

SENIOR CONSTABLE STEVENSON

Q1 This is an electronically recorded interview between Senior Constable Jason Stevenson and Stephen Ross Walker at the Eden Police Station on Monday, the 28th day of December, 1998. Also present seated to my left is Detective Senior Constable Stewart Gray. Mr Walker, do you agree there's no-one else present in this room apart from us three?

A That's true.

Q2 Do you agree the time now according to my wrist watch is 2.22pm?

A Yes.

Q3 Do you agree that prior to the commencement of this interview I told you that I wanted to talk to you about your involvement in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race?

A Yes.

Q4 And do you agree that I told you that the interview would be recorded on three cassette tapes - - -

A Yes.

Q4 - - - and at the end of the interview you would be given one of those cassette tapes for you to keep?

A That's correct.

Q5 Prior to getting into the interview I'll just get you to read this paragraph that's typed out in front of you. Can you read it to yourself just so that you understand what the requirements of your statement are.

A This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to

give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it and if it is tendered in evidence I shall be liable to prosecution if I wilfully say anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true. I am 45 years of age.

Q6 Can you state your full name for me, please?

A Stephen Ross Walker.

Q7 And your date of birth?

A 1st of the 10th, 1953.

Q8 And your age now?

A 45.

Q9 And your current home address?

A 84 Jackson Street, Wynyard, Tasmania.

Q10 Who do you live there with?

A My wife, Della.

Q11 Are you employed?

A I've got my own sailmaking business.

Q12 Sorry?

A Sailmaking business.

Q13 So you're self-employed?

A employ four people.

Q14 I understand you were involved in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race aboard a boat called Business Post Naiad. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q15 Can you tell me who the owner of that boat is?

A Mr Bruce Guy. some background into

that. Bruce Guy and I have known each other for 20 years, we've done a lot of sailing together over the last 15 years and since he got his own boat, Business Post Naiad - - -

Q16 Yep.

A - - - I've basically been his sailmaker and probably his 2IC on the boat, he usually takes one watch and I take the other. We've done a lot of sailing together.

Q17 How long have you been sailing yourself, personally?

A I've been sailing since I was eight, so, 37 years

Q18 Quite some time?

A Yep.

Q19 Have you been involved in this Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race?

A This was to have been my fifth. I've done five west coasters, five Melbourne to Devonports and four Tasmania races. I've sailed in about 20 Australian championships and represented Australia

Q20 Fair bit of experience?

A Yes.

Q21 Now, if you could I'll just get you to go over now in your own words, basically from the start of the race when you left Sydney to the rescue point. Just, if you can go into as much as detail as to what happened. Take your time, there's no rush. Tell us as much as you possibly can.

A

Well, the boat came up, Bruce and five others brought the boat up, they left on Friday before Christmas, Friday week before Christmas and four of us flew up on Christmas afternoon and basically the boat was well prepared he'd been working on it since July, all the equipment was up to scratch and sails, just about everything on board, Bruce had been over it, he's meticulous in his preparation and the crew put in a lot of time and effort and expense to get the boat to the start line. The boat was At the start of the race, we got a reasonable start for a 40 footer, we got out through the heads without any problems, middle of the fleet, probably about 50th spot, we went out through the heads and set spinnaker, carried that for, 'til about 6 o'clock that night, three-quarter spinnaker, the wind had started to freshen from the north east and it looked like blowing the spinnaker so we dropped back to an ounce and a half continued with that and eventually the breeze went around to the south west in which case we changed to, got the spinnaker off, got the number four genoa on, and, well prior to that actually we'd been running square with the number one heavy and the mainsail and then as the breeze went into the west and south west we went to the number 4 two and the main, and we sailed like that for nearly a day until Sunday the 27th, about midday it started to freshen quite hard, we

dropped the number four and put, firstly we had the number four and three reefs in the main, put three reefs in the mainsail, and we dropped the number four triple reef number three as the new front from the, the new westerly came through Bass Strait, it was another western front, there was a second one, visibility was way down, initially around about 35, 45, which was quite manageable it just continued to build over the next couple of hours, eventually the, we were wondering, there was four of us on deck, we were discussing what to do, because we knew we had too much sail, triple reef the mainsail, which is the same size as storm trysail, and is made of kevlar which doesn't normally like being to any great extent, eventually we got a hell of a strong gust and it got heavily flogged and the top batten flew out, which meant it was going to flog itself to pieces quickly, so we dropped it, which mean that it for a short while, while we lashed the mainsail to the boom and secured the boom and centred the boat and got all that then we put the storm jib up and was just sailing under the storm jib. At this stage it was probably blowing 50, 55 knots. The breeze continued to build and the seas continued to build, like when you looked to windward it would just sting your eyes badly, there was often rain squalls there and it was just it

was just a similar experience. The seas were building and starting to break, the boat was safe, you know, we weren't, we didn't feel as though there were any problems, but conditions were deteriorating to the point where they were nearly the worst I've been in, with the storm jib on we doing six to eight knots most of the time, which is fairly fast for a small sail, twice the storm jib and we got big squalls and bad waves that popped out of the track but we managed to get, some of that probably was quite set right and another time was when we just got blown away by a big wave and we were at the wrong angle and it just popped it out, we managed to get forward and get that, settle back down without any drama, meanwhile we were running bareheaded, while we were doing that, I suppose at this stage we were still racing, it continued to build until it got to around 60, 65 knots and by that point in time the storm jib was holding the boat leaned over at 45 degrees well and truly under water and the boat was, really was overpowered to blazes, that's the smallest sail we had on the boat so, eventually we ummed and ahed and then, eventually took it right off, which we knew could be a dangerous manoeuvre, 'cause you've got only three or four knots generated by bare poles and if you do get a big bad breaking wave often you can't steer your way through it and we got the storm jib off, we got all the sails down below, everything stowed, that

wasn't any sort of danger, the mainsail was still lashed to the boom, the boom was lashed to the boat was in imminent damage. There was four on deck, I think Rob, Tony, Phil Skeggs and I'm not sure who else was there. I'd been on deck for four and half hours, from 1 o'clock to about 5.30 and I'd done most of the sail changes and that myself, well, with the aid of one or two others but I'd been involved in all of them, I was pretty much knackered, so I've gone below to get some rest, it was going to be a long night. And I've just got my waterproof top up and a wave hit us and the boat slid sideways and did a, I was down below so I couldn't see the boat did a 360 degree turn, during the turn the boat went to leeward and stuck in the water, we were just thrown through the air in the cabin, one of the bunks was broken with
..... I distinctly remember it going dark as the cabin, as the cabin windows went under water and the water coming in through the cabin, not a lot, but just enough, the boat virtually just continued in a 360 degree roll fairly steadily, lucky that I was, you know, in a reasonably confined spot so I could sort of jam myself in a bit too much. The boat came up, we'd broken the mast, we'd broken the first spreaders and we'd also broken the second spreaders. The boom was still attached, the main part of the bulk of the mast was over the side, and four people were over the side of the yacht

attached by their lifelines, we all rushed on deck and pulled them straight, straight back on board and then we got the runner, the runner rope onto the winch and just winched the mast back up hard on the the mast in itself weighs 200 kilos, it was atrocious conditions, we got it up the side of the boat and then physically lifted it onto the boat and lashed it all down, we were still the boom was still attached and the boom was still secured to the centre of the boat that was all the top eight feet section of the mast between the first and second spreader was attached by a bit of aluminium track and the halyards at the first spreader and that was just leaning down against the other mast and it was just hitting it occasionally making a bit of a clanging noise but nothing we got all the ropes and lines back on board first to make sure there was no sheets in the ropes so if started the motor we wouldn't get rope around the propeller, did all that, and got the motor going after a little bit of difficulty, there was too much water in the boat, there was chaos, all the plates had just gone flying out of the cupboards, the cupboard doors were blown to pieces, they were sliding doors there was food all over the place and frozen food in the freezer, we must have had about 50 prepacked frozen meals, they all just came flying out and went

everywhere, greasy food everywhere, it really was pretty chaotic down below, two bunks were smashed and apart from, and also the main companionway bulkhead had sprung away from the hull and also delaminated the centre on the port side and there was a deck sprung away from the the main structural bulkhead near the, where the mast goes was all sound, the boat wasn't leaking except where, a window had been smashed when the mast had gone over, I don't know whether the mast actually hit it or whether just the force of hitting the water when we were rolled and smashed it and we just stuck a pillow in there and that stopped most of the water coming in through there. Obviously, everything was wet. We got it all shipshape, the motor got started and then we started motoring towards Gabo Island, the heading was around about 330, 330 degrees, conditions were such that you could only steer 270 to 330, the waves were just enormous and a lot of the times we just had to poke the boat up into breaking waves to, so that we wouldn't get rolled by them. I think the actual roll took place at around about 6.30 to 6.50, somewhere in that - - -

Q22 That was the first roll?

A Yeah, the first roll.

Q23 Yes.

A On the 27th, that's PM and it probably took us an hour or an hour and a half to clean it all up and get the motor going, we got the motor going, we just had one

deck, we had one steering, because as much as you could be there, you couldn't be there any longer than an hour, it was quite exposed, you would just duck in behind the sail and the boom, get some shelter, but the helmsman's eyes were getting constantly stung by 65-70 knot winds rain into his face, Bruce did it, Bruce had the first hour and then Tony had a go and then I had go Rob Matthews, Bruce was up there with Shayne Hansen, Tony was up there with, I'm not sure who was up there with Tony, I can't remember who was up with Tony, I was up with Jim Rogers, we came down and Bruce went up again with Shayne Hansen and then Rob Matthews who hadn't been on deck for four hours but he'd done a lot of the steering through the afternoon, he came up with Phil Skeggs who'd had probably two and a half, three hours break below, but he'd done a fair bit, especially on deck during the afternoon as well, he was probably fatigued, but not extremely fatigued and being the offsider he really only had to stay in the cockpit and he could by sitting in the cockpit he was leaning over the the compass and calling the numbers, the compass headings could well have been the boat, conditions hadn't really abated, we were still getting a lot of and it was just passed, well and truly at this stage. The boat felt quite good down below and we weren't taking water,

structurally sound and under control for all intents and purposes, the motor was humming along pretty well, five or six knots, we weren't making that over the bottom because of the strong tide set against us, I think in four hours we only made 15, 16 miles headway. So, it was looking like we'd reach Gabo, I think when it actually happened the first time we were about 41 miles off short, at 11 o'clock we got to within about 25 miles offshore and then we got a rather major roll, it was just after Bruce came down, I reckon Rob and Phil Skeggs had only been up on deck for about 20 minutes, Bruce had come down and layed down on the, on the port side of the boat between the lockers and the on top of the sails, we all still basically just had our wet weather gear on so we could move quickly, we got a major roll, when we rolled, we stayed upside down for probably four to five minutes that's only an estimate, during that period we were virtually trapped in the hull, we kicked out the, 'cause all the storm ports was closed and the hatchway boards were in so there wasn't much of a gap there, the boat was filling with water we, Bruce and I kicked out the, well I mean, in the roll I got a cut on the nose and a fat lip and other cuts and bruises all over me, that happened to most of us in one form or another, we were just literally thrown about, the boat was filling with water, kicked out the

..... hatch and then tried to, started push out the life rafts, I suggested we keep one in Bruce and I were there doing it, we were standing on the cabin top while the boat remained inverted with the keel in the air and the rudder in the air, we could hear, I could hear Rob Matthews calling to Phil Skeggs, so I assumed Rob must have got out from under the cockpit and must have been able to breathe and was O.K, I didn't know whether Phil was, I was hoping he was clear, we got another big wave and that hit us fairly hard, hit the keel hard and the boat rolled up the right way again and the boat was by this stage probably had two foot six, three foot water inside, it was covering all the bunks which were still intact on the quarter berth and berth bunks, just as it came upright, Bruce and I were trying to manoeuvre the life rafts and Bruce arched heavily as though there was a pain in his chest and his eyes rolled back, I grabbed him and assumed that he must have been having a heart attack, I don't know that he was, he convulsed very strongly the first time, I grabbed him and went and sat myself in the bunk, I couldn't put him on the bunk, 'cause his head would've been under water, so I had his head in my lap and Jim Rogers helped me and held him, he was sort of breathing lightly for a short period then had two further convulsions, we weren't sure whether it was a heart attack or fit or what it was but it we assumed it was

probably a heart attack, after that we didn't hear any more breathing and his pulse stopped, meanwhile, the boat was still three foot under water and I sat and held him, I wasn't sure exactly whether he was dead or not, I assumed that he probably was. I just held him in the bunk keep his head above water, I was sitting in water up to my waist, water was sloshing around, the boat was still being tossed around by 70 knot winds and big waves, water was surging from side to side of the boat, there was just rubbish and just an unbelievable carnage down below. And not only that when we tipped over the second time because the motor was still going, the motor spewed oil and diesel everywhere through the boat and it went all over Phil, not Phil, Jim Rodgers, who'd been, had had himself wedged in between the motor box and the freezer, the boat was being literally thrown around so much you couldn't be in open space all over the place. He was wedged in and when it rolled he just got all the oil and diesel of the motor all over the top of him, so he looked like an Aboriginal or Negro. Fortunately, he wasn't injured and he didn't seem to inhale any, it was certainly all over his face that was also all through the water and all through the boat so everything was very slippery and slimy and dangerous meanwhile on deck, I was handling Bruce and I really didn't know what was going on on deck, Shayne Hansen had gone up and was trying to revive Phil, I didn't know at this stage, I

found out later, he was doing mouth to mouth and he was just full of water and couldn't, couldn't budge him, and he's heavy, like he's a big guy and weighs 90 odd kilos and trying to manoeuvre him around he was tangled up in ropes so I assume that he rolled, he perhaps hadn't been able to undo his, like he had a - - -

Q24 He did have the required safety clips on there?

A Yeah. And just the double action ones, so he could have undone it, if you're under pressure in those circumstances in the dark and those sort of circumstances you probably wouldn't and thinking about it afterwards, if I'd been on deck for an hour in those situations I'd probably would've panicked and I know Rob Matthews kept his head and fortunately the boat lifted at one stage just as he was about to and it gave him enough to get a grasp so that he could undo his safety harness and hang onto the runner ropes on the back of the boat, out, out from the under cockpit while the boat was actually inverted and he actually sat on the boom, moved himself around, managed to sit on the boom in the water and then when the boat righted itself, he was just thrown back into the boat, but he noticed that Phil was dead and he just, and I was too busy with Bruce at the time. I did hear him call for Shayne or someone to come and up help and that's when Shayne went up and tried to help with Phil. The

boat was, it had probably 900 mil of water in it, the water was starting to wash up the cockpit and straight over the companionway down below, so we were quite close to sinking, we got the companionway, the hatch board and put in to stop the water flowing in and we passed out a life raft and got that activated over the side and we just collected up a couple of bags of bits and pieces floating around the cabin, like, drinks and food and things, I just chucked that in the bag and had it ready to, to get off the boat into the life raft and then I was quite hesitant to get into a life raft, I thought we should've started to bail the boat, Bruce was dead, Tony and I put Bruce in the port quarter berth and did the leechsheet so it couldn't fall out, it took quite an effort to do that, being so, well, he's quite heavy and he was slippery and oily and so forth, we got him secured there. We secured him
..... the life raft
..... we had the life raft over the side and tripped over once or twice, upside down, but we managed to get it back up the right way and sitting into leeward, meanwhile, I, I, I was down in, like, none of the guys really wanted to get back down below, because the boat had rolled twice and it's not the place to be if the boat rolls, I got down below and got the plaster bucket, which is, it'd be a 20 litre bucket and started bailing, started passing the water up to Jim Rodgers and Peter Keats who just then tipped it

over the side, eventually Tony Guy came back down with me and we both, I'd just run out strength to lift eventually we got, we did continue to bail and got the water level down, by about 18 inches, so there was probably only 18 inches of water left in the boat, so that we could sit on the bunks and the would be dry and we weren't going to take out too much water 'cause we wanted the boat to stay stuck in the water, we didn't want it to roll again, meanwhile Shayne Hansen and one of the other guys had got the storm jib and the spinnaker tied into ropes and thrown them over the side up the bow so that they would act as a and hold the boat heading into the waves, I guess the actual roll happened at 11 o'clock, or within a couple of minutes of that, I took note, had a look at my watch at the time, particularly when Bruce had his heart attack, I took particular note to make sure I knew roughly what time it happened. Obviously all the electric had gone out we couldn't, we already sent out a Mayday and asked for assistance after the first roll, we had no means of communication after the second roll, so we were just there by ourselves to try and stay alive and keep the boat afloat. After reading the inquiries for the Fastnet Race back in '86, I think it was, when something like 70 odd sailors were drowned. I quite remember that a lot of the boats were found the next

day afloat and the guys had jumped in their rafts and drowned, while the boats were still there afloat, so I was quite keen to keep the boat going and keep the boat, keep all the guys down below, so we once we had the water bailed out to about 18 inches we all just came down below and tied the life raft up to the stern, we tried to get the second life raft, which we'd put up on deck and it had come adrift out of that, we had passed it back down but I was thinking that if we did roll we'd still have it down below, there was only seven of us and they were six man life rafts so we thought we'd be able to get seven in a six man life raft if we had to, we had one on deck activated and we were planning to have the other one unactivated down below in case we rolled again and lost the other one, unfortunately, as we moved it down below the oxygen tank clip got caught on something and it's activated down below so we had to throw it back up on deck very quickly before it inflated down below and then secured on deck, so we ended up with two life rafts. I, I initially just, just left it in the stern of the boat and secured it to the starboard, starboard companionway winch with it's line and went below, some time afterwards we got hit by another wave and the life raft got thrown out of the cockpit and then ended up on the starboard leeward side in the lee of the hull just sitting there so both life rafts were sitting quite comfortably off on the starboard leeward

side sort of on port tack and the were holding the bow up to port a little bit and the boat was in a relatively safe position, we put all the companionway boards in and put the hatch virtually shut and just went and sat on the bunks, Phil Skeggs had been tied onto the and we'd secured Bruce Guy on the port quarter berth, we were all fairly, we were all thoroughly sodden, it was quite cold on deck, just being open to sea in 60 to 70 knot winds we, down below, a couple of the remaining berths and just sat there and I just had a headlamp on and just kept that on all night. Most of the other guys slept, I guess I slept on and off a bit too. Conditions seemed to slowly abate and improve, like the wind probably came down to 40, 45 and the seas seems to flatten out and we didn't have as many breaking waves on us, I think around about 3 o'clock we had another big wave hit us, about then I saw both, I didn't see the lights on the life raft, they'd both disappeared, I'd assumed that they'd probably turned upside down outside the hull, none of us was in a fit state to go and do all that, so we didn't and the boat was in no danger of sinking at that point and it wasn't till we got up at around 5 o'clock the next morning, went on deck and checked everything out by which the time the conditions were back to, I suppose, 45 knots and probably five to six metres seas but the boat was well and truly, was hanging nicely off

