning, the cousin, I think, of Richard Winning, and he had some misinformation that they'd been winched, that the crew had been winched out of their life rafts and they were safe - - -

Q17 Mm.

A - - - which was not correct, and I had another conversation with him to tell him, explain to him what the position was.

Q18 All right.

A And the next morning I, under instructions from Howard Elliott in the race centre, I rang, I rang Mrs Guy, and after she had been notified by the police and officially informed from the race centre - - -

Q19 Right.

A - - - that her husband was dead, and I did the same thing with, with Mrs Skeggs.

Q20 Right.

A The other, the other crew members in, well, I think they were dealt with by CYC in Sydney.

Q21 O.K. Now, do you recall if that, one of those boats that was in concern was the Business Post Naiad?

A Yes. Yes.

Q22 All right. O.K. Now, you said that you contacted representatives of each of those boats, was that done after or was that, after the storm or during the storm or -?

A During the storm.

Q23 Right, O.K.

A I, I'm not, I'm not, my notes were, as you can probably appreciate, it was fairly hectic - - -

Q24 Yeah.

A - - - I'm not sure, and I'm not a 100 per cent sure whether I spoke to somebody from the Business Post Naiad on the Sunday night, I certainly spoke to them the next morning.

Q25 Right.

A I, I had two conversations with Mark Guy.

Q26 Yeah.

A Who was the son of the, and wasn't on the race, and I also had a father, David Hansen - - -

Q27 Yeah.

A - - - came to the club to see me and he's, he's an ex club member, he had a son on the boat.

Q28 O.K.

A And I spoke to him about it, but at the time when I did

this, I, I had to make a decision the second time and I'd already fobbed Mark Guy off the first time, and the second time, the fact I was talking to Scott Dunn from the Water Police - - -

Q29 Right.

A - - - and I said, "What do I do?", I said, "I just don't want to tell him, tell him that", you know - - -

Q30 Mm.

A - - - I said, so I just had to tell, I told him that there were two people dead on the boat.

Q31 Mm.

A And we at that stage, we, we didn't know who, and - - -

Q32 Yeah.

A - - - and that's, so that was the communication was, that, that was made on the last Monday morning.

Q33 Right.

A The following morning.

Q34 O.K. Now, so far as you said that in the control room there's a person from Ausmar, is that correct?

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q35 Now, what's he's role or her role exactly?

A He, his role is basically that if, if there's a problem, then he, he gets in touch with Canberra, and search, search procedures put, put into place.

Q36 All right.

A And, and, and, and he was there and he, he was, and I, I, I was there the day, when he spoke to the father of

the missing crew member off Winston Churchill - - -

Q37 Right.

A - - - when he told him that they were calling the search off.

Q38 All right.

A understand then, you're learning these procedures as you go along, that it, that it is their duty to tell the family that they're calling the search off and it's the police's job to - - -

Q39 Right.

A - - - to tell the next of kin of, of death. So -

Q40 Yeah. Now, so far as rescue ability down here in Hobart, what set up for rescue ability here, like, vessels and that sort of thing, if the, suppose that storm was further down the coast and, and closer towards Tasmania, is there a rescue set up here?

A Well, I, I, I couldn't, I can't, couldn't answer that. I mean, I think that's the state emergency service or whatever here - - -

Q41 All right.

A - - - but obviously it would, the similar procedure would be - - -

Q42 O.K.

A - - - from Canberra that that they would come in on, come in on this.

Q43 O.K.

A I, I mean that sort of, I think you probably have to talk to, to the Water Police about that.

Q44 O.K. Is there any questions you'd like to ask?

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE STEVENSON

No, there's no questions at this stage. I think the interview's going well.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q45 Is there anything else that, sort of you would like to tell us so far as your views on the whole race?

A Well, I, I, I can only comment that as I said, it's my second race.

Q46 Yeah.

A But I thought the professionalism of the, the crew, the, the, in the, in the, in the actual, the, the radio room, the, the race centre was - - -

Q47 Mm.

A - - - Phil Thomson, you know, the people I mentioned earlier, Sam Hughes, was just absolutely first class, and the way, the way they handled it, there was sort of no panic - - -

Q48 Mm.

A - - - it was all done in an orderly way. We were, you know, very, very a, well, when we, the crew member went over off Kingura, we, we got the phone call to say he'd been picked up and the, pick up in the, by a police helicopter, there was, there was elation, but unfortunately that elation was short lived for probably no more than half a minute, and a call came through that there was a man overboard off Sword Of Orion, and that was Glyn Charles, and that's what just the mood

sort of, you know -

Q49 Yeah.

A One of despair, it was, it was, it was dark and getting onto, it was getting dark and, you know, just the, that sort of - - -

Q50 Mm.

A - - - you know, it was just, you could see that suddenly we'd achieved something and then suddenly it, it - - -

Q51 Yeah.

A - - - there was another kick in the backside. But it was, but as I said, I've got, I've got no, and that's the second, as I said, my second race, and I think that, you know, well we've been doing it for 54 years now, and even the, the backup team down there, there in the, in the race, the race centre which is run by John Honeyset from our club, was absolutely excellent, and they've got phones ringing constantly - - -

Q52 Mm.

A - - - and, you know, the radio operators in our radio room down there, they're sort of all, you know, they're all very good at it - - -

Q53 Yeah.

A - - - and it was, we had a couple of problems with last year with one of our radio operators, he's not there this year, and it's all sort of, and they're all properly qualified radio, trained radio operators, trained by a fellow called, Mike Cuminson, and, you

know, they've got, they've all got their radio operators licences, and they're, and he only put the ones in that he thought were, had the, the good voice for the radio.

Q54 Mm.

A You know, you know, I could have nothing but, but compliments for the, and bouquets for the, for those that worked down there.

Q55 Yeah.

A And they worked under, and it's a difficult job in that, at that, in the race centre where the crews can, wives can ring up and make inquiries about, about the family and, you know, they were fielding some tough questions, in fact we put a special line through into, into the race centre itself, and for any questions on Winston Churchill, for example - - -

Q56 Yeah.

A - - - or, or Business Post Naiad were, were fielded by us in that particular, in that room rather than leave it to the, to our general helpers.

Q57 Right.

A And you mentioned before there was some problem with the communications aerial?

A No. That is a, that is, there's not a problem with our aerial - - -

Q58 All right.

A - - - it's just, where the aerial is located - - -

Q59 Yeah.

A - - - it, it's, you can't, we can't, we couldn't hear the, we can't hear the radio relay ship until she gets further down the coast.

Q60 All right.

A And I think it's something that we, we do have a club member Jeff Boys who runs Tascoast Radio from Midway Point and he gets a much better reception down there

- - -

Q61 Yeah.

A - - - than we do, do in the city, we've got to get, we've got to get the, the, the antenna up, up higher

- - -

Q62 All right.

A - - - and if we can get it on the top of Mount Wellington, it would be marvellous. So, that's something we will no doubt be looking at. Looking at as a result of this race. But it wouldn't have, wouldn't have made any difference - - -

Q63 O.K.

A - - - because Young Endeavour was too far away to communicate with us. Her point of communication was with, with, via the coast stations up on the New South Wales coast.

Q64 Mm. O.K. I've got nothing more to ask you.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE STEVENSON

No, I have nothing further to ask.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q65 The time on my watch is now 11.24am. This interview is

now concluded.

A O.K.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED