

# Stranded crewman plans to intercept skipper

By ROGER WILLIAMS  
Chief Reporter

WHILE a lookout was being kept off the Cape's west coast yesterday for the abandoned yacht *Fiji*, a stranded member of its crew was planning in Cape Town to fly to Las Palmas to demand his belongings from the Dutch owner.

Mr Wolfgang Borutta, 23, an electrician from Frankfurt, West Germany, said all his belongings, including his passport, his clothes and nearly R2 000 in cash, were on board the *Fiji* (formerly *Strike One*) when it sailed from Port Owen without him on Christmas Eve.

The *Fiji* was abandoned on Sunday when, after sending out a distress call, the owner/skipper, Mr Leo van Lent, 58, and his companion, a Cape Town woman known as Shireen, were picked up by a northbound merchantman, the *Mineralis*, about 180 nautical miles west of Port Nolloth.

The ship is heading for Las Palmas. Efforts to contact the vessel by radio yesterday were unsuccessful.

A spokesman for Southern Air Command said a lookout was being kept for the *Fiji*, now considered a navigational hazard, by aircraft of the command on routine coastal patrols. By late yesterday nothing had been sighted.

Mr Borutta and another crewman, Mr Bresler Dauth, 24, a Cape Town musician, said the arrangement with Mr Van Lent was that he would pick them up "early in the new year" in Cape Town, where he would also get official clearance for himself and the boat before sailing for Europe.

"But instead of that, the boat obviously headed straight for Europe after sailing from Port Owen," said Mr Borutta.

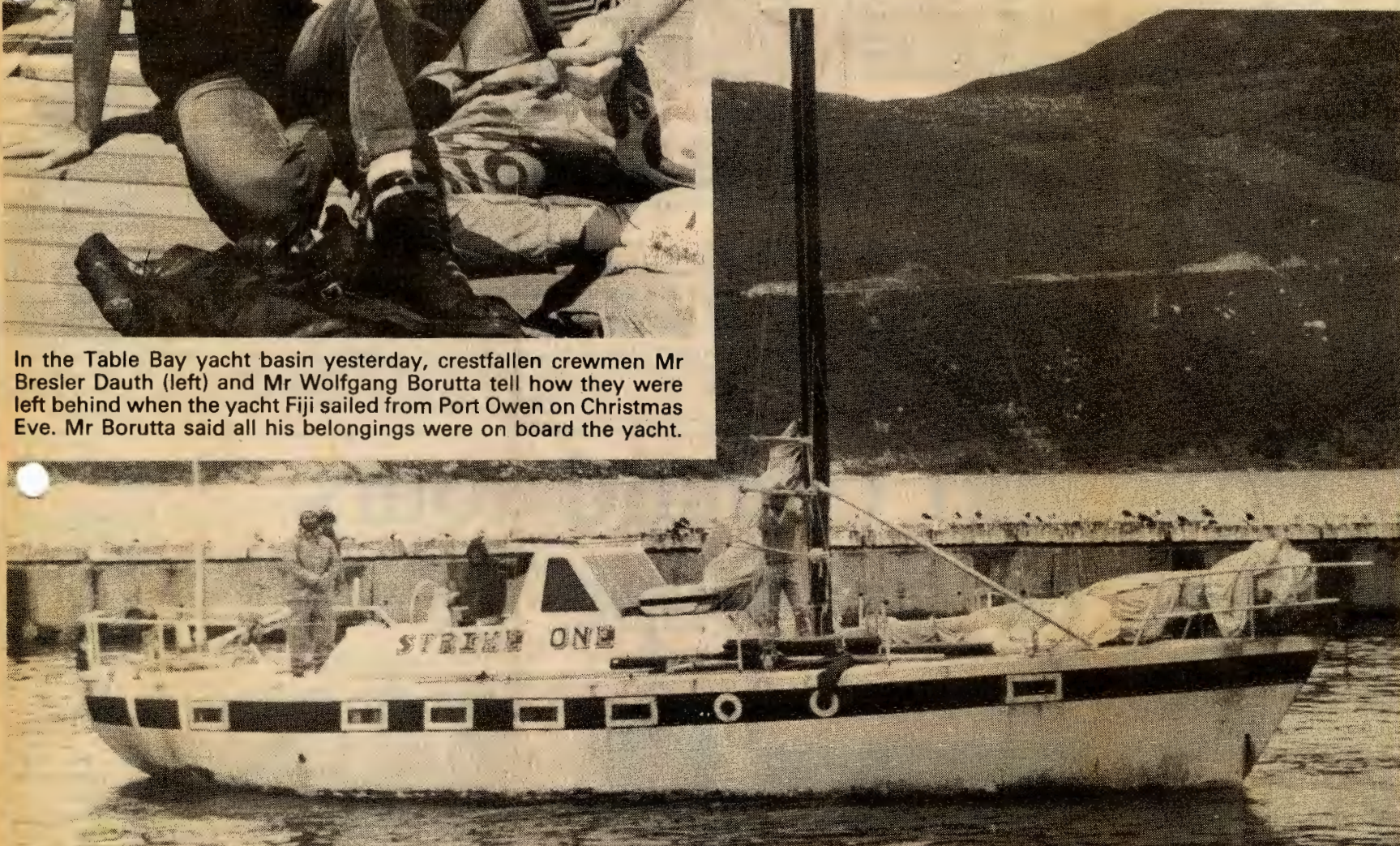
"Everything I possess — even my guitar — is on board that yacht, and I must recover what I can. I have had to ask my mother in Frankfurt to send air-fare to enable me to get to Las Palmas, via Europe, and I hope to be there before the *Mineralis* arrives."

Mr Borutta said both he and Mr Dauth had paid Mr Van Lent R350 towards their passage money, and he, Mr Borutta, had also left \$500 (about R1 100) and R600 in cash with Mr Van Lent, "for safekeeping on board the yacht" while he and Mr Dauth spent Christmas away from Port Owen.

When the *Fiji*, which as the *Strike One* was "under arrest" at Saldanha Bay for part of 1986, transmitted an emergency call at the weekend Mr Van Lent said his hydraulic steering mechanism had failed.



In the Table Bay yacht basin yesterday, crestfallen crewmen Mr Bresler Dauth (left) and Mr Wolfgang Borutta tell how they were left behind when the yacht *Fiji* sailed from Port Owen on Christmas Eve. Mr Borutta said all his belongings were on board the yacht.



The *Fiji*, then called *Strike One*, in Hout Bay in 1985 after a rough passage from Brazil. The yacht, which had not yet been bought by its present owner, Mr Leo van Lent, had to be towed into harbour.