

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q1 This is an electronic interview between Senior Constable David Upston and David Wait on Saturday, the 31st of the 7th, '99 at the Parkes Police Station in South Australia. The time on my watch is now 12.05pm. And also seated to my immediate right is Detective Senior Constable Rob Beatie from the South Australian Police. David, as I explained to you prior to the interview, Detective Senior Constable Beatie and I are making inquiries into the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and in particular a lift raft that comes to mind from the vessel VC Stand Aside that was a participant. But just prior to the interview would you like to state your full name please?

A David Wait.

Q2 And is that David Stanley Wait?

A David Stanley Wait.

Q3 And your address?

A Is Ely Street, Athol Park, 5012.

Q4 And your date of birth?

A 20th of the 9th, '77.

Q5 And your occupation?

A Is an apprentice mechanic.

Q6 O.K. David, as I explained to you earlier, would you please like to read aloud this statement here?

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. This statement is true to

the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that if it is tendered in evidence I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true". I am 21 years of age.

Q7 O.K. Do you agree with that?

A Yes.

Q8 O.K. Now David, where are you currently employed?

A Andrew Craddock the, that's where I'm posted from the MTA group training scheme. I'm posted there and that's sort of my base where I actually work.

Q9 O.K. And what sort of work do you, can do there?

A Normally it's, I'm a sort of an apprentice, learning about the outboards and the other marine mechanic sort of things.

Q10 O.K. And in particular I'd like to talk to you about a time that you were employed at Quinn Marine, is that correct?

A Yes.

Q11 O.K. How long were you employed at Quinn Marine?

A About approximately three and a half to four years.

Q12 And I understand now of course that you're, you're not employed there, that you work at this other place. And when did you ceased your employment with Quinn Marine?

A The 29th of January, '99.

Q13 O.K. And for what purpose were you employed there?

A As a life raft surveyor.

Q14 Right. And were you under any type of supervision

there, as a life raft surveyor?

A I had, I was basically left on my own or with a co-worker but there were a department manager and sort of the owner of the company often popped up to see how we were coping with the work and sort of to give instructions at certain times.

Q15 O.K. Now as a lift raft surveyor, do you have to undergo any formal training?

A Yeah, there was a week long course in Melbourne at the RFD Australian headquarters, sort of go over there and, and carry out work as normal with them, teaching anything that you weren't sure about and carry out a test on the Friday before we came back.

Q16 O.K. And you, you underwent those and you were obviously then issued a certificate of compliance, so to speak.

A Yeah and with the certificate comes a stamp. Everyone that actually passes gets their own stamp and when you release a life raft you stamp, sign and date the certificates.

Q17 So it's like your personal identification, to say that you were the person that surveyed that lift raft?

A Yeah, that's correct.

Q18 O.K. And with your certificate, were you currently, was that, was that certificate current at the full time that you were working at Quinn Marine?

A For the first six months, approximately, it sort of, I started as sort of a nobody and picked up on the job

training. Then I went and carried out the course and until I ceased the employment, I was still currently certified by RFT.

Q19 O.K. And when did that certificate lapse?

A The fine print of the certificate actually sort of cancels the certificate on, when you leave the place of employment. So, the same date, the 29th of the 1st. I was actually, if I had of stayed employed, it would've been up until March sometime, of '99, it would've still be current until then.

Q20 O.K. All right. Now, when, when you conduct your normal employment as, as a life raft surveyor, do you, is there strict standards that you, you adhere to?

A Yeah. At Quinns we normally carry things out and make sure that if there was two of us working, Owen and myself, usually got each other to check it off and if there was any problems, we'd always cross check. Get the other one to see the problem and work out an answer as a team, rather than just go ahead and jump in. And there was also the procedure of weighing the cylinder and checking everything as you went along to make sure it was all sort of ticked on a form and carried out up to date. And then as a job left, you signed it off to say that it was done yourself.

Q21 O.K. Well, from what you've told me now, can we go back just a little and can you, in your mind, when you receive a lift raft for, to undergo a survey, its annual survey or whichever the survey may be for, what

are the procedures that you would adopt when you first receive that lift raft?

A When we first receive the life raft, normally we would book it in, sort of downstairs with the customer or bring the raft up and talk about it with the customer. Get any extra information we could. Write that on a job card and we'd sort of go ahead with the job. Sometimes in front of the customer and other times after the customer's left, depending on the urgency.

Q22 So it's the case that the, the customer's quite welcome to stay and watch the lift raft being serviced?

A Yeah, we always, as a sort of, if the customer wanted to see it, we, we'd always appreciate that and we'd like that but, because we felt he then had more familiarity, he was familiar with what was inside the box or the valise, if he ever did actually need to use it.

Q23 O.K. So, O.K. He's either there or he goes. Well then, then, and you've got either the life raft there in front of you. Can we do one at a time? Let's look at the valise. How would you go about servicing that, that lift raft in a valise?

A A normal service, get it out on the floor and I'd open up the valise which is normally a zip or velcro and I'd open it up and flat sort of, disconnect the cylinder so there was no chance of that going off and inflate the life raft. And then carry out the inspections on the raft and test on the buoyancy of the raft and check the

emergency, the rations and flares, make sure they were all current. Weigh the cylinder and then start the deflation and packing process.

Q24 And when you say you inflate the life raft, how do you go about inflating it?

A There was times when there was sort of an additional test where we just fired the cylinder and checked everything out as a test, make sure the whole inflation system worked. But as a rule they normally didn't require that. So we'd disconnect the cylinder and use a vacuum cleaner to pump it up and then we'd use the compressor to obtain test pressures.

Q25 O.K. Now when you, what, what, what gases are in the cylinder?

A There's carbon dioxide, CO2 and nitrogen.

Q26 All right. And the reason why you would use the vacuum cleaner instead of igniting the, instead of letting the, the gas cylinder go was, is there a particular reason for that?

A The gas cylinders freezes the fabric and if it happens too many times you can actually crack the fabric and the raft is just sort, it's a reject raft.

Q27 M'mm.

A So it's general procedure to try not to do that and that way the raft will last a bit longer.

Q28 O.K. Now you said you weighed the cylinder?

A Usually we'd grab the cylinder and take it over to the scales and the scales at Quinns were in the Imperial

measurements, the pounds, so we'd convert the kilograms back to pounds or we'd weigh it and convert the weight back to kilograms and compare the full weight on the cylinder and, to the weight we'd just measured and see whether they compare.

Q29 And basically what that'll do in layman's terms, that'll tell you how full, or if it is full in fact, or empty. Is that correct?

A Yeah, that'll give us an idea of it. If the full weight was 10 kilograms for, for example and the weight we just obtained 9.99, that one sort of .01 difference is within sort of a tolerance, 'cause it might just be a little bit of a paint sort of chip or something like that. But generally gives us an idea that yes, the cylinder is full or no, it's empty.

Q30 Right. And there is, you can actually weigh to an accuracy of what you just described there - - -

A Yeah, sort of.

Q30 - - - to allow for even paint chipping off?

A Not, not sort of to the extent of just like a little chip of paint, but sometimes the cylinders were rusty and that, that effects the weight. There's a few little, they look rather large amount of paint and chipping sort of over it - - -

Q31 M'mm.

A - - - and we can see that but generally if it's empty it shows up on the actual scales.

Q32 O.K. And you would do that as a matter of course?

A Yeah, we'd do that on every raft that was opened right up before we packed it back up again.

Q33 O.K. And now let's, let's look, does that cover everything you would do with a valise style?

A You'd normally be, and then we'd just go through the pack and test the actual, make sure the tubes held the air and the raft itself was O.K. And then we'd pack it back up and some of them actually went in a vacuum bag before the main valise, so it would mean we would have to pack the raft into the vacuum bag and suck that down so that we'd get the raft as a smaller, with less air in it and then we'd pack it, zip it back up in the valise which meant tying the painter line back up, hooking it up to the cylinder, the firing cord and putting it back in first.

Q34 O.K. Now with, with the valise style which we're talking about at the moment, with the, with the Pacific style lift raft, when that comes in a valise, does that also come in a vacuum bag?

A Yeah, with the, with the Pacific, they, probably with the hard pack and the valise, both come in the vacuum bag inside of its main container and the idea behind that was to keep the raft itself dry and free from moisture, even though it was in a, another container outside.

