

8 January 1998
1310 hours

Ronald Bernard FARRELL states:

My full name is Ronald Bernard FARRELL and I am known as "Rip". I am living with my wife Ngaire on our boat "Rippa". The boat is usually moored in Picton, however for the last week or so we have been at Furneaux.

My date of birth is 20.12.46 and I am originally from Lower Hutt.

I am speaking to Detective Tom FOGARTY about the missing couple from Furneaux Lodge.

My boat "Rippa" arrived at Furneaux in between Christmas and New Year. We hadn't planned to stay long but because they were short-staffed I've stayed on.

My boat is a 24 foot Ganley. It has always been moored. I'm on the first row of medium moorings on the eastern side of the bay. My boat is white but has red windows.

Since the boat has been moored here my wife and I have been staying in the Lodge.

I know my boats reasonably well and I have an interest in older boats.

In the afternoon, earlyish perhaps, I went out in the Lodge's Naiad. I was being picked up to be taken off my boat to shore and during this we had to pick a person off a little fizz boat. This fizz boat was on a light mooring on the western side of the bay. Don was driving the Naiad when we picked this guy up. I can't remember anything about him.

Ronald Bernard FARRELL further states:

As we headed back to the jetty Don asked a glass yacht that had some young people, if they needed a ride. This yacht was about opposite the Lodge, perhaps more opposite the tennis court. They were fishing and drinking and said they were fine.

I remember seeing two boats moored in this area - one was the "Mae NZ" and the other was the "Bin Tang". There was also an older type of boat that was similar to the boat you are interested in. It was moored in this general area.

It was a large boat and I'm sure it would have been a two mast boat just because the type of boat it was. I didn't see two masts but that's the impression it gave me.

I may be getting a bit confused here. If the "Mae NZ" is a large white yacht with a blue line then this is the older boat I saw. The name "Mae NZ" sticks in my mind and this makes me think it could be the older boat.

I didn't see any movement on the boat, however I only glanced at it as we sped past. We then went back to the jetty. This was the last time I went on the water for two days. I know that as the day wore on more boats were arriving for the New Year's celebration but I can't comment on what they were.

During 31 December 1997 I was doing odd jobs around the place. I was down at the jetty unloading stuff, dealing with the alcohol and anything needed doing in the Lodge.

As the night's activities started I dropped some alcohol down at the garden bar on dusk. It was still reasonably quiet. The next time I went out to the garden bar it was dark and really busy. I couldn't get into the bar so I returned to the Lodge.

Ronald Bernard FARRELL further states:

I spent the rest of the night helping fill riggers out the back of the main bar and standing near the stairs by the piano. While there I spoke with the security guys and had a laugh.

At about 2.30 am I'd had enough and went to bed. I did this so that I could get up early to clean the bar. Everything was in full swing when we went to bed.

I got up at about 6.30 am and started cleaning. I was wearing black Guinness t-shirt and black trackpants.

I've seen photographs of the couple that are missing and it doesn't mean anything to me. I can't recall seeing or speaking to them. I am aware of the names of the missing couple but I don't know them or their family.

The yacht "Tamarack" means nothing to me. I didn't take any photos that night.

I've thought about people in the Lodge that I recognised that night. The bar staff and owners, etc, I'm sure you know. There was a couple I knew from my days in Wanganui - Ted MATTHEWS and Jenny. They still live in Wanganui. They bought a yacht called "Sheriff" down. Jenny is a nurse up north and Ted works at an engineering firm - he owns it.

There was a person - Cherie HANNAH - she is a local, and her husband Gordon. They are well known here. The HANNAHs live in Dryden Bay.

I don't recall seeing the missing man at all.

They are about the only people that stick out. I'm from Picton and know a lot from there and no-one stands out from that area.

Ronald Bernard FARRELL further states:

There is nothing else I can remember that night. I didn't have anything to do with the Naiad or water taxi.

I've had this statement read to me and it is true and correct.

(Sgd) R B Farrell

Statement taken and signature witnessed by:

T Fogarty
Detective D175
1415 hours