

ON RESUMPTION ON 3 JUNE 1998 - DAY 3

CHAIRPERSON: Shall I formally welcome you, Mr Braizblatt, let me formally welcome you to this enquiry. It's an investigative enquiry, it's not a disciplinary enquiry, it's not a trial, it's not a hearing and it is intended to gather information around the issues which I hope were mentioned in your invitation for you to attend.

We are thankful that you are here and we have to apologise that we have had to cause you to wait whilst we were taking other testimony in relation to something else. Before you testify I would like to swear you in.

MR BRAIZBLATT: (Duly sworn in, states)

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Terreblanche?

MS TERREBLANCHE: Thank you very much for coming so far, you still live in Israel?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I do.

MS TERREBLANCHE: We have been in need to question you about a number of things. Can you just briefly tell us when you started your career in SAA?

MR BRAIZBLATT: In 1969.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And you have been Cargo Manager in Tel Aviv since then, and you still are?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Correct.

MS PATTA: Mr Braizblatt, we have heard a number of witnesses telling us that during the mid 1980's there was an SAA flight that went over Portugal and Italy and then landed in Tel Aviv?

MR BRAIZBLATT: A passenger flight.

MS PATTA: Was that a weekly flight?

MR BRAIZBLATT: A weekly flight.

MS PATTA: According to some of the pilots and crew who were on that route, you as Manager was aware of some military cargo that was off-loaded in Tel Aviv, is that correct?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I don't think that they've got it correct, no.

I think that what they're referring to are boxes, large boxed that were freighted on board the aircraft. I doubt very very much if it was military cargo. I have my doubts. Once again we can't know what type of cargo it is, there's no way we can know, we can only go according to what's written on the airway ...(indistinct) manifest.

MS PATTA: Right, so you have no knowledge of the cargo that you off-load for SAA?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Well, there's no way we can know what we off-load, I mean, we don't off-load it physically, Israel airport authorities off-loads the cargo. The cargo is then taken to the customs warehouse. We're not even allowed to look into the cargo, by international regulation, it's not our job to do so.

MS PATTA: Even if it's then re-loaded on another flight?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Customs.

MS PATTA: Right. Mr Braizblatt, let me take you back to 1985, the 4th of June. A South African flight was standing over

waiting and they were off-loading and one of these crates apparently fell out.

MR BRAIZBLATT: I know of that, I know of that incident, yes. I was called out to the aircraft once they'd already got the crate onto her belly.

MS PATTA: And did you see the contents?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I saw something there, I didn't see the actual contents because I only saw the part that was facing towards me when I came to look at what was happening down there.

MS PATTA: So what did you see?

MR BRAIZBLATT: What I saw was a metal object. I can't tell you what it was, because I - to be quite honest with you, at the time it didn't even interest me what it was. What interested me was getting the cargo off-loaded the aircraft and getting everything out as soon as possible so as we could re-load and go back.

MS PATTA: Now, as I understand, the pilot on this flight, Mr Flippie Loog ...(intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: It's possible that they saw things, - that, yes, because I wasn't on the ground or I wasn't at the aircraft belly at the time of off-loading.

MS PATTA: Well, Mr Loog told me that he went to you and asked you what - if you can confirm that this was a missile, and

he wanted to know whether it was with or without fuel. You said that you did not know, but that they should not make such, let me just read to you this,

"I asked Jossie whether the missile contained fuel, and if so solid or liquid, after all, I was flying with it.

He said he did not know. Jossie admitted that this was off-loaded every week. It was loaded at Jan Smuts and flown on the route Portugal-Italy-Tel Aviv and is destined for the military missile programme with Israel."

MR BRAIZBLATT: Definitely incorrect, I think that's very malicious to say a thing like that. Two things, no 1, as I said to you, we had large boxes, it's not my duty to look into these boxes and see what's inside these boxes, definitely not, I'm not even allowed to do it, that's no 1. No 2, to say that missiles were on board an aircraft, I would never say a thing like that, and I doubt very, very much whether the Israeli authorities would allow any dangerous missiles or anything like that to land at Tel Aviv Airport on board a passenger aircraft, knowingly, because of the implications involved should a thing like that happen. Just think for one minute, if an aircraft should have an explosion or a mid-air disaster, whatever, the first thing the Israeli's would say is, this is a sabotage attempt against a company flying into Israel with Jewish passengers on board. Do you understand the

ramifications, therefor the Israeli's would never ever, as far as I know agree, to any cargo like that been placed on board the aircraft. There might have been military shipments on board the aircraft, but not of a dangerous category, they certainly wouldn't allow it. Another thing which, I mean, just living in Israel, I know, the Israeli authorities would never allow anything military to come into Israel by a 2nd or 3rd country because this would be already a breach of their own security.

MS PATTA: Mr Braizblatt, but let's remember the time, it was 1985, Israel was good friends with South Africa.

MR BRAIZBLATT: That doesn't matter.

MS PATTA: And it was a time when we were - we now know with hindsight we were defying the arms embargo, we have information about front companies having been used. It seems remarkable that Flippie Loog would lie about something like this, something he was reluctant to talk about initially anyway.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Miss Patta, first of all, it's highly likely that there was movement of whatever there was in between the two countries. It's likely, I don't know anything about it. If there was, I doubt very much if it would have been on board a civil aircraft because of the ramifications involved in whatever aspect there could be. Now I certainly don't know of any missiles, armed, fuelled or not fuelled.

MS PATTA: So Flippie Loog is lying?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I don't know. I am certainly not lying because I certainly don't know of any missiles that - look I'm also explaining to you the ramifications involved.

MS PATTA: Let me just ask it to you ... (intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: Just think for one moment of a passenger aircraft coming into Israel and something happening to that aircraft. In 1985 when we had plenty of enemies looking for Israeli aircraft all around the world and found a lot of aircraft bound for Israel around the world - the Swiss Air, the Swiss aircraft that went down over Switzerland, the first thing the Israeli's would have said, there's a sabotage against a civilian air-flight into our country.

CHAIRPERSON: Let's imagine, Mr Braizblatt, that the South Africans and the Israeli's were embarking on a joint nuclear programme, a programme that they didn't want the Americans to know about, a programme they didn't want anyone to know about, not if there were ingredients which they have to get, let's say uranium and all sorts of stuff like that, and even rock fuel, these would not be things that they would want anybody to know about ... (intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON: But then wouldn't it be the perfect situation for them to say, let us use a normal passenger flight which is not going to attract attention, let's take a risk, after all this is

something that we are never going to be able to do without taking a risk, if we are to prevent the international community of the eyes of the entire world knowing about it. Now, are you saying it is beyond the realm of possibility that a gamble like that could have been taken?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Look, I'm not professional enough to say it's beyond the realm, but what I think is - you're having said that, I think it would be stupid of them to take it via two points in Europe. That would be a suicide gamble in case the aircraft stays there for whatever technical reason there may be. It stands to reason that there may have been things, but I would think that they probably had them on cargo flights direct backwards and forwards, or by sea. But if you're asking me, does the possibility exist, the possibility exists. It's a very doubtful and highly improbable proposition. There were things like aircraft parts, but nothing - I personally never saw a missile and I certainly wasn't asked whether it was fuelled or unfuelled, and how could I possibly tell that it was fuelled or unfuelled?

MS PATTA: Right, now, you were Cargo Agent, and you've been that for a long time ...(intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: That's correct.

MS PATTA: And you are, I presume, responsible for the safe loading and off-loading of cargo on planes?

MR BRAIZBLATT: To a certain extent, but you must understand, we have handling agents that do the work for us, they get paid to do it. We also have airport authority, they actually load and unload the aircraft. They're professionals at it, it's their job.

MS PATTA: Right, but now I want to just put this to you, a week after this happened on the flight with Mr Loog, the flight of Captain Deon Storm came in and the same thing happened, a crate broke open revealing a long metal object looking like a missile. Now I just find it very difficult to understand why you never knew about it or saw it, being the Cargo Agent.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Yes. Okay, now no 1, I did tell you that I was called to the aircraft after the things had fallen down, because I'm not at - look, my job isn't only cargo, my job is passenger, cargo and operations, therefor I'm not at the aircraft all the time, I'm at the aircraft the moment it lands and the moment it takes off. In between those two times I'm situated in the arrivals hall dealing with passengers that have come in, problems with lost suitcases, whatever, and I also alternate in between the departure hall where we have problems with passengers that are there ...(indistinct). That is why we have a handling agent, to take care of all these matters. And quite right, metal object, I told her I don't know what it was. I got to the aircraft after the crates had been off-loaded because I was asked

to come out, but I couldn't see anything, I could only see the profile of it, and only a slight profile of it.

MS PATTA: How often were these crates, the similar crates, off-loaded?

MR BRAIZBLATT: We're speaking about 1985, I think maybe - I tried remembering this myself because I thought that would be one of your questions, four maybe five times.

MS PATTA: During mid 1985?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Yes.

MS PATTA: And later one, before that?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Look, we've even had big crates today.

MS PATTA: But we're talking about a particular ... (intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: I can't know what was in those crates.

MS PATTA: But we've looking at a particular kind of crate.

MR BRAIZBLATT: It's incorrect to say that, I'll tell you why. We, for instance, forward irrigation equipment. Now irrigation equipment as you well know, sometimes they have to forward them in pipes that can be 4 - 5 metres long, because this goes with a whole computer system and they're in very very similar crates. And at the same time one of the freight - one of the companies that was forwarding out to an irrigation company here in South Africa, he was forwarding these irrigation modules in small packets and they were coming back from South Africa for

repair as well. We had one case where it came back from South Africa for repair, they couldn't disassemble the damn thing and it came back to the Kibbutz for repair. So, not necessarily, we've had this, we've had an occasion of a crate, but who can tell what's inside it? You know, we've had occasions where we've had crates that are, what, 1 metre 20 by 2 metres by 3 metres and then, you can't know what's inside them. These are boxes, they are computer equipment and things like that inside, telecommunications equipment that has to go standing upright, because you can't fold a telephonic switchboard in any other way.

MS PATTA: If something dangerous would have been placed on a flight to South Africa, I suppose ... (intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: To South Africa ... (intervention)

MS PATTA: Can you just listen to the question. If something dangerous, but packed according to Iata and Icao standards, would you know about it when such a parcel goes on a flight to South Africa?

MR BRAIZBLATT: If the Shipper would have declared it as being a DGR, dangerous goods, yes, we would have known about it.

MS PATTA: How?

MR BRAIZBLATT: That's why there's a Shipper's declaration. We would have known about it and the goods would have been checked thoroughly.

MS PATTA: How often did that happen?

MR BRAIZBLATT: During that period it didn't happen at all, but basically very little, because at that period our cargo capacity from Tel Aviv to Johannesburg was virtually nil. Now, why was it virtually nil? The flight as you were saying yourself, was going via Europe. We weren't given allowances for a cargo out of Tel Aviv at that period. Very small allowances were given for us, because our yield on cargo from Tel Aviv was a lot less than what the yield would have been from Rome or from Portugal, don't forget, Rome, Portugal is further away from Israel and therefore they were charging higher rates. We were trying to compete with our first competitor LL, who was charging rock-bottom rates. So basically, what we were carrying at the time was very small items of irrigation equipment, we had perishable food products, we had swimwear, ladies swimming costumes, that's what our basic cargo was during the 80's. We could have had a lot more, but we didn't have the space to have it.

MR MAGADHLA: Were you summoned to the spot where you saw the object which you say you only saw the profile of?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Yes.

MR MAGADHLA: Now what was the purpose of summoning you to the spot, to inspect, to say what the object was, or to do what?

MR BRAIZBLATT: No, the airport authority asked me to come out as see these long objects, these long boxes that we knew

nothing about, that they were going to be on board the aircraft. They said, look, here's a very long object that couldn't be off-loaded manually, you just can't off-load it from a 747, very difficult. Once again, I'm speaking about something that's about 3½ - 4 metres in length.

MR MAGADHLA: Was there no interest in knowing what the object was?

MR BRAIZBLATT: On whose part?

MR MAGADHLA: Your part and on the part of the people who called you to see the object.

MR BRAIZBLATT: They obviously didn't think it was anything of any important nature, or else they would have asked me, but once again, I've said to you before, and I clarify this again, in my capacity of being out at the airport, I'm interested in three things, first customer satisfaction, on time performance, and getting the aircraft out as soon as I possibly can, getting it away from me so as it can start back on its roundward journey. We have got cargo handling agents, they're being paid to do this job, it's their job to see what is the matter, what goes on. If there would have been - this is where the whole thing lies, if there would have been something abnormal it would have been written up.

MR MAGADHLA: The thing is they called you. You say it's their job and why would they have called you if it was not

important for you to see the object and also to say whatever you had to say about the object?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Once again, I clarify myself of what told you before, Mr Magadhla, the airport authority called me to show me the long object, why wasn't I informed or why didn't I inform them to have special equipment ready to off-load this object?

MR MAGADHLA: Okay. Now, you are aware that after that air crash there was an investigation by aviation people?

MR BRAIZBLATT: After the Helderberg?

MR MAGADHLA: Yes.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Yes, I'm aware.

MR MAGADHLA: Were you one of the people who were approached to give whatever version you had to give with regards to the handling of whatever objects that went into that plane.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Into which plane?

MR MAGADHLA: Into the Helderberg.

MR BRAIZBLATT: I had nothing to do with the Helderberg, I was in Tel Aviv. Helderberg was from Australia to Mauritius.

MR MAGADHLA: The other object that we're talking about is not an object that had to do with the Helderberg, okay.

MR BRAIZBLATT: I don't understand the - I had nothing to do with the Helderberg.

MR MAGADHLA: No, it's okay ...(inaudible)

MS PATTA: Mr Braizblatt, why did they need special equipment, was it particularly heavy, or was it particularly long?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Particularly long. Now also, it doesn't matter, once you have a long piece, it's difficult to manoeuvre it around and take it off, because the high-loaders that we have at the airport servicing passenger aircraft are used for pellets, ordinary pellets, as opposed to cargo aircraft that would have a doubt pellet loader, that would be easier to remove from the belly of an aircraft.

MS PATTA: But you also said it couldn't be done manually.

MR BRAIZBLATT: It can't be done manually because we don't have 15 or 20 airport porters to pick it up.

MS PATTA: So it is heavy?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Anything that's over 200kg - 300kg, you're not going to get 2 or 3 people picking it up, you're going to need a lot more than 2 or 3 people. You see, what they used was a bar of a series of bars and they were manoeuvring it around, pushing it around on the series of bars to get it off sideways onto the high-loader, and from there using a fork-lift to take it down.

MS PATTA: I think you've answered.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Okay, I hope that's helped you, I don't know.

MS PATTA: Very much so, thank you.

MR MAGADHLA: This object that you say according to you was unknown, you didn't know what it was, what if it was a dangerous object?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I shudder to think of it, I don't even want to think of it, what if it was, I don't even want to think of it.

MR MAGADHLA: I hear there was an object which you were not made to prepare for it, and there it is and you are called to come and have a look at it and you are satisfied with ... (intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: Don't forget this is an object that's come from our head office, from Johannesburg. This is an object that was supposedly had gone through security and everything else. This was for me safe cargo, it wasn't anything else, it was safe cargo. Had it not been safe cargo I should have been advised. What you're asking me, do I question the authority of the people that sent me things.

MR MAGADHLA: No, I'm not saying that, I'm saying, if you had this abnormally heavy object that needed some kind of machine to lift it and you did not know what it was, knowing that dangerous objects are not allowed in the area of the planes, didn't it occur in your mind that, but what is this object?

MR BRAIZBLATT: No it didn't because ... (intervention)

MR MAGADHLA: Is it a dangerous or a safe object?

MR BRAIZBLATT: No, because once again, had we have known, we have to rely on two things, or I have to rely on three things basically. I have to rely on information that's sent to me, that information that is sent to me has to rely on Shipper's declaration, dangerous goods, what I told Mrs Terreblanche, we rely on this things because if we have to start checking every single piece of cargo, heavy or not heavy, that falls off a gully or falls off a trolley or whatever, we'd be there all day and all night.

We have heavy objects, we have objects that are 2 metres in length weighing 1½ tons, these are dyes, these are dyes or moulds for making things.

MR MAGADHLA: I'm was just asking because you are talking about the agricultural modules that came from South Africa for repairs or something, and that those, because they were modules they were not dangerous to anything or suspected to be dangerous, you have had occasion to know what they were exactly. But here's this one where you are called to come and see and you don't bother - remember we have said that those times leaving the story that you say that you had other authorities, other people dealing with that stuff, but you're also aware that those times were embargo times and things may not have been told to everybody. Now here's this thing all of a sudden, showing itself that there's something that is here and you don't know

about, this is the context in which these questions are being asked.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Okay, Mr Magadhla, let me clarify my statement in regarding irrigation equipment. For me irrigation equipment was very important, it was important because we were selling the space for this equipment. We were selling space from Tel Aviv for this equipment. This was equipment where we had a local shipper in Israel, using SA services. So for me his stuff was very important and needed to be taken care of. I didn't want to loose a client, so when I knew that he was getting stuff back I was doubly sure to make - it was in our promotional interest to make double sure, whereas the shipments you're speaking about, there was not way that any of us could know the nature or the illegal nature if you wish to call it, if it was illegal, of what was inside. And it wasn't something that I could worry myself with to start checking what's going on, because once again, if the manifest would have said aircraft parts for example, or wings or things like that, or it would have said, let's say, commercial shipment or consolidated shipment or tractor part, or whatever, that's what I would have to rely on. That's what I would have to rely on, you see. If later a claim would come against us for anything damaged it would have been a claim for a damaged part.

MR MAGADHLA: Thank you.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Okay.

MS PATTA: Were you aware of a frequent number, a significant number of misdeclarations of SAA planes that you say, for example, you say you had to rely on the cargo manifest, but the cargo manifest may say computer parts where in fact it was actually something that was misdeclared, it was something else. Were you aware of that at all?

MR BRAIZBLATT: From Johannesburg to Tel Aviv or from Tel Aviv to Johannesburg?

MS PATTA: From both directions.

MR BRAIZBLATT: I can vouch there were nothing from Tel Aviv at that time because I've explained to already.

MS PATTA: You know what was in the cargo going from Tel Aviv?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I can - I didn't inspect the cargo, I didn't open up the cargo or the cargo boxes, but our clients, I mean I know who I was in touch with, I was in touch with the irrigation company ...(indistinct) and there's another company that did a lot of work here with South African, I was in touch with Gottex who at the time were forwarding a lot of swimwear and general ladies wear, and I was in touch Aggrexco who was forwarding processed meat products into South Africa. Don't forget, we had a limited space, we weren't allowed to forward a lot.

MS PATTA: But you seem to have a remarkable knowledge of every other item that was on the plane, excepting this particular one which you ...(intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: No, I'm referring to cargo from Tel Aviv.

MS PATTA: I'm saying in both directions. You never knew what came from Jo'burg?

MR BRAIZBLATT: From South Africa, no.

MS PATTA: You never knew of anything?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Now, I had to go according the cargo manifest and it didn't basically it didn't even interest me, because, once again, we had a handling agent who was in touch directly with the agents and with the customers. We didn't even see who was couriering the things.

MS PATTA: As Cargo Manager, is not security one, and safety of passengers also one of your concerns?

MR BRAIZBLATT: Definitely.

MS PATTA: So were you not concerned that there was an object that might endanger the passengers, were you not even vaguely concerned?

MR BRAIZBLATT: From where, from Johannesburg
...(intervention)

MS PATTA: I'm talking about the specific incident that Flippie Loog mentioned.

MR BRAIZBLATT: From Johannesburg to Tel Aviv?

MS PATTA: Yes, you weren't concerned?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I don't know what you've saying by I wasn't concerned, I mean in which respect could I - I've got to rely, in other words what you're saying to me is, why didn't you tell Johannesburg that you had a dangerous article on board and why did they put it on board. That's what you're asking me.

MS PATTA: I'm asking why you didn't even bother to find out, your told Mr Magadhla you weren't interested.

MR BRAIZBLATT: No, because once again, we have our handling agents, and our customs agents. Had there been something of a peculiar nature they would have straight away told me.

MS PATTA: Let's assume they wouldn't have.

CHAIRPERSON: I think what we want to establish from you, Mr Braizblatt, is whether you had a process to deal with misdeclared objects.

MR BRAIZBLATT: From Johannesburg to Tel Aviv or from ... (intervention)

CHAIRPERSON: From anywhere. Particularly now, because there is an incident. You see, the problem is that all these questions are asked against a background of a statement that has been made by somebody who says, who gives a sinister interpretation to the events of that day. You are giving it an innocent interpretation, you say, well, an object fell, I didn't

know what it was, it was a missile, I don't know if it was a missile. The person says you were specifically asked if it had needed fuel or stuff like that, it makes it dangerous. I know that you said that it's a malicious statement, but it's a statement that is there and for us, therefor to test whether it is that statement or your statement or evidence that must be relied on, we must test your responses, and I find it remarkable to say nothing else, that weren't you were concerned about the safety of passengers when an object drops out which may or may not be a missile, which may or may not have contained fuel. All you tell us is that your attitude was that, well, I didn't know what it was, I came there having been asked, summoned to come and look at it, firstly not telling us why it was necessary for you to be summonsed, but having gone there, when you get there, what do you do. You look at it, you said, fold it right back on, did it fall out and what is it, I don't know, nobody knows it, and you put it back. Now you must appreciate, therefor, that our problem is, there is a sinister interpretation that has been given on the events of that day. So you have to satisfy us that you did conduct yourself in a way that must make us reject the version that has been given to us.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Okay, let me try and clarify that, and I want you to understand this. The set-up and an airport is such, any airport, any aircraft that's handled by anybody, we have airport

authority porters, we have our handling agents. Now, we as airline representatives unfortunately don't have enough of our own staff to be everywhere all the time. That's why we rely very heavily upon our handling agents. When I was called out to the aircraft, if you remember I said to you, they called me out to say, hey look at these long objects that were on board your aircraft. Nobody told me that something had fallen out that was damaged, the crate was damaged. I told you I saw it on the profile. Now at the same time what I'm saying to you is, everything is then taken on the dollies to the cargo acceptance centre. At the cargo acceptance centre it is then stored in accordance to size and aircraft and date that it arrived on. Now, if you're asking me, then why didn't you check in, it's a dangerous goods, for me it wasn't a dangerous goods because I didn't receive any pre-advise that I had dangerous goods on board. Now, once again, I rely on our handling agents, on our cargo handling agents, LL in this case, to tell me if something was bad or wrong, if something was cleared incorrectly, damaged. That's why we are paying them the money to do this. It didn't even dawn on me to think that maybe this object was a missile, the thought would not even have occurred to me, I mean, to think of a thing like that. Now to ask me, just think for yourselves for a moment, to ask me, Jossie, does this contain rocket fuel. How can I know if it contains

rocket fuel, how can I possibly know, just think for a moment. I mean we've got to try and be a bit fair here.

CHAIRPERSON: Let me answer that question. Why would a person who was not running after us to give us that information, who was solicited to give an account of a story that has apparently been told over and over, a story that you also do not deny, only to the extent that it implicates you ...(inaudible) Is there any reason why the person, quite apart from being malicious, knowing how serious the ramification and the implications of that statement is, why would he say something like that if that a conversation never took place in the form in which it took place, according to him?

MR BRAIZBLATT: I found I'm now speaking as a person that doesn't live in South Africa and has got nothing to do with your present future situation, and I found, I don't even know how to express this, I found all sorts of stories going around about all sorts of things in order to do all sorts of harm to all sorts of people at all sorts of walks of life. Now, I would have remembered had I been asked if a missile had rocket fuel in it ...(intervention)

CHAIRPERSON: You see, the problem is that ...(intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: And at the same time, just like I'm answering you, it could be, I would have said, look, how can I know if the thing had missile fuel, I didn't even know it was a

missile. I mean, people are trying to, it's beyond me, why, I've got my personal opinions why, it's my own personal opinions.

MS PATTA: These particular two captains were both former South African Airways ...(intervention)

MR BRAIZBLATT: Former.

MS PATTA: Pilots, yes, so they knew what a missile looked like. They were also highly concerned and ...(indistinct), so I would just find it very difficult if they did not enquire on the ground, was it with you or somebody else, to clarify what it was that they were seeing.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Did they clarify this when they returned to Johannesburg, did they ask as soon as they came back to Johannesburg what it was?

MS PATTA: Yes, they did. They also did so because they could get no clarification on the ground.

MR BRAIZBLATT: We certainly didn't know. Once again I say, look, we didn't know. If we would have know, we didn't know, there's no way we can know. I mean, look, with all due respect, I can't tell from looking at a profile and a box that's partly damaged if it's a missile, I really can't tell. I don't know whether anyone of us here can tell, I certainly can't.

CHAIRPERSON: Are there any further questions for this witness? Thank you, Mr Braizblatt, thank you for having come.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Thank you for having me.

CHAIRPERSON: And you should appreciate that we have a job to do and we're trying to it.

MR BRAIZBLATT: I most certainly do.

CHAIRPERSON: Otherwise you are excused for the moment.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON: I do not know whether you have any witnesses to call.

MR BRAIZBLATT: Sorry, I'm on my way if you don't need me any further. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON: We'll adjourn for ten minutes which would mean we should re-assemble at 11h50. I'm sure the tea has gone cold.

WITNESS EXCUSED

HEARING ADJOURNS