Q35 O.K. All right. Now does that cover just about everything with the valise?

A Yeah, that's - - -

Q36 All right. Well now would you like to explain to me how you would survey a, a lift raft and probably in particular the RFD style Pacific lift raft in it's hard pack?

A In a hard pack it's, it's much the same. Basically we'd get it in, talk to the customer and then we'd go on and if the customer was there or not, when we were due to service it we'd pull it out on the floor, cut the straps or the seal off it and open the container. And with the Pacific, the vacuum bag we'd open that up. Sometimes cutting it right across the, where the join was 'cause there was basically a half join and a common type one where everyone, all the service agents open them up, up one end. So we'd open it up, up that end, pull the raft out and much the same as the valise, we'd disconnect the cylinders and pump the raft up. Go through the packs, the tests, carry out any other inspections and finally we'd get back to packing it up.

Q37 O.K. Now I'd like to talk to you about the life raft that was supplied to the vessel VC Stand Aside, or we'll just call it the Stand Aside. Now, I'm lead to believe that a life raft was purchased from RFD and distributed through Quinn Marine. And I'm also lead to believe that the, Stand Aside entered the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, and this in particular why we're here talking to you today, and that when it was caught in a storm, in particular the lift raft was deployed from the yacht and it failed to open for some

particular reason. Now what I'd like to know and I'm also lead to believe is that when the life raft was forwarded to Quinn Marine it was in a valise style. Now this was a Pacific life raft and it was in a valise style pack. And I'm lead to believe that the life raft was then repacked into a solid container or a hard, hard container. Are you aware of that?

A Yeah, I carried out the change from the valise to the hard pack and that was as directed by the customer who we were dealing with and the department manager, Fenn Thompson and it included taking the raft out of the valise and putting it straight back, as it was new, into another container supplied by Quinn Marine.

Q38 O.K. Now in doing that, is there a, is that the standard procedure where you can take in fact a life raft out of a valise and put it into a hard pack?

A No, normally we'd just put, if any of the rafts that were open, we'd carry out all the checks on them but as this one was new and it was just signed off by RFD themselves, we believed it was going to be O.K, and it was never taken out of the vacuum bag. So we never carried out all of the procedures themselves. We just took it out and we packed it without opening up the vacuum bag.

Q39 Right. Would it, would it be normal procedure for you to, to open up that vacuum bag and check its contents?

A Normally we would but not on a, on a new raft. Normally if we received the new raft, we'd just send it

straight out and this one, the customer wanted it changed from a soft pack valise into the hard, hard pack container so he, he asked, he dealt with Fenn, the department manager, and we sold him the container and whatever else was required and we just changed it over and put it into the hard pack.

Q40 Right. Now when, when it's, when it comes out of the hard pack, out of a valise and into the hard pack, is it a situation where the, the bottle, the, the gas container, right, is in a, in a different position or the way that it's normally deployed from the, from the hard pack to a valise, is the firing mechanism in it in a different place?

A The, inside the vacuum bag, whether it's in a soft pack or hard pack, inside the vacuum bag they're both packed the same but the painter line may have been located differently between the two and normally that, it's like a parachute release, you pull the cord, wherever it is, it normally comes out and there's a set way to actually pack the painter line, wherever it is.

Q41 What type of, what type of cylinder head or device is fitted to the, to the Pacific life raft?

A On the Pacific it's actually a, a French design which is where the Pacific comes from and I couldn't tell you exactly what make or model that is. It's made by Plastimo 'cause that's the Pacific, the whole, the whole life raft is actually made by Plastimo, RFD buy them from them and they're the ones that deliver that

around world wide.

Q42 O.K. Now you said that you, you, it's, the only, the only change in procedures would be to move the painter line in, in, from the valise to the hard pack in a different, different position. Would it, is it the case that with that particular firing mechanism for the cylinder, that setting the painter line and the firing mechanism in a different position would interfere with the, the firing of the, of the life raft?

A No, it should've made any difference at all 'cause the way the painter line was set up, it was set to pull in line with the cylinder and the rope would've ran straight out with that, straight outside the container until all the rope had been pulled and then it would've pulled the firing cord and that would've followed straight through in a straight line to the outside of the container.

Q43 Right. Now let's just talk about the container that you've put this lift raft in at this time. Was that a Pacific life raft container?

A No, it wasn't. It was actually a harder fibreglass container where the Pacific one is a plastic container and that was obtained, it was on the Quinn's shelf down the back. It was new but it had been sitting there for a while so, Fenn and Rod Hunter, the customer, had made up a, come to some agreement and that was, what was arranged was to put the raft into the new container which was actually a Roaring Forties container.

Q44 O.K. I'll show you a document here. Now this, this is an RFD brochure and I'll show you on page 2 of this brochure a Pacific life raft and there's a picture on the, facing you on the left hand side with information about that life raft. Now there's also an inset in this top picture, on the top of the page of page 2 of a hard pack. Was that correct?

A Yes.

Q45 Now, what can you tell me about that hard pack?

A That's the, the specific, Pacific RFD container. It's only a small one by the look of it so I'd say it's probably a four or a six pack. But familiar shape about it as well, much the same as that and it's only a picture so I may be wrong. Looking at it, it's actually looks like it's been sealed up and the painter line's hanging out one side with the handle sort of in the middle of it. And there's not much really to say, the container, you can't see the raft through the container or anything like that.

Q46 O.K. I, I'll just draw to your attention, there's a plug, we can't determine the size of the plug, but you may be able to tell me a bit more about this, the plug where the painter in fact goes through the case and onto the life raft cylinder head. Now with this particular life raft in its case, is the bottle and lanyard, this is the gas cylinder bottle, is that in a different position as it, to what it would be in the, in the valise?

A I can't really remember exactly where it is on the valise but they were all like that one there, located close to each other or within a range where the painter line would pull and they'd be sort of a direct line for it to actually fire along. So that looks correct in the picture there.

Q47 Right. So would you say that from your, and, from your expert opinion, that the, the cylinder in this particular case would run across the, the shorter side of the, of this hard pack?

A No. Looking at it, I would say the cylinder would be just directly behind the handle which is hanging down, running along the length of the container.

Q48 Right. Would you just like to, to draw there, like, if I pass you a pen, where you believe that the cylinder may be on that particular -

A On the inside, on the bottom half of the cylinder and sort of running the length of the container.

Q49 O.K. Now would you just like to initial that page, anywhere on the page, to say that you've drawn on there for me. Right, now on the picture below there is a valise on a, on a Pro Saver life raft. Now I'm not saying that this, these are two different types of life rafts but is that valise similar to the one that comes with the Pacific life raft?

A No, that one there would be sort of a short, round, sort of valise - - -

Q50 O.K.

A - - - and it would be in length, longer maybe, by looking at it. The Pacific had a, it was sort of like a suitcase type of shape. It was a flat and a distinct rectangle.

Q51 O.K. All right. Now with this, with this particular Pacific style, can you describe the way that the, the firing mechanism works on the cylinder head? Earlier, you mentioned earlier that it's a direct pulling out, or is it, the mechanism inside, had you opened any of these mechanisms?

A We've, there is a service that we can carry out on them to replace the O rings which is described in the manual and when we do that, I've actually pulled one apart and had a look at it. But basically what happens is the cord is pulled which pulls a, like a pulley sort of arrangement on the inside, and that turns a, a bolt or a screw along a thread which presses down as it turns, it presses like a firing pin, which in turn, on the top of the cylinder, to fire the cylinder, the firing pin actually pierces a brass disc which is a weak point in the cylinder and lets the gas escape.

Q52 O.K. Now just, can you just explain to me again the, the brand of the hard case that you put this Pacific life raft from valise, into?

A We put it into a Roaring Forties.

Q53 O.K. Now the Roaring Forties, now is that the same as this, this case, was the, as the Pacific's packed into or was the plug where the lanyard goes through in a

different place to where this should be, where this was?

A The plug was actually, they're normally down the end and from memory I can't remember where I fitted it, but I think I would've put it back down the end and inside the raft the painter line would've been running sort of along the floor of the container itself, or just up on one of the sides, much the same as they do with the Pacific.

Q54 Has that, where you've placed the painter line, has that got a great deal to do with the deployment of the life raft?

A The life raft will basically sort of fire. The situation of the painter line and a plug will actually, basically just allow for an easier operation. It sort of flows out through the hole and from there it's got to actually pull the firing mechanism but the firing, basically they're all situated on the floor of the bottom half of the container, or up on the sides so that it can flow in line with the hole itself, and out through the hole.

Q55 Right. The way that you packed it in the, in the other life raft case, do you feel that that may have hampered the operation of the life raft at the time that the, the crew tried to deploy it?

A No. After speaking to Rod, the customer who was on board at the time - - -

Q56 This is Rod Hunter?

A Rod Hunter, yes, and I felt happy with it and signed it off as it left, but after hearing about it not working and speaking to him when he got back inside the building, in, in Quinn Marine there, he'd actually sort of told me that he'd opened the container anyway and pulled on the cord and threw it back over and it made no difference at all.

Q57 When, this is what he told you. Did he throw the life raft back over the side personally?

A I don't think he done it personally.

Q58 Right.

A But I couldn't be 100 percent on it.

Q59 O.K. All right. But they pulled it out of the pack, they retrieved it and they pulled it out from the from what you've been told?

A Yeah, that's correct. They actually threw it over the first time and nothing happened, the container was still floating as a container in the water. So they pulled the painter line and the raft came back and so they cut the container open and threw just the vacuum bag back out, pulling on the painter line and still nothing happened.

Q60 O.K. Now when you, when you received the, the raft as it is from RFD in the valise, and a certificate came with that. Do you feel that once you altered the bag, altered the, the situation by taking the life raft from the valise into the hard pack, that perhaps you should have re-issued another certificate?

A Yes, there should've been another certificate and I'm not sure whether one was or, but it should've been and was it signed off on the job card that it was done carried out on there and I would've thought that they would've actually carried out another one but I can't remember if I did sign a certificate to say it was changed or whether it just went out on the existing certificate.

Q61 Well if I told you that a certificate wasn't issued for the way that it was repacked, what do you say about that?

A Basically, don't know what to say really 'cause it should've been somethin' that was done.

Q62 But you being the surveyor of the life raft, wouldn't that be your responsibility to issue another certificate for it?

A Yes, as carrying out the procedure that was carried out, I should've ensured that there was another certificate to signify the changes to the raft.

Q63 Right. Now from your opinion, what can you suggest to me, the reasons, from what I've told you and from what we've been talking about today, why that cylinder or why that life raft wouldn't deploy.

A Maybe the cylinder had a leak on its way between Melbourne and here due to an unknown sort of reason, it may have leaked, a thread or something on the cylinder and by the time we've got it, it was actually empty anyway, and so there was no gas to fire it. Other than

that, the only other reason may have been basically the, the seals that allowed the gas and controlled the gas to go to the chambers of the raft, maybe those seals weren't tight enough and the gas has leaked out when it has fired, so it's basically just a matter of where did the gas go. 'Cause - - -

Q64 Well from, from your, from the time that you've been packing life rafts and all that sort of thing, you would, would you suggest to me that if you did pull that life raft, the lanyard, and there was a, was a leak, you would certainly notice the amount of gas escaping from the bottle?

A Yes, so that actually, if Rod or one of the other crew on the vessel didn't notice that, that sort of suggests that the cylinder may have had a leak before it's been fired.

Q65 So it would be highly unlikely that you wouldn't know that, that if there was a leak somewhere between the lien and, and, and hypothetically the gas bottle was full and you pulled it and there was a leak somewhere between the gas bottle and the raft, you'd certainly hear it, wouldn't you?

A Yeah, you'd definitely hear it if you pulled the cord and sort of heard the hissing, you'd definitely hear it.

Q66 'Cause it's under great pressure, isn't it?

A It's under a huge pressure inside the cylinder and there was sort of, you'd definitely hear that noise.

Q67 Right. Now when you received the life raft, in hindsight, do you think that you should have weighed the cylinder?

A Looking back on it now and if I was still back in with the life rafts, I feel that it's sort of, if the directions came to redo the same procedure, it would be a definite to actually pull it out of the vacuum bag and give it a double check as it's gonna have my signature on it at the end of the day. So I'd rather sort of check the weight of the cylinder myself and feel happier about it.

Q68 M'mm. Now just, just one step back again. Is there anything that you would do differently in packing a life raft from a valise into a hard pack? Should it be packed in a, in a different way?

A No, I feel that I actually, the packing of it was carried out and that would've actually fired. I feel happy with the way that that was carried out and I don't see that as a problem, feel happy but sort of would like to know the reason why it didn't fire but I feel happy within myself the way I actually carried that side of things out was going to work.

Q69 Right. Now just on this, with the other, the other life raft container which was a you said, the
- - -

A Roaring Forties.

Q69 - - - was, correct, Roaring Forties, a Roaring Forties life raft, are you, are you satisfied that if the plug

was at the end, that the life raft, if deployed and the cylinder was, was, was full, that that wouldn't hamper the way that the cylinder would actually, or the operation of the, of the cylinder?

A Definitely, I'm more than happy within myself that it, that was carried out and raft and the container when put together that that would have actually worked if the cylinder was full. I feel definite that would've happened.

Q70 O.K. Constable Beatie?

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE BEATIE

Q71 At present, or to your knowledge, is there, is there any system or is there any way that we can test the firing mechanism?

A Not of, the only way would be to fire the raft off. If we, if you had one in the container in front of you. The only way, basically inside there you can't see the raft, you can't see the firing mechanism. The only way would be to pull the lanyard or the painter line and fire it off and, to see whether it works.

Q72 So it'd be fair to say that that's just one small part of the whole packing procedure that really can't be tested till it's used?

A Yeah, there's sort of no way of testing it until it's actually used or unless someone else is - - -

Q73 And obviously you don't want to go firing all the time 'cause that will weaken the, the actual raft itself over time.

A Yeah, it will weaken the raft and -

Q74 O.K. Do, can you remember why Mr Hunter wanted the
 hard case as opposed to the valise?

A The Stand Aside itself, the yacht. I believe that had
 a sort of cradle on it for a lift raft but they didn't
 actually have a life raft, so he wanted his new raft,
 the container to match the cradle' that were existing
 and that way he could just keep the life raft for the
 boat.

Q75 Given that, can you understand why he ordered a valise
 and why he didn't order the harder case version in the
 first place?

A That was sort of an arrangement between him and Penn
 and the Pacific was a cheaper life raft and I think
 when sort of we have at Quinns, you can hire a raft
 which went back into the soft pack, so it was an
 agreement between then and can't exactly say why, why
 he just didn't order the - - -

Q76 So it would've been, the way he did it would've been
 cheaper than to buy the hard case version, is that
 correct?

A I, I would say so

Q77 O.K. And in the, in the event that, let's just say
 there was a, a mistake in the ordering of the life
 raft. The life raft came in the valise and the
 customer said, look, I want the hard case. How much
 time would it take to get a hard case from RDF to
 Quinns in order to fit it?

A Normally if RFD's got it in stock it would sort of take maybe two, three days to get the extra container across or the valise whichever they, they decided to change to and normally it would normally only happen RFD to an RFD container or valise, not, not an RFD to a Roaring Forties.

Q78 O.K. So how packed prior to, to the start of a race or whenever they want to

A Can't remember, sort of the precise date or anything but it was in the, in the build up to the race. It would've been sort of just prior to - - -

Q79 So it's probably, all I'm trying to get at here is, is it possible that they perhaps didn't have the time to order the proper hard case and that's why they may have decided to utilise something other than

A No, Rod actually came up, sort of pretty early on this one - - -

Q80 O.K.

A - - - and started asking me questions about it early or, with a bit of time to go before the build up to the race and we ordered the raft and it was sort of plenty of time to, before the - - -

Q81 O.K. Can I just ask David a question actually. Was the life raft ever recovered?

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

No.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE BEATIE

Q82 No, so we, I mean that's obviously the reason we're

asking these questions, because we don't really know. No, that's the only questions I've got at this time. Thank you.

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q83 Just the last couple of things now, David, have you ever received a life raft new from any manufacturer that, packed, that you've done a test on that a cylinder has been empty?

A Never because we never normally actually open them up and test them ourselves. They're normally left there.

Q84 In the time that you've been a life raft surveyor, which is some three years, have you ever known or ever heard of lift rafts not being deployed correctly?

A There was another couple, I think one or two, where one had actually only half inflated and that one was sort a while ago, I can't remember whether it was new or not but that wasn't actually, we didn't do the test on it. They had fired it off themselves for whatever reason at the time, whether it was an accident or not, I couldn't sort of tell you, that was too long ago.

Q85 All right. Now, so you, if, if, if a, is it possible that a life raft can actually, or the cylinder can leak and not deploy the life raft?

A I would say, yes, it is, but the chances are pretty low. They can, could actually leak 'cause the cylinder's only a matter of sort of, sealing is done by the little brass disc on most of them and that there, the seals on that are basically just a thread.

Q86 So if it was to leak at that little brass plate where the, where the firing mechanism is to go into, the gas would release and then release into the line and go into the life raft, is that correct?

A Yeah, but it's usually very slow, sort of, and probably seep back out through the fabric of the raft. Because whenever we have sort of tested, even the inflatable boats, a brand new one still does leak, sort of, it's within a tolerance to the manuals.

Q87 O.K. So it's possible that it could've leaked over a period of time and the gas has leaked through the fabric?

A Yeah, definitely.

Q88 Or through some other loose mechanism?

A Mm. That's correct.

Q89 All right. David, is there anything that you feel that you could add now that would assist me and, and Detective Beatie with our inquiries?

A No, not really.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE BEATIE

Can I just ask one more question? Have we got time? Just quickly.

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q90 For the purpose of the, the interview and the change of tapes, the time by my watch is now 12.50. This interview is suspended for a changing of the tapes.

INTERVIEW SUSPENDED

INTERVIEW RESUMED

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q91 The time on my watch is now 12.52pm. The interview between Upston and Wait resumes and Detective Senior Constable Beatie, you were asking a question.

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE BEATIE

Q92 Yeah, David, just a, you mentioned earlier about the fact that when people come in with a life raft, how some would stay around and, and actually watch as you tested them or surveyed them or in some cases, actually deployed them or what. Did you ever actually deploy them as well, as part of that?

A Yeah, that was, we preferred it, like with the customer to be there, especially as the rafts got older. As a business, it was sort of better for two reasons. Sort of personally for, for me and my co-worker Alan, we felt that it was a good idea because the customer got to know his life raft and it was a safer if he ever did know, need the raft. He actually knew a bit more about how to use it, what it looked like inside the container and as a business for Quinns, it was also a better option because if there were any problems with the raft you could actually show them to the customer and he knew straight away he was going to be up for some repair work.

Q93 O.K. And what sort of reaction would you get from most of these people upon showing them about the lift raft?

A Some of the customers were really couldn't sort of care less. The raft was more or less there because somebody

said it had to be there and others generally sort of, without prejudice, most of them are sort of retired people who went cruising their boat and more than likely sort of wanted to stay alive and enjoy life and they were actually happy to spend their day looking at the raft and learn a bit about what was going on inside the container.

Q94 So, although it's a pretty simple mechanism to fire, if there were to be a problem, if you had no experience and took no time to learn about it, it would be a pretty, given the frightening circumstances of this
- - -

A Yeah, when they're, when they're in a panicking type situation, if there was a problem and you'd still sort of, you'd go into the panic and you really wouldn't know what to do and sort of that's the main reason why we felt more comfortable showing people.

Q95 Right. O.K. Thank you.

SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q96 All right. David, is there anything now that you'd like to add? Anything further you'd like to say about the life rafts and the way you packed it. Maybe perhaps what you should've done, what you shouldn't have done, or do you feel anything indifferent about what we've spoken about today?

A No, I think everything sort of, that's been said is basically sort of I already, I already stated that I'd prefer to actually, if I was still carrying out work on

the life rafts, carry out a new one, if we received it, I'd sort of prefer to actually take it and weigh the cylinder in a situation like this one. But otherwise no, I sort of all feel what's been, what's been said, about sums it up.

Q97 O.K. All right. David, thanks very much for your time. The time on my watch is now 12.56pm. This interview is now concluded.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED