



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Person Interviewed: **Gabe WATSON** D.O.B.: **5/3/1977**

Place of Interview: **Townsville Police Station**

Date of interview: **27/10/2003**

Interviewing Officer:

Rank/No

Establishment:

Persons present : **DSC K Gehringer**

Sen. Const. G Lawrence

Gabe Watson

Mrs Watson

GEHRINGER: this is a recorded interview between myself Detective Senior Constable Kevin Joseph GEHRINGER, 10581, of the Townsville CIB being conducted at the Townsville Police Station on Monday the 27th of October 2003. Time now is 5:21pm. Other persons present are Senior Constable Glen LAWRENCE of the Water Police, Gabe Watson and his mother. Um Gabe just for the purpose, just so when we come back an listen to these tapes again, just so that whoever's going to transcribe them can um, can pick up the voices, just for voice identification, I'll just get the rest of you's to just state your name, full name, date of birth and your and your address, um, just for the purpose of voice identification, we'll start with Glen

LAWRENCE: my name is Glen Lawrence, I'm a Senior Constable with the er Townsville Water Police and my registered number is 10253

GEHRINGER: Gabe can I just get you to state your full name?

WATSON: ah yeah ah David Gabriel Watson, um date of birth is March 5th, 1977

GEHRINGER: and Mrs Watson?

Mrs WATSON: ah Lyndelle Watson, ah date of birth 10 UI 1950

GEHRINGER: um Gabe, as I was saying mate all we want to do is just go over with you again um the events that occurred um at, when you were conducting a dive on the 'Yongala' um, now I know we spoke to you the other day, at the hospital and you said there was a few things that you just wanted to get cleared up with us

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: mate um if you want to, just tell us what it is, you want to get cleared up

WATSON: oh the first and you'll have to probably maybe look at the statement is some reason I remember telling you that we were like 30 yards off the anchor rope

GEHRINGER: yeah

WATSON: which is roughly 90 feet

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: and I know, I know that's not accurate because the top of the 'Yongala' is at 45 feet

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: which would've meant as soon as we hit the water we could see it and we couldn't. The first visual contact we had with the 'Yongala' was around like the 20 25 foot range which means since to the best of my, you know, the best that I can remember you know we had the anchor rope in sight to me it seemed you know seems more accurate instead of 25 or 30 yards off it was more like 25 or 30 feet

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: ah just cause I was thinking you know if 30 yards is 90 feet, that means you know from the top we would've been able to see to the bottom, and I know that wasn't accurate an that, you know I don't know if I meant to say feet instead of yards or if it was just, all of it, but I know that was one of the things I thought of to say to you, ah you know that I couldn't remember

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: um and I've um UI I had to write this down so that I'd be able to remember

GEHRINGER: yeah no, you're right

WATSON: oh, and I know this is strictly ah my, my opinion on it

GEHRINGER: yes, yes

WATSON: and I know they still don't know other than just the preliminary stuff ah, you know about what happened but I do know that from what we were told of the current

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: and how the current was we, we were not told to prepare for how the current truly was, it was you know, from what the type of diving that we're used to and at home that would've pretty much been con would not have been considered a drift dive it would've been considered, you know pretty much severe current and you know, like I said I, we still don't know we don't know what physical thing happened with her

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: but I just can't help get out of the back of my head that, you know having a hold of her in a, you know the two different times and fighting against the current trying to go back to the anchor rope

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: I just can't help but think that, that the fight against the current is what allowed whatever thing took place that caused her to either black out or whatever in **UI** you know I keep thinking now that, had the current not been there you know, we'd still be out on the boat diving

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: and I don't think you know they didn't, they didn't prepare us for that current

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: you know as far as explaining, I just can't imagine with it like that, that any beginner diver you know like, you know like this thing here you guys can hang onto that um you know, we both realised once we got in the current that it, that's too much and that's when we turned and everything started to happen but you know going down you can't really tell the strength of the current till you're in it

GEHRINGER: yes

WATSON: and you realise you know, how it's pushing you and you know, there's no way neither one of us would've done that dive had we known and you know the best way I was explaining it to somebody back home, cause a friend of mine you know just recently got certified and you know we've been, he was my old room mate and stuff and we were kind of just talking about it an you know, I told him I said you know Jeff, had they said you know Gabe go down check out the dive, come back and let us know what you think you know I told him like there's no way I would've let any beginner do it I said I probably wouldn't have done it

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: just because of the, you know. There were just too many things that were present you know with that type of dive for a bad situation to occur and that you know, and I know it, what I think may not jive with what they come out with but I know in my head that's what I think, you know, the current was the trigger

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: for whatever, you know

GEHRINGER: now you mentioned out to me out at the hospital the other day, that there was a couple of things in the paper that

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: that you had sort of, concerns you

WATSON: yeah well that, that's what brought this up about the current was because ah, I don't remember who it was, one of the people from Mike Ball said 'conditions were near perfect' or, um that may have been actually the quote 'were near perfect ...

GEHRINGER: that was

WATSON: diving conditions'

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: and maybe, you know I don't know how things are, you know maybe for people that have dove the 'Yongola' a lot that was perfect 'Yongola' conditions, maybe for the way diving is in Australia, that's perfect conditions or near perfect, but I know at home it's not

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: you know when we go out in the Gulf, most of the time there's just there's no current and I've gone on some down there where they've said there's a pretty big current and it was you know not even a third you know as strong as that one was. And that was, that was the thing that set that whole thing off you know that they were saying it was 'near perfect' and you know I don't, you know I don't feel that it was 'near perfect'

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: you know just because of, because of

Mrs WATSON: misconception about the current

WATSON: of the current, you know

GEHRINGER: alright ad, an that was basically what is was in the papers that you, you wanted to

WATSON: right, yeah

GEHRINGER: bring up with us the other day

WATSON: yeah, there wasn't anything you know I guess at first I was, I was afraid they were going to come out an say stuff about her, you know saying she was an idiot or she had no idea what she was doing cause that's, you know she did but just kind of at the tail end he said 'we don't feel that it's diver related because it was near perfect diving conditions'

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: and that's kind of what set me off cause I thought well you know maybe the, the medical thing, you know, maybe it could've happened at that time no matter where we were, but I think because of the struggle you know against the current caused you know, whatever to happen to happen

GEHRINGER: alright

WATSON: you know, and we may never know I don't know but I, I just had to get that off my chest and

GEHRINGER: no that's fine, alright

WATSON: cause we're, you know, everybody been talking with us like you know like, would hate myself if I left not saying what I think I need to be said

GEHRINGER: yep, but absolutely and, and don't um, if there's something niggling at ya

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: don't, don't hold back in airing it to us cause um obviously our job it to um investigate it um fully and any input from your side of things um

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: is obviously necessary for us to make sure that

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: we've covered all bases

WATSON: and you know, and I don't know, I know I think one of you guys or both of you said you're going to look as far as air embolism to see you know how much could have happened from bringing her up you know

GEHRINGER: yes, yes, yep alright, can you go over for us Gabe and, again I know you've mentioned that you haven't go much of a recollection of, of your statement that you gave to us on the night

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: um, after after the incident happened, again can I just get you to in as much detail as you can just tell us everything happened, everything that happened from the time you got up the morning of the dive

WATSON: ok

GEHRINGER: to, to um you know your first dive, not working out and then obviously onto your second dive

WATSON: ok

GEHRINGER: and, an yeah, just absolutely everything

WATSON: and the only thing

GEHRINGER: we don't interrupt you

WATSON: no, the only thing that I can think of that you would ask, I didn't know at the time you asked what she had for dinner the night before

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: and it was grilled chicken

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: I mean I know that it probably doesn't factor in but

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: after you said that I was like, couldn't remember and I found the receipt

GEHRINGER: ok, sure, appreciate that

WATSON: whatever that's worth

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: oh, I guess we, we got up that morning um probably between six and six-thirty um, you know like I said because we were underneath the kitchen and we could hear pots, pans, walking that kind of stuff ah so we got up um you know and um, excuse me, um I think we went ahead an you know got our bathing suits on things like that and headed upstairs around, it was around seven o'clock ah for breakfast, um I think breakfast is served around seven-fifteen, ah somewhere in there um, Wade came in you know in the middle of while we were eating an you know was basically just saying you know we're diving the 'Yongola', you know it's said a little bit about the wreck, you know just not nec not condition related stuff but like you know it's sank in whatever year, how it sank and stuff

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: he said you know there not, he said that um, the people that are doing 'Natrox' after we ate to meet him on the diving deck and the people using their computers to hang around and meet in the, in the room where we were eating breakfast. Ah, so probably I don't know ten fifteen minutes till around eight o'clock I believe ah we went, we went back downstairs um, think we went back down to the room maybe for a few minutes, I'm not really sure, oh and then probably cause we we, we weren't using either one we were using all our stuff so, you know we weren't meeting at either place ah so I think. You know we may have gone back down to the room or something or we may have gone out on the dive deck and you know started, finished getting our stuff ready. Ah you know, so then around eight may have been eight-thirty, somewhere in there the times are so hard to remember, ah somewhere around in that in that time frame Wade came out, you know met everybody on the diving deck um you know to go over the conditions of the dive, you know to, they had a little chalk drawing on the board, you know he pretty much went over, you know some of the different safety things like, you know like we talked about what to do you know, if you surface way out from the boat, how to signal them ah you know ah whenever those hand signals made sure everybody had you know their safety sausage ah. Told us that you know we were going to get into ah little rubber boats um to you know to go to one end of the dive um cause he said it would be easier swimming that way as opposed to starting at the back and going up current um and that was probably thirty or forty-five minutes, I mean it was a lengthy you know lengthy talk

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: um you know so after he got through you know everybody started getting their stuff on and I know we didn't, we weren't the first to to get into the boats just cause I'm, you know I was I always hate putting on a wet suit until right before I know I'm getting in just cause it's so hot

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: oh so we waited for a couple of minutes an then you know just kind of started gathering our stuff up, ah getting into the right order, laying it all out and ah then ah we put on oh then we put on our wet suits and started started getting everything ready ah, and that was probably it may have been twenty minutes later, you know somewhere in there ah you know, if I had to guess on time I would say it might've been might've been between nine-fifteen nine-thirty, something like that

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: you know um ballpark you know as we were starting to get ready for the dive and then ah you know so we're had pretty much all our stuff on um waited for one of the boats to get back an got the rest of our stuff and got our BC's latched up and everything and went down and got on the boat ah, I believe there were six people total on the boat and not including you know seven including the driver

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: and we were the last two on the boat so we're in the front of the boat sitting across from each other ah if, you know you were looking from the drivers perspective I was on the right, she was on the left and then the boat you know pushed the boat off you know and he drove us up ah and kind of just said you know he was going to go up current from the buoy you know we would all do the roll off the back ah and then you know make our way to the anchor rope um and pull ourselves to the buoy well not necessarily the anchor rope the buoy was up and they have the drag line you know line that kind of floats back that you pull and then go down so we, we flumped off the boat and swam round and this, you know it was at this time we were probably the back of the group ah to start going um, you know we got up close to the anchor rope an ah you know kind of signalled each other lets go down, started to go down just a couple of feet under the water, my computer beeped at me um you know 'gas alarm' which is basically it's not, means it's not registering with the cylinder, either you know out of air, or it's not working or whatever so you know motioned to her, we went back up um you know I told her my computer weren't working, and I said well hang on a second and I went down you know a few more feet or a couple feet again just to see, cause normally with mine if it doesn't register before you're in the water, once your under a couple feet the pressure makes it kick in

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: and it never did so, you know I went back up told her and we went back over to the boat, I remember there was another girl already hanging on the boat that didn't have her weights set right or something, so they were there ah, he got them situated ah and then we went around to the back of the boat and climbed in, I told him my computer wasn't working right and ah you know headed back to the boat, ah and we got back to the, to the spoil sport ah, went up and put our BC's and tanks back in the holder ah, unhooked the regulators cause Uzi you know came over an you know was asking I guess cause he thought we were in the first group so that we'd actually made a complete dive and I explained to him that no we hadn't so we'll, we unhooked the

regulators and he hooked up the thing to fill the tank ah, and he was filling both our tanks and you know I asked him to, to find me some type of coin so um I could you know check my battery and um you know he got me a coin, I pulled the battery out swapped it around hooked it back up, you know ah, basically I had to wait you know until after they had to fill my tank because my regulator had to be hooked back up um to register the air pressure. So after we got through, you know topping up the tanks and I hooked everything um you know hooked my regulator and all that back, er turned the air back on held my computer next to it and it registered the PSI so I knew you know that that the problem, er so I went back an I you know casually told Uzi ah said you know well 'here's your quarter' and I you know 'don't tell anybody but I had my battery in backwards' ah so you know that problem was solved, er so we went back over to our equipment um, stood around for a few minutes ah, the total time we were there was probably ten fifteen minutes ah and it, it didn't seem like it was all that long

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: ah an you know, sat back down with our BC's waiting on the boat to come back, another boat came back er, you know we put our BC's back on again hooked everything up and ah walked over to the ladder um, you know to get down on the boat and ah again we were I think we were last onto the boat so, pretty much we were sitting in exact the same spots as before, ah and this was the one ah the boat that Wade who was the trip director or something you know he was, he was on that boat with a couple of other people and ah we headed back out um you know to the dive you know, back to the anchor rope and this time since we were in the front ah you know when we rolled off we were in front of everybody and I told Tina, I said lets go ahead and get the rope we're going down

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: um so we went on over to the rope ah, pulled ourselves over and got to the anchor line and you know we were, we were on our way down

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: ah and as soon as you got into the water you could see some fish and stuff so we weren't you know weren't in a hurry going down just you know cause there was some some bigger fish than what we see at home you know close to the surface so you know she was, she was down in front of me probably not that far cause ah, actually I had to move to the side cause you know so close on top, you know the bubbles were coming up an couldn't see a whole lot so ah, I kind of moved to the other side of the rope you know just so that I could see what was you know just see stuff on the way down

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: we got down to I want to say that it was around twenty something, I remember at some point when we could finally see the wreck I looked and I remember looking at my er computer just to see what depth we were at

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: er and it was in the twenty twenty-five twenty-eight foot range somewhere in that neighbourhood um and then we went on down er until basically we got right to the

top of the wreck and we decided before you know, before we went on our dive that the first time since we're gonna be there all day, the first time we dove it we would just go across the top since it was around forty-five feet that we would just go across the top, check everything out that, you know there are plenty of other dives later on to go down to the bottom and all that so, yeah we went down and I remember reached down and tapped her on the shoulder an kind of you know motioned out and ah we floated out and she was on my left I was on the right um and we went out, I don't know how far you know like I was saying the visibility you know I, my guess is you know around twenty feet or so ah from the rope was when um you know we both realised you know this currents a lot stronger than what we feel comfortable diving in and um about the time I turned to look at her was about the same time as she was turning to me, kind of gave me a motion to thumb back towards the anchor rope, so we turned around and started swimming and ah she you know she wasn't moving as quick as I was so either she stuck her hand out or I stuck mine out, I don't remember which, either way you know I had, I had her left hand in my right hand and ah you know it would've been about, she was back behind me so she would've been back a little bit and I started swimming cause at that point you know when, when I had her hand I realised you know this is not a good situation

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: um so I started swimming you know we could see the rope and all that and you know as we were swimming and I don't know I don't know how far you know as far as how many feet we had actually covered you know I don't, I just don't know ah but at some point I noticed as I was swimming she was dropping down and it got to the point where instead of both of us moving um horizontally through the water you know I was horizontal and she was almost vertical cause she had drifted down a little bit um so you know I let go of her hand turned back to her ah grabbed my inflator hose thinking you know she's sunk down a little bit so maybe she needs a little air and I was also at the point kind of thinking well you know if, we would just inflate our BC's and we'll just start to float up ah and you know I grabbed mine, squeezed it once or twice you know motioning to her to do the same so she grabbed hers and you know she squeezed, I know she squeezed it, whether she squeezed it hard enough or didn't squeeze the right thing or it wasn't working I don't, I don't know. I know she took it in her hand and I saw her physically saw her squeeze it, um but she was still going down and that's when you know I won't say panicked but you know I could tell at that point you know I mean she was scared before it but at that point I could tell that you know, she was frightened and that's when I realised you know something's going on so I went down ah and grabbed a hold of her BC vest and just um I don't remember which side but it was probably, probably her left side again and you know kind of pulled her toward me and then I turned and just started swimming um back towards the anchor rope um you know I don't know, I mean I think we were still in that forty-five foot range ah, I don't know cause at that point you know I didn't look at my computer any more, at that point I was just getting her back and I thought well her BC didn't inflate so we obviously can't ascend to the surface so we were swimming back to the anchor rope and I, and I, thoughts were going through my head were I'm gonna get her, get her back to the anchor rope and she can either pull herself up it or she can hold it until I can go get somebody um, you know I even thought you know I still had my clamp on my BC that I use you know when I would go spear fishing to clamp my spear into it and thought if she can't, I can clamp that to her BC the other to the rope and she can't drift off ah so you know we were swimming back and you know we could see, I could see people ah you know on the anchor line, I could, I still don't know if it was the safety tank that they hung or not you know it could've been, might not've been um but you know there were, I could

see people on the thing you know on the anchor rope and so I was kind of heading towards them and at some point you know obviously before we got there ah her hand hit my mask um it knocked my mask sideways so ah I had to, had to let go ah let go and kind of turn back so that I would have some you know that I would have some space cause at that point I didn't have a mask didn't know if she was still flailing ah didn't know what she was doing so I let go and I remember I kind of, I don't know if I, I think I may of kicked with my fins back you know to give myself a little bit of space ah you know went and, I cleared my mask, went to put, went to get my regul basically went to breathe and didn't have my regulator in so I grabbed hold of my safe second which is also my inflator hose and my BC, it's all in one. Grabbed it and I remember the thought going through my head as I put it in my mouth, you know I had no air so I knew I wasn't going to be able to breathe and I hit the button to push the air in and I remember thinking if I hit the wrong button you know um it's probably too late for me also, um so I hit the button ah you know so that I could get some air in my mouth, I had it in my mouth and my mask cleared turned back around and at this point she was going down um, I don't know if ah if she was still kicking or not ah but she was looking up had both her arms out you know reached, stretched up almost like looking at me reaching her arms up to grab so I kind of ah I upended myself you know head first um and I remember going down you know reaching and at this point I was thinking you know, I'm gonna grab a hold of her, I'm gonna yank off either her weights or you know just do whatever I could and I'd even thought at this point if I could grab a hold her I'm just gonna fill my vest up, grab a hold, let it pull both of us up to the top or whatever ah and ah you know she was she was out of arms reach ah you know just from me inverting myself you know I couldn't grab her hand cause she was you know maybe five feet below me or something like that I don't really know, I went down started kicking down and I was kicking down but as fast as I was kicking down to go get her um she was, she was going down just as fast and ah I just remember I mean its it still shocks me now to how clear some of the stuff, some of the thought were going through my head but I just remember thinking ah you know I can chase her down to the bottom, get down to the bottom and either you know dump her weights, let her you know dump everything let her rocket to the top cause at that point I knew something's going on and I thought well you know hell you know busted lung, or whatever's better than what in my mind I was thinking was, **UI** to happen and ah you know I just knew I wasn't going to catch her and I knew if we started, you know I knew, we were still we weren't to the bottom um I knew we weren't I don't know how far below the hull you know we could still could still see the hull of the ship and ah from what they said the bottom was a hundred feet so I was guessing we were around fifty something feet and I thought well if I go to the bottom and she's unconscious or something I don't other than dumping her equipment I don't know of anything else to do um so I thought well you know I'm half way down, if I go all the way down I can't come back up quick just because of how deep it is, so I thought well I'll just turn, shoot back to the anchor rope where I saw the people and I remember just turning up I probably never swam so fast in my life cause it just seemed like from the time she went down to the time that I realised I couldn't you know get to her that I was at the anchor rope and you know five or ten seconds and then could've been longer I don't know but it, you know it just, I know I was moving. Er got back to the anchor rope where some people were and ah I remember shouting through my regulator Tina, Tina, Tina, tapping em, I know the guy turned around and looked at me and I was pointing you know where she went down thinking you know if it's people from my boat maybe they'll make out that I said Tina and if their not, maybe they'll realise I'm pointing an I'm distressed and maybe you know they can get a visual cause I didn't know if people would be able to see her still doing down um and you know they just kind of looked at me and ah so from that point I just, I pretty much turned and, pretty much just rocketed to the top

and I just swam up to the top ah and that was one of the things I thought about later we were talking all those people that from that point I, you know I'm amazed that I didn't end up with the bends or something oh, you know and you know the only thing I did in going up there you know kicking back was I made sure that you know as I was going back to the rope that I wasn't going up quicker than the bubbles were, um that was something that I remembered from you know about descending you know ah but I know when I got to those people and they didn't know what I was talking about I just turned and kicked and went straight up to the top and I remember getting to the top ah yanking my mask off you know spitting out my regulator or not even have it in I don't know um and just yelling you know "Tina's gone down" er you know "I need help" you know I just that was basically all I can remember yelling was "Tina's gone down, I need help" "Tina's gone down, I need help" ah I remember the first big boat I saw it wasn't our boat it was it turns out later that was the boat that they actually brought her up on ah I remember seeing that boat and yelling to them and then kind of off to my I think it was back off to my right it was one of the you know little boats from our boat coming up cause our boat had basically anchored on the opposite side of the wreck and the other two were on the top side ah and one of the little boats came up and I just remember grabbing a hold and telling you know "Tina's gone down, Tina's gone down", he picked up his picked up his radio and called in an I don't know if it was emergency or whatever but he called something in and he you know asked what happened and I just I remember telling him you know that she went down within sight of the anchor rope ah, got onto the boat for a few seconds ah you know I remember taking off my fins and I may have even taken off by vest and all that and given it to him I don't remember, I just remember I was in the boat ah, we went back to the back of the back to the back of the Spoil sport ah, we weren't actually on it yet and they there cause there was another boat there, that they were getting people in, I guess to go search and ah I remember they asked me, you know what was she wearing, I just remember saying how she had a that she's got a purple mask ah and purple snorkel which wouldn't have been relevant because we you know snorkels were in our pockets um and I just remember yelling out she's got a purple mask, she's got blonde hair an they ten they pushed that boat off, our boat went up, I went up to to where our equipment is and I I I think to I think I did still have my BC on, cause I went back to to the bench and sat down, took that off I remember taking off basically everything except for the, the overall part the the underlayer of my wet suit, ah and I just remember ah the two ladies, the two ladies that didn't want them to come here with me ah

GEHRINGER: UI

WATSON: yeah um, I just remember you know she came up and said "oh my God what happened" and I said "I don't know Tina's gone down" and um she said well you know well what do we going to do, what can we do and I just last thing I remember is just saying "I need a hug" and ah so that was you know I just remember going up there an I was, I think we were both just bawling ah you know the night before I remember you know Tina was kind of picking on Paula and Ginger just cause you know they, I think they'd just fallen in an they were just absolutely worn out and they were dozing off during the during the meeting an so being knew her and ah you know they knew me and I just remember we stood on the back deck for a little bit and then ah I remember they were asking where the the surgeon is or the doctor and that was John ah an I I don't I don't specifically remember John going by, for some reason I think UI get in the boat and going and so for the time frame from when they said later it was she had a total bottom time of, or that she was on the bottom for around ten minutes so that means you know we may have been on the back deck for around ten minutes something like that and I remember John going over to the other boat and

ah I was just outside walking round and people would come by an, I remember some guy and said ah "have they told you anything" and I said "no" and he said "well you know they've got her on, on one of the other boats and they've got an IV in her" and I just remember thinking well you know there was just a huge relief because I thought you know that they were rehydrating her or something you know at that point you know my worst fear was when I came back up leaving her was that she was just going to float off um cause I knew that you know I was thinking back to that current and I was like 'my God she's going to be lost' and that was probably the reason why I didn't want to leave her to, I remember he said "well you know they've got her" he said "they've got an IV in her and John's over there and he's an ER surgeon of Chicago, so everything's going to be fine" and ah so at that point you know I was kind of kind of relieved and I remember after you know a few minutes or whatever they called me and said somebody yelled and said they need to know, something somebody asks you is on medication or something an you know I told them that you know that she other than contraceptive their wasn't anything and I told them we had we had both had a cold before she left and that she had finished her medicine while we were still in Sydney ah, I told them I didn't know what kind it was, but just that it was something for you know snotty nose and a cough basically the same thing I had and I went up to the bridge where the captain was and I remember he asked you know how old she was and I told him and I think he asked about what she weighed and I told him and he was talking back and forth with doctor and then I remember he said something about ah that she had been, I don't remember if he said unconscious or no vitals but I remember he said something to the doctor about ten minutes and I remember just looking out the front window cause the front window of the boat was facing the back of her boat and I remember seeing somebody still doing CPR and at that point I turned and left you know cause at that point I didn't know, I was just standing there talking to him and just kind of hanging out cause at the point I still thought everything was okay and ah I remember after I heard that he said you know that they hadn't had, she didn't have a pulse or didn't wasn't breathing and wasn't breathing when they brought her up ah and once when I saw them doing CPR I had to turn and leave and I went back out and I I don't remember exactly what I did, I remember I went back down to the deck for a few minutes then went and sat you know went back outside where my room was an Paula and Ginger were both there and um you know we were just kind of standing in the hall talking ah, you know people going back an forth getting their water and stuff and um at some point I just remember John coming back in I said before that Uzi come in and said something and he said you know whatever and I just said just just bring me some good news, so he left and then however long later John came back over and standing their and not, I knew you know when I saw him that he wasn't coming to tell me you know everything's fine she's just got a headache or something ah you know and he walked over and said "I don't have good news, and I did everything I could but we lost her" and you know I just remember that you know just pretty much lost it and I think he lost it too and, and I just remember falling to the floor you know outside the room and that's about all for you know however long you know until they decided we were coming back but other than you know talking with John and he was you know filling me in an I was trying to tell him you know in my words what happened and all that to try and see if he could think of you know anything that would've contributed to it and you know I just remember a few minutes later I told him I had to go see her and so they arranged that, went to see her came back um you know hung out on the boat until they decided what to do and that's you know when we turned and went back to port and I I must've been inside cause I didn't know until we got back in port that they still had her on the boat I thought because they said one of the other boats was faster that they had already taken her back on that boat ah so I don't, I must've been

inside cause I don't remember them bringing her back over um and and that was pretty much it other than then going out back. The worst thing I've ever experienced.

GEHRINGER: alright, are you alright do you want anything?

WATSON: can I get a glass of water

GEHRINGER: ok, do you want to have a break or just get a glass of water?

WATSON: oh maybe in a couple of minutes to just to

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: stand up, stretch, this never hurt easier I just

Mrs WATSON: oh sweetie it's

WATSON: and it's like you know want to just loose it but

Mrs WATSON: just loose it

WATSON: I just, I well I just I want to, I want to get over with, I want everybody to have all the information

Mrs WATSON: I know you do **UI**

WATSON: don't want to be here anymore, **UI**

Mrs WATSON: **UI** that's sweet **UI**

WATSON: probably have to pay

Mrs WATSON: I know but just you know

WATSON: I know, I know

Mrs WATSON: this is not always **UI** hurry up as fast as you can but

WATSON: yep

Mrs WATSON: I just want to go

WATSON: I know, I know

Mrs WATSON: it's like **UI**

WATSON: no I didn't pass out, I was standing there

GEHRINGER: **UI**

WATSON: John's, John's a pretty big guy like I mean his about my size but he you know he's a pretty strong guy he came up an I you know he was right there and I just remember

just diving into his, into his arm an you know holding on and we, we both lost it an I he was he was probably

Mrs WATSON: is he a medical person?

WATSON: yeah, **UI** he was holding onto me and I said to him **UI**

Mrs WATSON: **UI**

WATSON: **UI** and I think **UI**

LAWRENCE: ok, all I'm going to do is basically go through your dive the actual diving part of it, um step by step ok um, my first question was um, the orientation dive. You didn't do an orientation dive on the wreck before your first dive?

WATSON: no that was, that was the very first dive of the trip, the very first dive you know that we did

LAWRENCE: ok, did um anyone mention to you anything about orientation dives or?

WATSON: the only thing that was said about anything and I remember this from the night, the night before we left and we you know I was telling you guys we're filling out the paperwork and all that

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and I asked him ah, you know do we, do we night dive. Cause he, I mean I think that point he said we'd be there all day and I asked him if he did night diving and he said "well yeah" and that's when he'd asked he we'd done one and I said well I have but Tina hasn't and he said "well Tina I'd like to a night" you know "do that first night dive with you"

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: but there was no, you know and they knew you know when we filled it out you know he asked how many dives she'd done and you know she put them down an it had well actually the different types of dives ah so there was you know, so they knew where her lev her level was er but there was no orient orientation dive

LAWRENCE: so there's was was there an orientation dive offered to anyone on board or to yourself or?

WATSON: I don't know if it was the you know the other people, there wasn't anything directly to us

LAWRENCE: mmm, just it's **UI** swap them over ok

WATSON: an that, I mean that you know what you're saying about an orientation, that's what I want to be clear about the current you know that's, cause I think somebody tell me later you know, as we were coming back on the boat that Wade was actually going down with some you know people that were on the little rubber boat with us, I think somebody actually told me late later that Wade was actually taking those people on a not guided on, was orientation or

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: but they said the reason he was with those people is because you know they wanted to evaluate their diving ability

LAWRENCE: now just for the purpose of, sorry sorry mate, just for the purpose of the tape I'll just, I just want to get the time for the tapes here, it's a six minutes past six, just going to change the tapes

END OF TAPE



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Person Interviewed: **Gabe WATSON** D.O.B.: **5/3/1977**

Place of Interview: **Townsville Police Station**

Date of interview: **27/10/2003**

Interviewing Officer:

Rank/No

Establishment:

Persons present : **DSC K Gehringer**

Sen. Const. G Lawrence

Gabe Watson

Mrs Watson

GEHRINGER: six minutes past six, this is a recommencement of an interview between um myself DSC Kev GEHRINGER and Senior Constable Glen LAWRENCE and Gabe Watson, sorry mate

WATSON: no you're right

LAWRENCE: ok, so we're just finishing off before the tapes got changed um you weren't offered, neither yourself nor Tina were offered a an orientation dive or anything like that. ok

WATSON: no the

LAWRENCE: um you're saying UI radio that having done the dive now um that you didn't think any anyone but an advanced diver

WATSON: no

LAWRENCE: should be doing it, um did you bring those sort of questions up with either Wade or any other diving instructor before you went in?

WATSON: no, I didn't know anything about the dive before we did ah and like I said the only reason I'd done it you know, went to the aquarium, I bought I bought a book you know that had like Australia's Greatest Dives or whatever and it had the 'Yongola'

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and I remember reading in there it actually said you know the visibility is usually you know it was the way it made it sound was even you know was like you know jump in an your swept in the current you know it's a struggle just to get down that the

visibilities never more than like fifteen metres I think he said and you know that it's not, not what I would consider a dive that a beginner which is what Tina was, just was not a dive that they I don't even know if they should be allowed to do it with somebody

LAWRENCE: you read that before you you

WATSON: no, no, no, no

Mrs WATSON: this was yesterday

WATSON: this was

LAWRENCE: after you

WATSON: after, yeah before that all I know about the 'Yongola' was basically was Wade had told us, you know which you know gave us a brief history, it sank in a cyclone it was protected you know and that kind of stuff ah but no, I had no knowledge ah prior to it I just because of what happened it's made me want to know as much about it you know as I can

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um and that's when I when I was thinking about the current then I read stuff about the current it just reinforced that thinking, that's all

LAWRENCE: ok, so after the dive instructor questioned you about your experience, level number of dives and Tina's, did um anyone then any of the dive instructors offer to go with you like, come down with you on your first one?

WATSON: no, no

LAWRENCE: ok alright

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: ah, ok

WATSON: no sor, I mean you know they had, we would've just because we'd talked before I said you know if there's any dive that we don't I don't think you should do, I don't want you to do it an if there's any dive they don't think you should do, you shouldn't do it

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: you know just, you know we'd talked about that before but since it, you know it wasn't said

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um cause I, I think if somebody had mentioned something to her I think she would've come to me

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and you know told me

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: ah

LAWRENCE: right, right up until the night before getting your gear ready, seeing other divers going into the water etcetera um, how did Tina appear, how did, did she?

WATSON: she was, I mean she was actually excited ah you know about doing it you know especially when he said, you know told us about the I don't remember the name but on top of the dive across the top, that's one of the reasons why we were going across the top is there are two a what do you call them 'Nemo' fish and he said you know you swim by, they their great for pictures then as you leave they nibble on your ears or something ah you know he said up above there were sea turtles which are basically the the 'Nemo' fish and the sea turtle are the two things she wanted to see the most so that was the only reason why we went across the top ah an actually right into the right before ah you know as we were getting our equipment ready you know there was a sea turtle actually up on the surface and I pointed it out to her an you know she was excited um, um

LAWRENCE: um when you were setting your own stuff up, your own gear up. You set your own gear up? You did yours, Tina did hers?

WATSON: yeah, the only thing I did of hers was put the ah put the hook her BC to the tank just you know cause you have to pull it pretty good and you know and I pretty much every time we've been diving I've done it um you know just cause the BC with all the weights heavy and the tanks are heavy and all that so I've always, just always just kind of done it whether you know, she's never really exactly asked but I've always just done it so but I, you know I did hers then did mine and then ah I opened up the regulator bags handed her regulator and I had mine and then we started hooking that stuff up

LAWRENCE: ok, once you your first stages were on your tanks and your um BC lines are hooked in, computer run, did um you go through and do air check and inflation check?

WATSON: yeah we, ah, we did I I know I turned mine on, turned my air on

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: ah and then checked the regulator ah I, I don't know specifically, I would be surprised if she didn't just because every you know she's always done it before

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: but I didn't you know, we didn't watch each other do it, the only thing I can remember was you know after she turned it on um you know I had I think I asked her how much air she had or something like that um I know you know she had her you know computer in her hand

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: looking at that um just cause, the only reason I asked that was just cause you know I've been before at home and had a half full tank or something like that

LAWRENCE: ok and ah how much, how much air did she say she had?

WATSON: ah we both had over three thousand, I think mine was close to like thirty-five hundred

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and I think her's was over like maybe thirty-two or thirty-three I don't, I know it was over three thousand ah PSI but I don't remember exactly what just because you know it's one thousand, two thousand, three thousand

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and I just remember seeing it over the three thousand

LAWRENCE: ok, so did you do any buddy check with each other?

WATSON: oh only just I hooked, well when we stood up her, you know I did her strap you know across the front and you know pulled it tight um and you know just kind of did you know whether or not really did **UI** ready to go up, give me up, if you're ok, give me ok you know if you've got problems oh well I don't know if we did ah got problems but um, but no we didn't you know didn't, didn't I guess we went through like an official buddy check

LAWRENCE: ok, do you remember at any time before you got to the water um either yourself or Tina checking um your primary regulator and or BC inflation?

WATSON: well I know the primary we, since the beginning you know every time I turn mine I always punch it and sniff the air and she does the same thing

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: ah you know as far as well gone, well I still don't know about her checking her inflator hose but I do know that when we got off she was on the surface

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: so and we went down, you know we both had a hold and pulled so I know air came out um but we did and I and I an I know what you're talking about now yes you know

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: but we didn't go through I guess the official

LAWRENCE: chit chat

WATSON: buddy check but I do remember you know that we got off and we swam on the surface over there and I remember as we were going, going down you know we were facing each other we both pulled ah to let the air out

LAWRENCE: nor worries, um when you dive together, how much weight does Tina usually put on?

WATSON: oh, lets see, she's always had I want to say, and this, I'm trying I trying to go off memory

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: I know she always had two five's, she'd have one five on each side and I think one four on each side and then I don't know if she I think she even did like me and put a couple pounds in you know cause in the back of our BC's since they only inflate in the back to help hold you upright in the water

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: er I think on that dive I think I had close to thirty pounds and I bet she had two eight, she may've had between eighteen an twenty, something like that

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um but I don't, I don't know for a fact I just remember you know the weight, weight belt up under underneath the thing underneath the tray ah, the trays are under there I know I remember her pulling out you know some of the bigger ones um you know I do it, I know she asked asked somebody where the you know the smaller weights are and there was a bin you know kind of across from us where those were, but I don't know exactly how much weight

LAWRENCE: ok, did she carry a weight belt as well as what was in her BC?

WATSON: no, just we both had the integrated

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: um, so that was all

LAWRENCE: ok, er saying that um when you first dove down someone else had a problem with descending and needed extra weights, er did at anytime did Tina go and get when you were back on board, do you know if she got anymore weight?

WATSON: not that I know of um you know I don't, like I said I don't know cause you know when we got back on the boat you know that's when I've I was working on the computer thing

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um and she was kind of just hanging out so I just, I just don't know

LAWRENCE: ok, um

WATSON: you know as fas as that kind of stuff she's usually you know since I've been diving you know a considerable amount ah usually she asks

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: about that kind of stuff but I don't, I just, I don't I don't know

LAWRENCE: alright, a couple of other things. On your way down, down the shot line on the front, you said you were going down slowly and looking at things. Ok did ah, do you remember Tina stopping at any time um wanting to equalise or

WATSON: no she

LAWRENCE: see her going to equalise?

WATSON: yeah, when I did I, I did see her equalise um and with me it takes me as kind of you know when the, the last time I shot down for her I ended up messing up my ear because I, I have to equalise more than the average person er especially until, until I get down to you know about underneath thirty feet you know after that it's not that bad ah I do remember that I know at least once she did because I I remember she, you know I mean she was below me but you know I remember seeing her hand go like that

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: and then back but you know I mean she could've been adjusting her mask she could've been doing whatever um

LAWRENCE: do you remember how far down the shot line that was that she, that you saw her do that?

WATSON: no really don't, um no, I mean I would I would just have to flat out guess ah just cause I'm trying to think if when I saw that if I could see the boat or not, but I don't

LAWRENCE: when you initially again below the surface and deflating BC's you weren't equalising them together?

WATSON: ah, like initially, no we when we first um you know deflated the BC's we were on the I think they call the drag line so basically we'd let all the air out at that point and then pulled you know pulled ourselves anchor line and I remember I actually had to pull pull myself down a little bit to, cause I wasn't sinking quick

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um but I don't know cause as soon as we you know as soon as we'd deflated she kind of got in front me and I got behind her an you know we just win it

LAWRENCE: ok cool, you you left the anc er the shot line headed towards the wreck

WATSON: mmm

LAWRENCE: to the bow of the wreck at the top

WATSON: yes

LAWRENCE: um, did you see any other divers around at that time, did you pass anyone out, didn't pass anyone back?

WATSON: no, no I knew there was some behind us just

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: because of Wade an them

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: I don't know how far behind us they were ah, I don't think there, I don't think there are any others because the groups were spread out a little bit

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: so unless there was you know something that slowed the group before us up you know they I guess they would've already been gone but I don't, I don't think there was anybody um because there you know other, like I was saying other then you know me having to move over because you know her bubbles. When we were going down there weren't any other directly below us

LAWRENCE: when, when you were saying you had to move out of the way of her bubbles was that um because you're just about on top of her?

WATSON: oh well, we you know we were going down

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and you know I was right behind her and you know they were just drifting up

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: cause they were you know kind of like that so I just, I moved like that ah just cause they were

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: coming up

LAWRENCE: and um you've dived with, dived with her in the past, with Tina in the past? How, how was she breathing on this one was it um was it

WATSON: oh

LAWRENCE: how would you describe it, erratic breathing or?

WATSON: no I mean what I really want to say is I never paid attention to until you know we had the problem but even when at the point where you know we I did the with the inflator hose there was wasn't anything that struck me as unusual um but you know I, nothing struck me as unusual um about it

LAWRENCE: so are, are are so are you talking about when you motioned to her to **UI**

WATSON: after she'd kind of sunk a little bit

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: I thought well maybe, maybe she just needs to put some air in an that you know when I motioned in, at that point I didn't, I still wasn't noticing anything

LAWRENCE: so at that time she was still ...

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: breathing?

WATSON: yeah at that, at that point ah there was she was still rational I guess cause she'd looked at me you know I don't, I don't remember if she motioned or whatever but I remember she looked at me and I grabbed mine you know kind of a bit like that and that's when she grabbed hers and it looked like you know she was squeezing it and but you know because we were drifting and because she was still sinking you know I don't know you know

LAWRENCE: when, when she was saw her squeezing it, was there any bubbles coming out of it apart from her breathing?

WATSON: not, I don't know, I really don't

LAWRENCE: so she, she didn't exact she didn't disappear into a into a curtain of bubbles though?

WATSON: no, no, no, no, no, right we were, when we did that we were probably, probably as close as we are ah you know when I first did it and then she kind of floated, kind of down a little bit you know well she kind of floated down a little bit um and that's you know that's when I went and grabbed ah, but I know up until at least that point of the BC she was at least coherent because when I she didn't have a hold of hers and when I grabbed mine she went and grabbed hers and I remember you know her squeezing it

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: can you remember how, have you any idea how long you'd been under water at that time?

WATSON: oh if I had, if I had to guess and I mean it's strictly a guess maybe five to seven minutes ah just cause I know when we went down, we went down slower than if you know we were at home and you know we were just going to the centre of certain death

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: we were that you know but since you know basically on that dive as soon as you go there's start swimming we went down a little slower just, just looking at stuff um so our descent was probably slower than normal um by that time it could've, you know it could've even been pushing ten minutes but it just, you know it all happened so fast you don't know it doesn't seem like ten minutes had gone by

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: so prior to indicating to Tina to um inflate her BC ...

WATSON: mmm

LAWRENCE: she had motioned to you that she wanted to surface?

WATSON: ah she motioned well she motioned back to the anchor line

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: yep how, how'd she do that?

WATSON: oh we kind of, I don't remember if she tapped me or I just remember about the same time as she's doing that my thinking was 'this currents too strong we're going back' an she turned to me and you know did one of those cause I know at that point we could see the anchor line and so she did kind of back to the anchor rope and so you know cause you know we weren't all you know we could still see it so we were thinking we're or I know at least I was thinking you know we can just turn, swim to it um you know and just go back up um cause at that you know that time I guess you know I don't know if there's anything else going on other than you know she may have just realised that the current was too strong for her

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: I don't know what was going on at that point er but she did motion back to the anchor rope

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: er and that's when we turned

LAWRENCE: when, when she did this, um didn't notice anything unusual then did you think there was you know just started the dive that it was odd?

WATSON: oh normally I would've, the only reason I don't is just because ah you know as soon as we got out in the current I knew she had never been in any type of current like that

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and I don't you know I was pretty confident that that's what her concern was that the current was too strong she couldn't probably well you know I mean it's just me making my guess but you know I think that at that point her concern was how strong the current was and she just wanted to turn go back to the rope and go back up

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: when how did, how did you feel about that. Were you ah?

WATSON: as far as

LAWRENCE: going back to the anchor rope and

WATSON: ah when we first started I didn't think you know I figured you know that was you know no problem just we'll turn around swim back to the rope ah you know an just go back up

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um and so you know what I mean so that's

LAWRENCE: and Tina didn't seem anxious that time or breathing any harder?

WATSON: ah no um I mean I did notice a change in the breathing um you know cause I think you know if I had seen just a you know big plumes of bubbles

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: you know I might've been easier to you know or it might've made me realise you know something serious is going on but I don't remember any any change other than just you know she had decided and I pretty much had decided at the same time you know we're going back

LAWRENCE: ok alright ah ok. Ok, Tina's you motioned to Tina to inflate her BC, she's done that nothing's happened, she still sinking away. You've gone, you've upended and gone down after her, is that right?

WATSON: yeah the ah, when she started to sink she the, the first time

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: you know she was going down but she wasn't that far out of reach so I kind of, I don't I don't think I totally did one of these numbers

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: I think I kind of swam you know over a little bit kind of grabbed and pulled her too me

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and turned and that's when I remember, that's when I knew something's going on and I was swimming and I just remember you know I don't know if she was kicking with me or not I just remember yelling through my regulator you know "swim Tina swim" um you know and just going

LAWRENCE: and what sort of feedback were you getting from Tina?

WATSON: ah see I don't, at that, at that point I don't know because we were I had her right here I was watching the anchor rope I remember once I looked and said you know "swim Tina swim" and then I just turned and I was going

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: cause I don't know what kind of progress I was making you know

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um so I just, I don't know if that's why, you know my first, my thought was the first time when I had her hand we were swimming she'd just you know gotten extremely tired and then you know we did BC and at that point she was tired and may have been maybe starting to panic an then

LAWRENCE: so why, why do you say that. What, she was starting to panic, was there any indication?

WATSON: no I'm just, I'm just saying that if like

Mrs WATSON: you were trying to second guess

WATSON: well yeah, I mean I am second guessing but

LAWRENCE: I mean if

WATSON: like

LAWRENCE: I'm not trying to put you into a corner but

WATSON: right, right, right

LAWRENCE: kind of thing but I mean, um I know what it's like down there and when people start to nark out or start to panic you know

WATSON: well she did know

LAWRENCE: UI was there any indication?

WATSON: no maybe panic's not the word, I know at that point she was um what am I trying to do, cause at that point I was starting to get scared

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: so I'm pretty sure you know at that point she was starting to get scared and that was my you know my first thought before you know things were coming out about what could've been an all that my thinking was, swimming she just wore herself out an then you know

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: you know I

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: don't get yourself wrapped up in

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: in hindsight, ok cause it'll drive us all all mad

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok um, like I said I'm not trying to put you into a corner

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: um just go through well I'll, I'll talk you through it

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: an just go through exactly what happened alright um and listen mate diving does get scary at times

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok so there's, there's no dramas there I'm not gonna

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: get all excited about that um but I do need to know

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: how the

WATSON: oh yeah, I know

LAWRENCE: how the dive progressed, alright. Um ok, so you've you've reached out an and you've grabbed Tina um

WATSON: you talking about the, second time

LAWRENCE: second time

WATSON: ok

LAWRENCE: yep um been, done the BC thing, still sinking down an grabbed her um said er her left hand an my right hand, ok?

WATSON: ah well the second time it was basically my right hand to her left side of the BC

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: you know the first time it was my right hand, her left hand

LAWRENCE: and that's when

WATSON: then after the BC I grabbed her and that's when I you know since the hand didn't work first time I though I'm just grabbing her BC and we're going

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: ah so that's when I went and I grabbed a hold of her BC right here, just kind of clinched it and turned and it was just going um plus I was you know cause we could see you know as we turned we could see the anchor rope and all that

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and we could see some people there so I, in a way I was kind of thinking just may look unusual if somebody's happened to look you know if you see somebody cause I know at that point I was breathing hard cause I could I could feel the heat on my face

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: you know just from being so hot and so I know I was probably throwing out bubbles all over the place so in the back on my mind as we were kinda going and I was kinda of thinking you know these people probably can see us

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um or at least think something odd going on

LAWRENCE: ok as, as you were doing that, I mean I I can imagine you you're finning pretty hard to get back

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: um can you hear anything else um you know you can hear people breathing you can hear reg noises?

WATSON: no I mean I cause I I was breathing so hard you know if you look on my computer the breathing rate is as, it's as high as it'll get

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um so no, I mean I couldn't, didn't hear didn't hear you know any yelling or any any I didn't hear anything as far as from her

LAWRENCE: ok, no worries, um ok you said just a bit earlier just to clarify it um that when you sort of grabbed her inflator or BC and nothing happened, she was still sinking, she looked scared at that point, I know she was scared before. Can you just explain that to me, like when she went for her inflator and nothing happened, she looked you said she looked scared?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: I mean again, there was nothing still like you was, there was still no indication from her, she she did it but?

WATSON: well I think you know panic's not the right word but I know you know we made eye you know we were making eye contact and all that and I'd maybe scares not the word, concerned just cause we tried the first time and we didn't make it

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: because I was unsure, I probably looked the same way cause my thinking then was you know how, how to do this and one the reasons why I'd motioned to the BC was motioned to her about the BC was because I thinking we'll, we'll just float up we may be two hundred yards out in the ocean but we'll just float up but ah cause you know I didn't you know that was just what I thought ah

LAWRENCE: no worries

WATSON: but you know I mean I think you know there wasn't any like drastic facial expression

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: but you know I was concerned and worried at this point so

LAWRENCE: ok, ok um and you also say that ah 'she was scared before' um what, what, why do you think that?

WATSON: I don't know

LAWRENCE: don't know, how'd

WATSON: unless I just meant you know that she was just from us

LAWRENCE: yeah

Mrs WATSON: UI

WATSON: you know and it may be unless I meant you know just from either of us swimming you know attempting to get back and not making it or just from you know just from you know maybe when she realised the current I don't, I really don't know what I mean when I said that

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: no worries, um gone back down grabbed her BC and you're swimming hard now towards

WATSON: mmm

LAWRENCE: towards the anchor line or the shot line

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok, um so you, you were looking at the shot line

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: didn't look behind you

WATSON: yep

LAWRENCE: above you or below you?

WATSON: at that time, she was probably right, we were probably almost shoulder she was probably just a little bit behind me but, because the way I'd you know reached down, grabbed a hold you know and went she was probably cause I remember I had my arm right in here somewhere

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: ah so she was pretty close she was

LAWRENCE: she was helping you to swim at that time to be up there with you?

WATSON: see that's what I don't know um at that point that's when I you know it didn't work with both of us swimming the first time, you know so when I grabbed her that time that when I was swimming as hard as I could cause I didn't know if she was and you know and I guess that's kind of when the adrenalin kicked in and I just kind of thought well I'm just dragging her back to the line and we'll take things from there

LAWRENCE: ah you mentioned before that you, you had thought of just grabbing her and popping the BC and, why didn't you do it then?

WATSON: then?

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: because I didn't know what the problem was

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um cause I, my thinking was ah you know like didn't know if you know if it was her inflator hose that was the problem I didn't know if she was having some other problem I thought you know concern inflator hose or she just wants to go back to the line and we're down you know forty-five fifty feet and I dump her stuff, she doesn't know to breath out as she goes up and to go up slower than her smallest bubbles you know I knew she if you know it was, it was one of those kind of things and I mean I did, I did think about it but I guess because of the anchor rope being there thinking I can get her back to that because I didn't know what, you know just didn't know what was going on

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: ah so that I mean that's pretty much the reason why cause I you know was just

LAWRENCE: ok, and between you said that then you realised that you couldn't surface and that's why you were heading back to the anchor rope?

WATSON: yeah the, the well yeah the second, when she was sinking that's when I I thought you know something was going on ah so I just grabbed her and went

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: cause you know if she couldn't go up you know I didn't know, I didn't know what was going on um you know

LAWRENCE: what was, what's um in your experience what's, what's the deepest dive that you've done?

WATSON: that I've done?

LAWRENCE: yeah

WATSON: um below a hundred an fifty

LAWRENCE: below a hundred an fifty?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: and what was your, remember what your bottom time was there?

WATSON: mmm, no it's in my log book

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: ah the 'Cosmill' dives

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: Cosmill, Mexico

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um we did, I won't say several but I know I know there's at least one I did below a hundred an fifty

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um you know as the, I think it may have been the only one we did that day but, we just never cause that time I think I'd just, I'd either just gotten my rescue cert or just gotten my bands I don't remember which and we were with our instructor

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: so you know it was one of those he, and also he wanted us to experience what it felt to be narked

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: so you know on that dive we basically rolled off the boat you know upended an swam down to a hundred an fifty feet an

LAWRENCE: sat

WATSON: but I don't know, I don't know but the bottom time was on that

LAWRENCE: ok, no worries, so so being at this sort of depth was was no dramas to you?

WATSON: yeah that, right that was, yeah

LAWRENCE: ok um ok the um oh right, forgot to turn it off

WATSON: everybody over here has songs for there rings I've noticed

LAWRENCE: um ok, sometime after that she, Tina has come round and dislodged your mask

WATSON: mmm

LAWRENCE: is that right?

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: um excuse me just going to turn this thing off

WATSON: and I don't know, I know I didn't say this at the time but when I went back my mouth piece was not connected to my regulator and I had a fitted mouth piece, you know they zip tie on there but I had to **UI** bowl of water and put it in your mouth and it moulds to your mouth

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um cause when I was getting back um you know a day or two later I think it was after you got here wasn't it

Mrs WATSON: yeah it was **UI**

WATSON: an I pulled my stuff out of my bag yet, cause my stuff was in my bag wet so I pulled out rinse them out and I noticed my mouth piece was not actually on my regulator

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: which again it's me speculating, it leads me to believe that she hit you know when she hit it with some force it wasn't her hitting my mask and me going 'aaah'

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: you know like I think I said that night

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: because my mouth piece was not there

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um but I mean I guess it also it's possible it could've gotten something happened on the boat after, I don't know but I noticed it wasn't on there

Mrs WATSON: **UI**

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: can you remember what happened immediately before, she's hit your mask? Remember hearing anything? Feeling anything

WATSON: no, I mean

LAWRENCE: from Tina herself?

WATSON: no ah I mean like I said you know immediately before that was when I grabbed her and you know I know the swim I know our attempt when I had her hand was a lot longer than our attempt to get back when I had a hold of her BC

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: ah from that time we started going, you know again I don't I don't know you know time wise but it wasn't as long as the first swim

LAWRENCE: so matter, could be a matter, a matter of a couple of seconds?

WATSON: well it would've been, I mean it was longer than that oh

LAWRENCE: yeah

WATSON: cause I, I do remember when I did that we started to make some progress and that's when I yelled I remember I reached over and I said you know "swim Tina swim" turn back was going some more and then you know sometime after that was you know when her hand came across and hit my mask

LAWRENCE: ok, you you've turned around, oh you let go of her first?

WATSON: ah yeah when when she hit the mask

LAWRENCE: yeah

WATSON: yeah she hit the mask, I let go

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: and grabbed my mask

LAWRENCE: yeah and um give yourself some room

WATSON: mmm

LAWRENCE: put your mask, cleared mask um realised you didn't have ar reg in

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: got your second, ok and then you saw, you looked at Tina again?

WATSON: ah huh

LAWRENCE: ok, what was happening then when you?

WATSON: when, when that happened was when she was, she was at you know she was sinking down, I upended she had both her arms up and she was looking up, her eyes were open

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: um that's when that was when my thought about dumping all her stuff came into play, cause at that point when I dump, upended I thought you know as I was reaching for her hand I'm gonna grab her and I'm yanking her stuff of cause something

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: you know serious is going on now um so you know I was going down you know just to, to try and grab a hold

LAWRENCE: yep, ok

WATSON: ah and yank her stuff

LAWRENCE: um when, when you first saw her at this time...

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: ...going down um was she still expelling bubbles?

WATSON: yeah there were still

LAWRENCE: UI

WATSON: see I don't know if they were

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: I know there were bubbles ah but you know I don't know if

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: you know I don't know if the reg was free flowing or if she was just exhaling you know I just don't know, I do know there were bubbles

LAWRENCE: ok, lots of bubbles, little bit of bubbles, normal?

WATSON: probably just yeah, just normal ah wasn't like you know big plume ah but you know there were some and like I said on that one when I upended that was probably that was just a matter of, cause if we were at forty something feet and I think my computer said fifty-four you know that was just a matter of ten foot or less going down

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: so that part it was probably just you know a few seconds ah before I realised she was going down faster than I could catch up with her um

LAWRENCE: um ok, so you can recall and you realise that you she was going down faster than you were?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok um and then you said you've gone back to her, you went through a couple of things in your mind as to what to do, keep doing down to the bottom with her...

WATSON: mmm

LAWRENCE: ...grab her gear etcetera but you, you knew the bottom was around about a hundred foot?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok, um but you've dived deeper than that before?

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: um, how much air, did you have left at the time? You remember?

WATSON: I don't, UI

LAWRENCE: do you remember if you'd been sucking hard the whole the whole time?

WATSON: oh well, I don't know ah I know I'd been sucking extremely hard just from all the swimming

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: I don't know ah you know how, I don't know how I had um you know but like I said the reason I, the reason I didn't go is because my first instinct was just to keep going down with her

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: was because I don't, other than pulling all her stuff off and letting her shoot to the top I didn't, didn't know what to do and since I figured you know I'm around fifty something feet ah you know I'm as close to the top as she is to the bottom I thought you know well that way I maybe I can go get somebody, cause I did know if I went down to the bottom thinking it was a hundred feet, if I got down and she was still conscious and just couldn't get up, I was still going to have to leave and it was going to take me a lot longer to get to the surface from a hundred feet just cause I you know I wouldn't be able to get there as quick as was from fifty something feet so ah you know that's when I decided well I'm gonna go get somebody how maybe knows what to do

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: on the bottom

LAWRENCE: no worries, aah ok so it didn't, you've left and headed back up towards the er the shot line?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: um how fast were you ascending then?

WATSON: oh probably faster than I should've um I know when ah you know when I turned, I think I went at about a forty-five degree angle

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: could you just, sorry, could you see the the shot line from where you were? You had a point of reference or?

WATSON: I think so

LAWRENCE: yeah

WATSON: because I, I remember when I turned I kind of looked and I kind of picked a spot

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and that's what I aimed for and I think the spot happened to be the spot where the people were

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: but I do remember that, you know when I realised I got to go get somebody yeah my, my first instinct from right there was dump my stuff launch

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: you know and get there as quick as I possibly could um but sounds like but you know if something happened I can't tell anybody and who know's what happens and so I just remember looking like forty-five degree angle and picking a spot on the rope that happened to be either where the tank was or the people were, I'm just not sure um and that I just I took off

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: so

WATSON: I don't know about how many feet per second or anything like that

LAWRENCE: no that's fine

WATSON: but I know it was probably borderline to me getting in trouble

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: so it wasn't a controlled, well would you call it a controlled ascent?

WATSON: controlled ascent, no

LAWRENCE: or emergency ascent?

WATSON: oh it was, well no, when I got to the line from there I turned and just went up

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um but I saw people and I thought if I can get to them as quick as possible and I can communicate to them somehow you know they can see her still going down, you know cause I still didn't know you know cause when I turned to leave I didn't I didn't turn and keep looking back or anything I just picked a spot and went and so I saw the people, went up to them you know it was like, was grabbing a hold of them shaking them and I know they looked at me I know they even looked in that direction but then they looked back at me you know like you know 'what are you doing'

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and so from that point at whatever depth I was I just turned and went um so yeah I guess you know half of it would have been controlled the other half would have been would've been risky I guess

LAWRENCE: ok, um at any time during the dive probably at the deepest part of your dive before trouble happened, um did Tina display any odd sort of behaviour like um like she was affected by ah getting narked out or?

WATSON: no, are you talking about as we started or towards the end of the dive?

LAWRENCE: as soon as you got to the top of the wreck

WATSON: the wreck

LAWRENCE: it was sort of just before she sort of said 'I want to go back'?

WATSON: ah no, I mean that's you know she she acted like she had a you know **UI** lots of other times you know an just swimming out and kind of looking this way, that way, you know at fish and

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: stuff like that

LAWRENCE: have you been at um, at a marked depth with Tina before?

WATSON: no

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: no the deepest, the deepest I've ever gone and dived with Tina was probably around the fifty foot mark um you know just we've done ah I don't know I don't even know how many, I know like some of the dives I did with her while she was still doing her class

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and then we did some that were you know just us at Bluewater in Birmingham but no we you know around fifty feet was probably about the deepest that the two of us had ever been together

LAWRENCE: ok had um, you you've done your open water course, advanced course and a rescue course?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok, you've done buddy breathing any of those courses?

WATSON: ah I think like in the beginning, just ah the going up the controlled ascent, sharing air

LAWRENCE: sharing air?

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: um

WATSON: the rescue and I, I don't know we may've talked about it the rescue that we did was mainly like majority of it was search patterns

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: ah you know we did a lot of that stuff and we did a lot of work with like air, the lift bags

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and then, then we did some stuff that I, you know like ah you know dumping your, kind of stuff I was telling you about you know the run was running through my head of things that

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: UI could do um you know some of those things, there wasn't there was nothing in our thing about how to get somebody, how to do any type of revival or anything from the bottom there was nothing about, other than controlled ascent you know sharing air ah there was nothing

LAWRENCE: ok but there was, there was nothing up until the point that you realised that things are happening

WATSON: right

LAWRENCE: nothing that sort of gave you an indication that maybe we should hang onto each other and and?

WATSON: oh no cause I, cause I, you know cause I think if and again I don't know if she was having trouble breathing, I think she might've asked

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: you know she would've, cause she knew and she knew before that you know she knew that I had done done that kind of stuff in the class and that I knew and that's one of the that's of the things that the dives like we both we trained by the same instructor so we knew we had all the same signals and stuff ah so I you know if and that, that was one of the first things I thought you know was that maybe it was but she nev there was never any indication from her

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: that she was needing air

LAWRENCE: ok, I think that's about um sorry, we're rehashing it over an over again I know but

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: um I think that's that's all I have at the moment, Kevie

WATSON: can I ask a couple of questions the day and I don't know, you guys you might not be able to say anything, are they thinking that maybe she had too much weight or that her regulator cleared or something

LAWRENCE: um no there's, there's nothing else than what we said like you're told that um the hospital the other day ah there's nothing

WATSON: I mean, I know you've got to ask all these things anyway but that's I was just interested to know

LAWRENCE: yeah no if, I'm more of ah the fact that if you thought she was carrying the normal weights

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: um, have you done many um sea water dives together in the past?

WATSON: I have, no that was the first salt water dive that I have done with her

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um I think, and I don't know how many she's done, I think she's done a couple

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: um just you know with the class and stuff like that, I don't we had never done one um

LAWRENCE: when ah before your first dive or after your first dive when you were back on 'Spoil Sports' with your computer and before that before your second dive, do you recall anybody on on the deck talking about extral weights. Putting extra weights in?

WATSON: ah I mean I know there was a lot of talk among among a lot of people about weight but I don't remember you know I just don't remember when and and all that stuff ah I mean I know there was talk with people

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: I just don't remember you know if, if somebody talked to Tina about more weights or if Tina talked to somebody about more weights you know or if if I talked to somebody about more weights I just, I just, I don't know. I just remember when I did mine I, I always overweight

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: when I, I mean not overweight overweight but I like to when I release my BC I like to go um, just to get down quicker ah and that's when I say you know I think I had probably close to thirty pounds

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: ah but I you know I just I don't know I don't know if she talked to somebody you know other than what you know she had said to me about you know the the weights UI

LAWRENCE: ok um, both your your sets are fairly new aren't they?

WATSON: oh mines, probably since about ninety-six

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: or whatever, whatever my card says I first got certified my open water

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um and the 'Cosmill' dives were not too long after that, that was like my first dive, first trip I took with a friend ah, but we bought me and a friend of mine bought all our stuff during our class

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: um and so Tina did the start of her class, the full session part with the rental gear

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and then just cause you know I didn't want her buying stuff and taking it **UI** and all that and they went out to the Bluewater to do the rest of the stuff she went ahead and bought the rest of her stuff was purchased back in the spring some time

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: um

LAWRENCE: we'll just wait for these tape to

WATSON: ok, can I get a little bit more water

GEHRINGER: yeah

WATSON: we're this

LAWRENCE: yep

END OF TAPE



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Person Interviewed: **Gabe WATSON** D.O.B.: **5/3/1977**

Place of Interview: **Townsville Police Station**

Date of interview: **27/10/2003**

Interviewing Officer:

Rank/No

Establishment:

Persons present : **DSC K Gehringer**

Sen. Const. G Lawrence

Gabe Watson

Mrs Watson

WATSON: and I'm just going off you know the next day my calf's just quit hurting yesterday

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: so I know I was swimming

GEHRINGER: hard

WATSON: hard as hard I ever have, and so I was just thinking you know that she's if she was going to have **UI** can being over exerted can that could trigger something?

GEHRINGER: I don't know Gabe um

WATSON: cause I don't either

GEHRINGER: um, I'm not a diver as I was saying to you the other night and

WATSON: no

GEHRINGER: and um even worse when it comes to to the medical side of things

WATSON: and like you know it like I said you know um you know I know the air embolism's kind of gives a little bit of an answer but then it brings up the whole question well is that what happened at that moment or is that what happened you know when they brought her up. Cause I know I'd ask Wade you know ah you know cause I I remember seeing her with her regulator and her mask on but I thought well maybe I'm just seeing stuff and I remember asking Wade, I said 'well was her mask on her regulator in' and he said 'yeah'

GEHRINGER: so you when, when she was sinking down with her arms up

WATSON: right

GEHRINGER: UI

WATSON: I know, well that's all I had so I know her mask was on and I was thinking the her regulator was in but I, I couldn't say I was a hundred percent sure but I was ninety-nine point nine

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: and so I asked Wade when we got back, I said 'was her regulator in' he said 'yeah' her said 'her mask was on, her regulator was in' and so that's when I was thinking well ok, you know that you know just wondering if he could I know he said that 'she wasn't doing anything when he brought her up' and I thought well you know if you're at eighty something feet and somebody brings you up

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: and your air's still pressurised from down there or whatever that you know you're going to some of that stuff that's why that's the only reason I was wondering

GEHRINGER: that's right yeah, I I believe um

WATSON: and I don't they may not be a question that can ever be answered, I don't know

GEHRINGER: yeah I believe Wade did whatever the proc, the correct procedure is

WATSON: yes

GEHRINGER: if you're bringing someone out which I think is UI

WATSON: ok

GEHRINGER: to do that so think that um, that's what happened UI

WATSON: so she would've had some air that was pressurised from the bottom, I get, well you weren't in there what I was asking was, you know we may never know whether the air embolism happened at the time you know when she hit my mask or whether it happened on the bottom, and I was just wondering if she was down there and got her air in or had some air in her or whatever you know to me it seem like well you know that was pretty much definitely going to cause some air embolism going up and then

LAWRENCE: the, the way she was brought up, was indicated to us was that her airway was open all the way out up and um she was she was getting air in UI um

WATSON: oh but

LAWRENCE: not on her own but

WATSON: yeah but just UI closed

LAWRENCE: the airway was open so you know to you in a an emergency thing, you've got your gear just look up, open your open your airway and just exhale alright so, as he was standing it's coming out

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: that was done um by the diving instructor, he knew how to do it

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: and he knew how to bring them up, yeah he did bring her up quick but um didn't know that, how long she'd been there so

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: yeah

WATSON: well apparently Wade, cause Wade if I understand it right wasn't one of the people that went in as an emergency dive he was actually already down there

LAWRENCE: that's correct

WATSON: cause I remember he told me he saw her sitting on the bottom

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and she was kind of looking up at the fish and he thought she was sitting there watching the fish and I don't know if he went over to her and realised something was wrong and looked for me or looked for me and then went to her, but I remember he was saying you know that he saw her and at some point was looking around to see me and didn't know where I was

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and so I just remember thinking later that you know it's pretty unfortunate that you know that he just happened to come across, cause my I mean it this would've been a million times worse if they had not found her

LAWRENCE: yes, yeah

WATSON: I just I can't imagine that

LAWRENCE: so

WATSON: I really don't want to

LAWRENCE: no, um mate we just for the, the tapes have changed

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: your gears, fairly knew just not old second hand hand me down type stuff?

WATSON: no my was, I don't know if you're familiar with air access

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: mine was the fir like the first generation air access, so whatever

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: I remember I actually

Mrs WATSON: but you purchased it brand new

WATSON: right right

LAWRENCE: yep right

WATSON: it was brand new, but I remember I got it an actually had to wait until the dive site actually you know they conned me into actually as much money as I could

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: and I just remember having to wait until the air access got there, so that

LAWRENCE: no worries

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: um since getting your gear, or since Tina getting her gear have you worked on your gear yourself, have you changed

WATSON: I take mine to get it serviced once a year

LAWRENCE: yep

WATSON: ah her's I don't I know I don't I'm almost positive she hasn't um but you know again I don't know but you know she knew and I knew you know pretty much everybody knows you have to get it serviced once a year once a year

LAWRENCE: mmm

WATSON: and I don't think she would've had any reason to do anything to it

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: but as far as me I you know other than putting you know hooking her B her BC to her tank you know that's pretty much the only

LAWRENCE: that's it

WATSON: stuff I've had with her gear

LAWRENCE: you know if Tina had um changed anything on her on her gear like putting computers on

WATSON: she

LAWRENCE: changed the lines, put nokie on or

WATSON: no um er I don't think she would've known how to do that

LAWRENCE: ok

WATSON: well I know she wouldn't know how to do that cause only divers know how to do that sort of stuff um

LAWRENCE: yeah

WATSON: so I don't think she did

GEHRINGER: UI obviously as Glen's been going little things are obviously pop into your head as you go through

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: um on the very first dive

WATSON: uh huh

GEHRINGER: sorry I'll go back further to that prior to getting into the little boat to go out to do your first dive where you knew you had you found out you had a battery problem

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: are you saying that you yourself didn't have any conversations with Tina about what weights and how many weights that she was going to put in?

WATSON: no very, the time before we ever got into the boat, no the only thing I remember was she said I need two fives and I don't remember if she said like two fours or two threes or whatever um and then she said I've got to find me two little ones to put in the back of my BC, um and I remember she asked where the weights were and I pulled the weight belt up that was in the tray underneath cause they gave us each person a big thing and ah I remember I pulled it up an you know she pulled off whatever she was going to use um and then something was said, I don't know whether she asked somebody or whatever something was said about where the smaller weights were and you know I know she got some smaller weights to put you know in the back pockets you know of the BC ah but there was nothing about you know how much are you going to use or anything like that, I just assumed she was using her standard amount um

GEHRINGER: do you know who physically put her weights in her BC?

WATSON: probably her but

GEHRINGER: did you see her do that?

WATSON: no ah you know I mean I didn't I didn't you know I assume it was her but I you know just don't know um

GEHRINGER: yep, um when we took your statement the first night

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: um it was it was we were getting to finalising it, um I think I mentioned to you how, how confident she was and you you made the comment that um 'most dives she she needed a bit of a pep talk at the start but once she's in the water she's ok'

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: was it a case of, did she say anything to you or did you notice anything about her by her actions or what have you about being a bit nervous about doing this dive?

WATSON: the only thing, the only time anything was ever said about nervous about diving was ah when we were still in Sydney cause she knew this was you know my part of the trip ah and she just said you know she said something to, and I don't remember the exact words, but something to the effect about she asked me if I was getting nervous about diving coming up and I said well yeah, because at that point my nose had snotted up again so I was thinking you know I'm gonna get on this and I'm gonna have sinus problems and I'm not gonna be able to do anything and ah she said well ah something you know that she was nervous cause my part and she didn't want to you know didn't want to, cause I had said something to her you know when we talk about it I said 'well I'm probably gonna do every single dive' and I said you know 'you do however many or however many few you want' you know cause I said you know you can snorkel, you can lay on the sun deck, do whatever ah and you know sort of ah so as far as her saying you know she was nervous I think it was more nervous about how many of the dives she was gonna be doing and she didn't know if she was afraid she was going to be the only female on the boat um and you know I just said I was like 'well don't be nervous about it cause you know you'll be able to see Nemo and the turtles and all that kind of stuff' and that was pretty much it ah you know the you know you know the pep talk stuff was kind of when she was doing her classes

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: she would get nervous before them

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: and so I would kind of you know say 'well you know there's nothing to worry about' you know 'Tom's there, Tom knows what he's doing' you know 'if he was able to certify me he can certify anybody' you know just kind of you know that kind of stuff

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: um but as far as that, I don't remember ah I don't I don't think there was any anything like that just because she knew that there was a little clown fish an sea turtles and all that kind of stuff so I think that was probably the most excited she was for a dive you know as far as what she was going to see

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: um

GEHRINGER: so as far as her spirits when you were getting ready on the sun deck, how would you say she was?

WATSON: oh I it I mean it she was probably as excited as I was, I mean I was probably a little more nervous just cause I'm always nervous about not being about to equalise or whatever just cause you know sometimes I have trouble

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: um an so I I was more nervous than she was about that but she never said anything, you know about you know 'I don't think I should do this' or 'I'm scared' or you know you know something along those lines I mean she's seemed ready to go see what was down there

GEHRINGER: now when you went out, you've then hopped in the small inflatable, they've taken you to the, to the site

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: um, just in relation to the site, when you had that briefing. Is it a case that there was um er a shot line at the front and the back of the the the um wreck so that in case you were going down on this

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: anchor rope and do you know like what, what, what was your plan as far as the dive was concerned?

WATSON: oh our plan basically was to go down to the top of the wreck you know around the forty-five foot area and just swim along the top of it to the other shot line and then go up the line on the other side

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: um and you know I knew I think from what they'd said and I knew I don't know if I may jump the gun on this but the reason when the problems happened that we didn't keep going with the current was cause we couldn't see the other end ah if, and that was one of the things I was saying about the misconception about the visibility, had you know the current come up you know you know or with the current and had we been able to see a significant amount of the wreck to know where we were going

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: chances are I probably would've gotten her, and we would've gone quickly to the other side uh but you know something I'd never been on, didn't know anything about the dive ah you couldn't you couldn't see that far of a distance so I thought you know well I if I if we're swimming out we may start swimming the wrong way and then we have no idea of where we are and that's, that's the reason um you know when we got in the current that we turned to go back to the anchor rope cause we, we had a focal point, we knew you know where to go um but as you know it's as far as going to the other end, the original plan was to swim across the top to look at the turtles to look try to find the two little clown fish ah you know and just kind of check it out and then

you know go up the other side to the surface, and that was the that was the original plan

GEHRINGER: so you've gotten in the little boat and you've gone out and you've rolled into the water, and you've back to I think you called it a drag line

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: now do you remember any of the other people that were in the boat with you at that time as far as their name?

WATSON: the first time?

GEHRINGER: the first time

WATSON: I I don't ah the only well I don't know if their a bit when, you know I told you I had a problem with the computer an there was a girl having a problem with her weights

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: all I remember about them was she was a, I think their from like Guatemala

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: I know she was there but I don't know if she was on that boat or if she was trying to go down and came up and that was the boat that was there, I know her and I wanna say another guy was there but I don't know, the four of us were hanging onto the side of the boat but as far as who was in the boat out going out there, I just don't know

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: um

GEHRINGER: to your recollection there was only um a total of six divers in that first boat?

WATSON: ah yeah I to me this I know that I weren't more to me cause we were sitting across and I remember there was somebody sitting next to each other, I was thinking it was six you know three rows of two and then the driver um you know I mean it's possible that there were five or something but you know I know there weren't more than that in the boat um

GEHRINGER: now when you've rolled into the water, you said you've had to swim along the surface

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: to this drag line, at any stage from when you've hit the water till you swum to this drag line did Tina display any um behaviour of panic as far as maybe grabbing onto anyone else in the water or

WATSON: ah no, no like you know like I said she was on the other side of the boat, I know that was her first time to roll out of to roll out of the boat um but you know we went back around to the back, we met up in the back and um but there was I mean you know I said something to her I said you know 'you ready to go' and she said 'yeah' and

that's when I you know said well put your regulator in, lets go and that's when we you know went down, cause I think at that time I think the first dive I was in front of her actually but you know I don't remember specifically but ah I remember you know my, as soon as I was under the water because it first started when I rolled off the back of the boat, cause I roll off kind of go down and do a kind of a flip and then come up and I know as soon as I got a few feet under I heard this 'beep, beep' but when I got up it quit, so I didn't know if that was you know somebody else's watch or whatever um so I went around the back of the boat we go on line and you know started to go but really before you know we got much more than snorkelling depth um well you know that's not the term I guess but within a few feet is when my thing beeped and that's when I you know tapped her you know we went back up

GEHRINGER: so do you know out of everyone that was in the boat, do you know in sequence who went down the shot line

WATSON: no, I I think we were towards the back we may have been the last two um but I I don't

GEHRINGER: you can't remember whether Tina went down first and you followed her on the first occasion?

WATSON: the first occasion just because I remember well I can, she was cause she was above me when my computer didn't work, I want to say on the first occasion she was behind me um but I did I remember when to line we were kind of holding holding the rope a little bit cause I know there was some people up the front of us and so we just kind of hanging out um and then you know we, that's when we started you know to go down, it was before I think my computer actually started beeping before we actually got to the drop line I think it was kind of on the drag line you know pulling towards it

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: um but I you know that I don't really remember exactly

GEHRINGER: so then you've gone back up again

WATSON: uh huh

GEHRINGER: um and then you said you went back down again just to check so

WATSON: yeah, I went down I said well my computer's beeping funny um, I said you know 'hang on let me see what's going on' so I remember well I don't know if I deflated my inflator hose or not but I remember I went down a couple more feet, was kind of looking at it and it was still beeping gas alarm and you know I put it back behind my head next to the transmitter seeing if maybe it wasn't getting a signal and I put it back and it was still beeping so I went back up ah and said you know 'something's going on with my battery I think I don't know' so we went over to the boat and got in

GEHRINGER: now from the time when you, you surfaced again

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: hopped in the little boat, went back to the Spoil Sport and used a coin or what have you

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: did Tina have any conversation with you about her having a weight problem?

WATSON: not that I remember ah I I don't I don't remember, I'm trying to think if cause I know I just I just don't want to get myself crossed up here with this cause I know we talked about the weights before, you know before that first dive and I don't know I just I just don't remember you know I don't know

GEHRINGER: now when you were on board the Spoil Sport and you were mucking around with your battery pack ten to fifteen minutes, have you got a full account of what Tina was doing during that time?

WATSON: no ah when we got back on the boat you know like I said they you know they pulled us over and went over and sat down took our took our stuff off ah and then my you know my immediate thought was you know my my batteries in this receiver wrong or it's dead so that's when you know um I said something to um, I went and booked in for somebody or whatever I went and got the coin from Euzi to take it off, pulled the battery out, reversed it, put it back on um and then um you know after the tank fill was done I screwed the transponder back on and ah turned my air back on held my computer next to it and it showed the pressure and ah so I went back and told Euzi you know what had happened and ah we went back and I think she said you know 'ready to go' or did you get it fixed or whatever and I said 'yeah' so we got our stuff back on ah you know we waited for the boat to come back

GEHRINGER: Have you put a battery in wrong before? Have you put your battery in wrong before?

WATSON: yeah cause it doesn't have, the way you know it's like the rec the computer goes in one way, the responder or the transponder goes in the other way and I changed both the batteries before I left and I basically just stuck them in um you know turned, cause there's really no way at home other than turn on the computer and I turned on the computer and it worked so you know I didn't think any

GEHRINGER: further

WATSON: thing else of it but you know I mean I have done it before

GEHRINGER: Gabe, just going back, I know Glen's already asked you this if I remember correctly but, when you, had her left hand in your right hand and you realised it's not a good situation, you could see the rope

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: and that focal point so your swimming back towards it she was dropping, you said she almost got to the vertical point you think?

WATSON: well I, I, I don't think she got straight up and down um but as we were swimming um I noticed she was you know kind of sinking down and I know when I turned back you know she was, she was pretty much up and down you know looking at me

GEHRINGER: looking at you

WATSON: ah you know I don't know if I still had her hand as she was up and down but I know by the time you know I let go and turned back that I knew she was down somewhere where she was

GEHRINGER: and I know you've said at this stage that you yourself was starting to get a little bit um I can't remember the word you used but concerned, anxious or what have you

WATSON: yeah was concerned

GEHRINGER: um from looking at her, when you've stopped to look at her did, did she, how did she look like what was your impression of how, how she looked

WATSON: oh

GEHRINGER: going off other dives you've done

WATSON: I just, I mean I just thought that that was kind of when I I thought you know that she's she's look you know pretty much worried like I was just you know just try to swim back and it didn't work um you know um she was she she wasn't panicked um you know like you know she was probably concerned about what do we do um and that's why you know I was grabbing the BC to show her, this is what were going to try and do because since she had sunk down that's what I thought the problem was that she didn't have any air in it and I thought well maybe if she got some air in it then that'll solve all the problems and you know we'll just go on

GEHRINGER: now apart from her using her thumb, initially when she thumbed back to go to the rope, during this stage here did she make any more signals to you the, I don't know the signals but, I'm in trouble signal or ...

WATSON: er no

GEHRINGER: made any signals to you?

WATSON: she you know when she looked, she looked at me I I did you know like when I you know I had her hand and we looked back at each other, I don't know if I I don't know if I tried to ask her what was going on or not, I think I may've just already at that point thought you know she got some kind of buoyancy problem and so it's you know I grabbed my BC to motion to her you know try this and see if that solves your problem because that was the only thing I could think of that might be going on at that time um and then you know she grabbed hers and she did it and it you know she didn't float up you know like I you know like I was expecting to happen um you know

GEHRINGER: you said that at this stage you could see bubbles so she was still breathing at this stage **UI**?

WATSON: yeah, yeah at this stage at this stage she was still breathing, she was still understanding what I was showing her um you know she was still rational I guess at that point

GEHRINGER: and when she has squeezed ...

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: you didn't notice um bubbles coming from as if she'd deflated her ah inflator? You didn't notice bubbles?

WATSON: no ah she grabbed it and she kind of pulled it out and I remember you know she she did that ah, I don't you know like with ours on the hose you know you pull like that and I don't remember her doing that it you know like she pulled it and you know kind of squeezed it a couple of times ah but

GEHRINGER: it, not being a diver but if air hadn't gone into her inflator to inflate it, would it be a case that you would see bubbles coming from wherever the air has come out?

WATSON: no if, like like I was saying if for some reason she didn't hit the button or whatever it probably wouldn't have seen anything. I know like with mine you know you press it and you just, your BC fills up until it's total when it's totally full, it'll expel you know so you don't pop it, it'll expel some air um but as far as when you're pumping it in and air's initially going into it I don't think that you know there are any bubbles come out anywhere ah, now if you do dump it yeah it's you know there's a big free flow that comes out um but I and I don't remember seeing anything like that

GEHRINGER: right, have you got any reason in your own mind why she hit your mask? Do you have any idea?

WATSON: the only thing I can say like I mean you know honestly cause I wasn't looking at her ah I I think it was either and that was the thing that's why I asked about the regulator to make sure I wasn't seeing things cause I know like you know if somebody drops a regulator or something they freak out, they'll grab for one it was one of those like you know I don't have air but there's some air and I want it, um so that was I mean that was my initial thought when she hit it was that you know she dropped her regulator or something was going on with her air um but you know I I think whatever happened that, that reflex was the cause of whatever happened physically at that moment if you know something physically happened at that moment you know I think it's just like a shock reflex or something um you know just because we were you know we were right there pretty much side by side

GEHRINGER: you saw her hand it wasn't a case that you just felt your mask?

WATSON: no it it I mean I know it came across and pulled down, like the mask didn't come completely off which is I guess is probably the reason I'm here, if the mask completely off and I couldn't find it I wouldn't be able to see anything ah but she hit it and it, it caught like that and so you know either the mask hit my regulator and you know knocked it out or her hand across and got both of them, but my mask kind of turned like, like from that, to that you know um but no it wasn't like it you know got knocked off or anything

GEHRINGER: how did you feel when that happened?

WATSON: scared as hell ah I mean for me there's different reasons number one just cause it, for the first second I didn't know you know where my mask was and when she did that I knew that she did that cause something was going on that you know she was in trouble so you know I knew you know I didn't have my mask I can't do anything ah but and then you know there's really no other way other than you know when when she knocked my mask off you know I was scared as hell um

GEHRINGER: now again, can you just take me through exactly what, what you did?

WATSON: when?

GEHRINGER: once that's happened obviously you've instinct would've been a case of instinctively you've let go of her, or did you actually let go of her?

WATSON: yeah well, a little of both ah it you know she hit it, it was a shock and also ah you know in the training for the rescue one of the things we did was like we had to deal with a panicked diver

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: and so that was my first thinking was you know well that was what I knew she was panicked at that point and she hit it and normally you push the other person away but since it was Tina I didn't push her away I mean had it have been anybody else I you know probably would've um but it was Tina and I let go and I remember I flew back like that and I don't know which hand I grabbed my mask with, but I grabbed my mask and I remember tilting it and blowing out with my nose which is pretty much all the breath I had, went to breath and my regulator wasn't in um and then you know that's when I grabbed um my safe second

GEHRINGER: why didn't you just grab your regulator back? Why?

WATSON: because it was, because it wasn't right here and it's a lot it was a lot quicker to grab that and stick it in as opposed to doing like if you drop your regulator your supposed to sweep to find it and then pull it back but we had been swimming so hard and I was so short on breath I honestly and since I'd sucked in you know trying to breath I honestly don't know if I would've had enough time to do it so the quickest, quickest thing for me to think of to do to breath and that's why I was telling you like I stuck it in my mouth I had to purge it, er and I remember thinking you know if I don't purge this right I'm in trouble um so that's why I never, didn't, never grabbed my regulator

GEHRINGER: now during this time from when she's hit your mask to when you've cleared it stuck your second second in the mouth. Have you seen, have you observed Tina in the state that she was at that exact time?

WATSON: no, when she hit, I moved back and I was I was cause when I was cleared my mask I could still see the anchor rope so I was still facing the way I was going um and you know I don't, it was a matter of seconds I'm sure, I don't know how many and no when I turned around was when she was you know she was already down some, ah I didn't I never saw her you know immediately after whatever happened

GEHRINGER: and that's when you're saying you saw her go down, she's had both arms out?

WATSON: yeah, as she went down, it you know, almost like that whatever that statue is over in Europe you know the both hands up, heads looking up that's why you know you know that's why you know it worried me that she was wondering why I was leaving because we, I made eye contact with her you know I don't know if you know if she was even still with us at that point but I you know I saw her eye balls you know I saw her eyes as she was going down and that

GEHRINGER: did you think she was alive or ...

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: at that stage?

WATSON: yeah, it had not even occurred it did not even cross my mind until you know later that she could've been unconscious then cause I just didn't know what happened and that's why you know she was going down, she had her arms up so to me it was like she was like she was, you know I'm sinking I don't know what, I don't know what's happening you know grab me and you know but at that time it had never even occurred to me that something could have happened you know that could've made her unconscious at that point

GEHRINGER: did you see her breathing as by the expulsion of bubbles at that stage?

WATSON: no, I mean I I saw bubbles but I can't say whether it was from her inhaling and exhaling um there were bubbles but that's you know about the best description of bubbles I can get

GEHRINGER: and ah I think you said that before you never saw any indication from her that she needed air, or she never have you any indication that she needed air?

WATSON: right, right

GEHRINGER: as far as a signal, is there a signal to?

WATSON: yeah you, do like that and you immediately go to the person and you know they as, as they get there you've got you're your regulator for them there, and you basically UI in their mouth and purging in their mouth

GEHRINGER: and and that's something that never happened?

WATSON: that, there was never any type of indication that there were air problems

GEHRINGER: Gabe you said when Glen was asking you, at this stage when she was going down ...

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: um, you said that even if you'd followed her to the bottom you would've had to leave her there. Why?

WATSON: well because I did I did I wouldn't know what to do basically cause I don't know how to get a person, if you know cause it was going through my head as she was sinking you know something's seriously wrong and I thought you know if, I don't know anything about how to get down there and get her and me up safely, um you know I didn't know if you know there was something, some procedure that can be done like you were saying you know that Wade did

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: you know I didn't know if there was any of that type of stuff that I could do and I just basically made a decision that there are probably people up there that know, you know that are better trained and know what to do than I do, and so that's when I turned and and went to go get somebody

GEHRINGER: and so within those within you diving experience, that's not something that you've ever covered where, if there's a person whether their I mean I know you can have the bottom at fifty feet or ...

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: the bottom at a hundred feet or a hundred an fifty feet but have you nev you have never have you done any training as to whether persons at fifty, a hundred or a hundred an fifty feet how, if they can't get to the surface how you bring them to the surface?

WATSON: the only thing that we've that we ever did was ah done at like around twenty feet where basically we dumped our own gear and did you know the purging, hook up, let your air go and all that you know for yourself and that's what I was thinking of, that most of the training I've had is basically taking care of yourself, not you know had we there was nothing as far as taking care of somebody else um you know and that that's why you know I you know that's why I decided to go you know and try and get somebody

GEHRINGER: now when you've gone back to the shot line and you were tapping you said you were tapping these people and shouting at them, do you know what depth that was at? Do you have any idea what depth that was at?

WATSON: I really don't, um I all I can do is guess, um

GEHRINGER: can you just, can you tell me if they were male or female?

WATSON: the well yeah, I the guy that I tapped was a Asian male I mean cause he he looked, we looked directly at each other, and that's why when we came back up I thought, I thought he was, cause there was, I remember seeing an Asian guy on our boat and so that's why I mean you know it wasn't like I saw him from a distance and thought hey, there's that guy on our boat, but I do know after I tapped him you know I saw him, I thought he was the guy from our boat and so you know, um, but then I got up later and I think somebody told me that the people down there were from another boat cause I I didn't realise when we went there were not other boats there yet, so the boats apparently got there you know after we'd gone under the surface

GEHRINGER: so how many people do you, do you remember tapping?

WATSON: ah I think there were two people there that I remember, I

GEHRINGER: total of two on that line?

WATSON: there were two people right there but I mean you know that's and you know I'm just I'm kinda giving you an educated guess

GEHRINGER: that's ok

WATSON: ah, cause I remember I came up and I just remember I remember I grabbed the UI with my right hand, I kind of grabbed him on his left shoulder, left shoulder and shook him and he turned around and that's when I was you know 'Tina, Tina, Tina' and he just you know kind of looked, and looked back, you know

GEHRINGER: so there's no, this person would have to remember that having happened if if you've your saying you grabbed him and

WATSON: yeah they will if

GEHRINGER: wasn't like a gentle?

WATSON: right if they person, I mean if that person knew what went on then they would probably think that was probably me that came and got, cause it wasn't like a you know hey check this out I mean it was cause I was, I was frantic at that time

GEHRINGER: yes

WATSON: um you know grabbed and shook him, they turned around I was screaming her name, pointing you know not like you would do if there was like you know 'hey check that fish out' or something

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: um and you know when they didn't do anything that's when I just launched to the top

GEHRINGER: the other person, do you know if that was male or female?

WATSON: no I don't, I don't know if I don't know if the other person turned to look ah I just remember you know when that one person didn't respond the way I thought they were I thought 'ok, time to get somebody else'

GEHRINGER: ok that's fine

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: there's, apart from the, you think there was an Asian male, anything else distinctive that UI?

WATSON: I remember, I remember seeing yellow but, you know I don't know if that was a yellow wetsuit, yellow mask, yellow regulator or it may not've been yellow you know I just remember seeing yellow somehow associated with that person but I just don't know if that's accurate or not

GEHRINGER: alright Gabe, anything else?

WATSON: oh the only, I mean the only thing I guess I can think if is that, just out of curiosity I mean has anybody else that you've all talked to said anything about, they thought the current was strong or stronger than they expected

GEHRINGER: um

WATSON: and I know you can't talk about a lot of stuff but

GEHRINGER: no

WATSON: that's just what's eating at me

GEHRINGER: yeah

WATSON: you know the current and

GEHRINGER: I think it gets back to what we spoke about on that first night when I asked you like from a scale of one to ten, obviously different people that have done sea dives

WATSON: well yeah

GEHRINGER: you know say like you know ask a person the question how drunk they think they are, some people you know when their staggering think their only a five on eleven or ten whereas other people at that stage think their a nine, so I think there's um probably a a cross section of people with their opinions as to how strong the current was

WATSON: yeah

Mrs WATSON: UI

WATSON: yeah

Mrs WATSON: putting the lines out she said it was so strong as her body was vertical

WATSON: yeah

LAWRENCE: usually up um

WATSON: and she was the one and I don't I don't know her name, I do know she was the girl ah that came down and sat in the room with me for a little while on the boat on the ride back they you know, they didn't want me to be by myself and I remember she was down there and you know a lot of it's fuzzy but I remember saying something about the current you know just cause I think she was asking what happened and I think I may have re-hashed to her the whole event and I just remember I told her you know well I the current I think was just I think it's a UI wore out, I said you know I, cause at that point I was thinking we swum so hard that her body just shut down, or she had a heart attack or something from just the physical exertion because you know cause I was I was worn out and you know like that's when the girl said well you know when we were setting up to dive ah you know as we were coming off the line hanging off the line it was blowing us out vertical from the current um you know I just remember thinking at that point you know that might've been nice to know at eight thirty this morning

GEHRINGER: so I think you may've mentioned when we first started off something about a drift drive you, you said it was more than that. So did they mention about a drift dive, about you going down and using the current to take you

WATSON: well

GEHRINGER: to the back of the wreck?

WATSON: well the basic what they basically said was that you know there's some current going through there and that you can just go down and just float along with the current um you know nothing that you know to me that wasn't like what I would've thought a leisurely float you know down a lazy river

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: which something would've been you know when they said it cause they even said about some people going down floating with the current along the bottom come up the top and just swim back as far as you can and then just ascend, so to me that meant you can swim against the current so that's not you know like you in Cosmill you can't really swim that good against the current um but the fact that they were saying you know drop down this side go across the bottom look at that stuff go up to the top and then you know start swimming back across the current you know until your bottom comes up it didn't indicate to me that the current was like an unmanageable or out of the ordinary kind of thing and

GEHRINGER: was Tina an, an aerobics type girl, an exercise type girl or?

WATSON: or she, not like aerobics, she walked um but you know wasn't not a major I mean you know I'm the same way I mean

GEHRINGER: not three times a week to the gym doing aerobics?

WATSON: no the only thing, the only thing, I mean the only thing I've done in twelve months, I think I've played basketball twice and I know that she would go walking so I mean she was probably in probably better cardiovascular shape than I am um

GEHRINGER: your both around twenty?

WATSON: we're both twenty-six

GEHRINGER: how, how long have you known Tina for?

WATSON: oh we met in school about five years ago, no we mean we just kind of knew each other and she was dating guys at that time and we had some classes together you know as we got closer to graduation we had more classes together and um you know basically convinced her to break up with the guy

GEHRINGER: so are we talking uni when you say school, you're talking university?

WATSON: university yeah, yeah, so total of four or five years we were together the two of us and we were date about a year we're engaged a day more than a year and that probably from the time we started dating to the time we were married would probably span about two years, something like that

Mrs WATSON: she wasn't a sanitary person, she was somebody always on the go, always doing something, always busy

WATSON: well I'm like at work

Mrs WATSON: life of the party

WATSON: the

Mrs WATSON: active, active, active person not like a little mousy person that's off to the side

GEHRINGER: ok

Mrs WATSON: she was pretty much in control of her, what she did and when she did it and who she was with and the good times we were going to have, she was not a

GEHRINGER: even so, more of an extravert than an introvert?

Mrs WATSON: definitely she was not an introvert at all, as I said she was, she was, everybody knew who she was

GEHRINGER: so, so if she if, if she was the kind of girl that if she, she had some problems she had no problems about voicing it?

Mrs WATSON: oh

WATSON: right

Mrs WATSON: she wouldn't no

WATSON: like with the dive, you know like I was saying earlier you know number one I didn't know anything about the kind of dives we were going to do and I knew I'm I was more experienced than her and I knew this you know I'm just gun hoe about diving and you know I told her I said you know I gonna do basically as many dives as I can until my head's just pounding, telling me to quit I said you can to as many or as few as you want and she said, well I know she had you know she had bought a couple of books cause she was planning on the majority of the trip you know basically I think anytime that she didn't think she was going to see turtles or clown fish she was just planning on laying around

GEHRINGER: mmm

WATSON: um you know almost looking at it as kind of a cruise with just the occasional diving um

Mrs WATSON: yeah she wouldn't want

WATSON: if she had a problem she, I really think if she had fears about it I don't think she would've had any reservations about saying 'I just don't feel comfortable about doing this dive' and you know it was like once we got in the current it wasn't that long and you know but we both realised at the same time but, she didn't try to just struggle it out of tough it out she told me you know basically let me know that she wanted to go back but she didn't want to do it

GEHRINGER: but we just don't know why, she didn't give any indication as to a reason why she wanted to go back?

WATSON: no there, she didn't give me an indication um there was you know there wasn't anything crazy that I noticed going on, the only thing in my head I can think of was the current, just cause it, the current surprised me so I know it surprised her

GEHRINGER: but at that stage you're going with the current though aren't you?

WATSON: we're drift, yeah but it was I mean it was pushing like

Mrs WATSON: like drifting

WATSON: more, like see we were thinking with the way the current would be if we could you know swim from this side of the boat to that side you know just kind of just kind of leisurely work our way down just you know because of the fact that he said you know you come up and swim back and see how far you can make it and you get we got in and it was you know it was pushing along

GEHRINGER: so, so correct me if I'm wrong but you're sort of saying that um if this is the, the wreck ...

WATSON: mmm

GEHRINGER: um and you start at the front and come to this way, it's not so much the current's running dead this way it's it's more so coming over ...

WATSON: it was

GEHRINGER: back through that?

WATSON: yeah like a, we got off and say this is the hull side and the boats kind of sitting like this

GEHRINGER: yep

WATSON: we got off right there, current, if I remember correctly was kind of coming in an angle so it was kind of pushing that way a little bit

GEHRINGER: so more so pushing you away from it, getting away from it?

WATSON: kind of, kind of down and away a little bit um and I don't know if that you know if that compounded the problems trying to get back to the anchor rope that was right there but it and again I may not remember correctly but to me it was like it was at a slight angle

GEHRINGER: but see if, did you have some concerns that, that you know that perhaps it was the sort of current that could take you back and away from?

WATSON: well that, that was yeah that was the reason why when we turned and went to go back to the anchor rope because I you know I didn't know what was going on at that time and I just thought you know currents a little too strong we don't want to do it, we didn't really realise I, going with it you don't realise how strong it is till you go against it

GEHRINGER: right

WATSON: and I really thought at that time that both of us could turn around and just swim back um, yeah because at that time I thought well you know if we you know ride this thing out I don't know where were going to end up um and that's like I was saying you know the reason that we didn't you know had it been going directly this way you know just straight down it and you know we could've seen far enough to know where were going we might, could've ridden it out and grabbed the anchor line on the other side but you know since we had no idea you know how far away the other end was or anything like that um you know to, it seemed like to me and I guess to her because she motioned back also which seemed the best thing to get back to the anchor rope

GEHRINGER: so from the, I know the you saw that drawing at the start ...

WATSON: yeah

GEHRINGER: from a visual inspection when you were when you were down, did you observe any particular part of the wreck that you know you got to?

WATSON: no ah, when we first got down you know, I just remember seeing the hull so I know which side we were on, cause I wasn't sure which way it was laying I just knew the set across the top and I just remember seeing the hull so I knew that we were on the hull side I, cause I remember when I came up that's what I told them I said you know 'we were down on the hull side' um but no, as far as I know they said somewhere there was some big cargo holes or you know somewhere up in here were those little er fish but I just don't think you know before I was saying about you know the the thirty yards I think I don't I can't imagine that was correct just because of the visual contact that we could have with the anchor rope and the visibility being you know either twenty-five, twenty thirty you know somewhere in there um cause otherwise we'd have been so far off you know that we wouldn't have known which way to swim

END OF TAPE



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Person Interviewed: **Gabe WATSON** D.O.B.: **5/3/1977**

Place of Interview: **Townsville Police Station**

Date of interview: **27/10/2003**

Interviewing Officer:

Rank/No

Establishment:

Persons present : **DSC K Gehringer**

Sen. Const. G Lawrence

Gabe Watson

Mrs Watson

WATSON: right

Mrs WATSON: well an she has a job that she likes, she has a lot of people under her an she's used to

WATSON: yeah

Mrs WATSON: making decisions for people an she's organised she's very attentionative, she's not like you know your little silly girlfriend that I want to do this, come do this with me um she's just she's just a joy

GEHRINGER: did I hear right at the hospital the other day, do you have a department store or do you work for a department store where she works or?

Mrs WATSON: no, no

WATSON: no Tina did

Mrs WATSON: the lady that works with me at school works for her at the department store

GEHRINGER: oh I see your, you're a school a teacher are you?

Mrs WATSON: UI

GEHRINGER: ok

Mrs WATSON: her sister also works at the same department store

WATSON: yeah her, somehow we still don't know her sister found out at work

Mrs WATSON: she's the manager

GEHRINGER: ok

WATSON: we don't know, somehow word travelled so fast, see her dad was in Tallahassee Florida which is about three hours away well he was going to be home by three o'clock that afternoon um and he, to tell her mum and he got home to tell her mum and I think her sister had

Mrs WATSON: on my way to the airport

WATSON: yeah had called, somehow I don't know how I mean it still amazes me how fast it got back there, her sister was still at work when she found out

GEHRINGER: so alright yeah, no

WATSON: sorry

GEHRINGER: I got the impression an yeah I thought you, you had the department store and she worked for you at the

Mrs WATSON: no no she, she was she was the big boss, I'm just them school teacher

GEHRINGER: what do you do Gabe?

WATSON: um I work for my dad, um we've got a it's a family business selling cardboard boxes

GEHRINGER: yeah ok

WATSON: um I mean you know long like bubble wrap, stretch **UI** tape

GEHRINGER: so you do the sales repping side of it or?

WATSON: yeah when I, well when I was in school I was working inside and then actually for a time as I first got into diving I actually I quit school cause I wanted to be a commercial diver and then realised how dangerous that was and ah decided no, so I going back there finished up school and after I got off school I started selling outside

GEHRINGER: alrightee, alright um

LAWRENCE: **UI**

GEHRINGER: nothing else, mate we'll um, just finish the tapes now, it's ah seven forty-four

Mrs WATSON: ok but now you

END OF TAPE