the and it was relatively secure and afloat even though it was in a shambles down below, where it was slippery and greasy and you had trouble to keep your feet, I dragged Phil Skeggs off the and sat up him up just on the cockpit floor and just left him there, did his waterproofs up so he wasn't exposed to the elements grotesque, I tried to close his eyes but they didn't remain closed. Bruce meanwhile was secure in the
..... we rested and I think around about 7.00, we got up and put a red sail beam or red genoa on top of the mainslips so we could be visible from the air easier. Our EPIRB had been activated on the first roll at 6.50 the night before, 6.50pm, so that was activated the whole time and certainly the race organisers knew that we were in danger. At about 7 o'clock a twin engine light aircraft came over, we let off a distress flare, he recognised us as much from the EPIRB as anything else, flew overhead. I might add the night before when it rolled the second time we did let off five or six red flares without any response. At around 7 o'clock the helicopter, I think the, what's your RACT up here?

Q25 NRMA?

A NRMA, it had NRMA written on the side of it turned up on the scene, we indicated to him that we had seven alive and two dead on board, he indicated to us that he

was going to send a frogman down and we were to jump off the boat and get off with a line and go to, into the water and he'd lower the frogman down to pick us up. That all went off without a hitch at all, everyone got lifted off, before I left, I was the last to get off, before I got off I secured Phil Skeggs' body in his safety harness or a safety harness line, whether his or not, put it around his chest in a slip knot and kept companionway, which was fairly secure, Bruce was still in the quarter berth, port side quarter berth, secured in by a lee sheet and there was still 18 inches of water, the boat hadn't taken on any water since we got it down to the 18 inch level basically and just closed the companionway hatch and jumped into the water and lifted up myself, thankfully, and were air lifted to hospital where we were all checked out and showered and given some clothes and ordered to bed

Q26 Just a few little things I want to clear up. With Mr Guy had he any known heart problems before?

A I think, I'm not exactly sure, but I think he did have a heart, a blood pressure problem which I knew he'd taken some tablets for perhaps a year ago and I don't know whether he was still on them or not, so I can't answer that.

Q27 That's fine.

A Well, I know he was on, he had had high blood pressure and I think by checking you'll find that he had had

some medication but I'm not sure whether he was still on it or not. He had, what do you call it, hiatus

- - -

Q28 Hernia?

A Not a hernia, no, just sort of get a burning sensation in his chest and his stomach he used to take medication for that, from time to time.

Q29 Just a couple of things I want to know about the boat?

A Yes.

Q30 Do you know where it was made?

A I think it was built in New Zealand in '84. It was known as Swuzzlebubble VI.

Q31 As what, sorry?

A Swuzzlebubble VI. It was the top, I think, I might, I might be a little bit wrong but it was a top scoring boat in the Admirals Cup, I think, in 1986. Thereabouts anyway in it for the New Zealand team and that was then, I think the New Zealand team actually won the Admirals Cup that year too.

Q32 It's Bruce Farr design, it weighs six and a half ton, it's built of foam and kevlar, it's, it's been well built, it's relatively sound.

Q33 How long has Bruce owned it for?

A I think it must be four or five years now, it's probably, no, it must be five, because I've done the Three Peaks race with him four years and the first year, I think, so it must be four and a half, five years.

Q34 Has it ever rolled like that in the past?

A No, never.

Q35 No. Have you ever been involved in a roll like that?

A No.

Q36 Do you know whether that's uncommon occurrence, for a boat to roll?

A I've heard that it's, where, where it has happened to boats not infrequently, in conditions - - -

Q37 Do you know of it, sorry - - -

A Sorry.

Q38 Do you know of it happening and the boat staying capsized like yours did in the second roll or is it general that the boat will do the full 360.

A Generally, the boat will do a full 360, in fact, I actually wondered whether the keel had actually fallen off.

Q39 Yeah.

A I couldn't see any holes in the bottom of the boat where the keel bolts would've pulled through if that happened, or maybe, maybe they could've been pulled out of the I couldn't see any evidence of that when the boat was upside down and when it did go upside down I did grab a head-lamp so I could actually, we had light in the sort of the hull and we could actually see.

Q40 Is there a minimum balance requirement or something similar to that that the boats are -?

A The boats are required to have a minimum stability to

do the Sydney-Hobart and to was up to that. They were extreme conditions, I, I rather suspect we stayed upright because, I rather suspect behind that wave there was just a lot of white spummy water and often behind a big breaking wave, you just have clear spot for a fair while.

Q41 Right.

A And I don't know whether that was pointing head to wind or what it was, obviously I was inside the hull, maybe it ended up upside down pointing into the wind in a relatively flat bit of water for those four or five minutes till the next big wave came along. The boat's relatively wide for its size, so that would mean it would float, it would want to stay upside down, it's wide on the deck, I think it's 14 foot wide and 40 foot long, which is quite, quite wide, it gives it a lot of stability both ways when it's upside down, so the boat would be maybe a little bit more inclined than most to, to do that. Just why it did it, heaven only knows.

Q42 Have you got anything

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GRAY

Q43 The health of the others after the first roll on the deck, did you see how they were after that?

A Most people were pretty tired. Bruce hadn't been on deck for a while, I don't think, he actually, the other guys got a really then Bruce actually took the helm and we got the mast back on

board and we started the motor so he was
helming first

Q44 Did they recognise the

A No, no, I mean everyone was fatigued - - -

Q45 Fatigued.

A - - - and obviously wet, we were wet through but we all
had our waterproofs on and we were, I don't think we
were, I mean we might have been cold but not, not to
the point where we would be suffering from hypothermia.
The helmsman could only take an
hour of it because he was out in the elements and could
only take an hour of it because it really was, the
spray just burned your eyes out, and also just the wind
shield factor. Everyone was fatigued.

Q46 Now, you said that boat was overturned there was water
coming in.

A Into the companionway, I mean, we were trying to get
out initially but like when a boat rolls over like that
the air's trapped inside the hull, it can't get out, so
we proceeded to remove the hatch boards because they
were under water, they're normally above the water, but
they were under the water, the air pressure would
normally keep the water out to a degree but there was
a, there'd be some escape of air in through some of the
smaller hatches and cockpit and up
through the bow, so it did actually, it did actually
take water on fairly quickly, I reckon, just at a
guess, perhaps would've stayed there for

perhaps another 20, 30 minutes that way up, if it had been, but I think it always would've rolled up the right way if the keel was still attached, it would only have been if the keel wasn't attached that we would've remained

Q47 Is it the case with these vessels that if they do become full of water in the cabin if they're inverted - - -

A Yep, it makes it hard to - - -

Q48 To bring them back?

A Yes, it does, it certainly does.

Q49 But they won't sink?

A No.

Q50 Right.

A No, that's right.

Q51 Right.

A Well, they could sink if you had, if you had a total escape of air.

Q52 Right. O.K.

A Yeah. If you lost the keel though they would probably float because the boat's built of foam and kevlar and the actual foam would act as buoyancy to a degree.

Q53 Yep.

A Without the keel, it may float but - - -

Q54 Just don't know.

A It'd be touch and go.

Q55 Now, the ropes that were tangled around Mr Skeggs, was it?

A Yes.

Q56 Did you see the ropes tangled around him after the
- - -

A No, I didn't go on deck.

Q57 O.K.

A When we did roll I stayed with Bruce.

Q58 Right.

A I'm only going on hearsay.

Q59 Right. O.K. That's fine.

SENIOR CONSTABLE STEVENSON

Q60 Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

A They really were quite extreme conditions, in my 37
years of sailing I've never experienced anything like
that before.

Q61 Yep.

A I regard it as tragic, to say the least, and Bruce was
one of my best mates and he was a decent chap and
emotionally it hits me pretty hard.

Q62 I'll stop that now. Do you agree the time now is about
3.04pm?

A Thanks.

Q63 That's the end of the interview.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED