**The Skeleton Project – Fletcher Jones**

**Phil Smith, CEO, Fletcher Jones**

**Phil Smith:**Hi. I'm Phil Smith and I'm the CEO of Fletcher Jones.

[Music playing]

 Fletcher Jones is an apparel retail organisation that's been around since 1918. I've only been there a short time - six months or so.

 I hope that I can see a first-hand experience of those practices that put people at risk, and I want to put a stop to it, and I want to put a stop to it effective immediately.

 The quicker we can roll this out, the quicker we can let people know that safety is not up for negotiation, it's not up to cut corners, we're not looking to save dollars - we're simply trying to make a safer working environment for everyone.

[Music playing]

Male: This is Peter. He's heading up the research.

**Glenda Jackson:** Hi Peter. How are you?

**Peter:** Fantastic.

**Glenda Jackson:** This is our VM room.

**Peter:** Do you feel safe out here?

**Glenda Jackson:** Not always. I've had shelves fall on my shins.

**Peter:** I've hit my ankle twice on this.

**Glenda Jackson:** Yes, yeah. Things need to really be put away properly.

**Peter:** Have you ever tripped over out here?

**Glenda Jackson:** Oh yeah. Yeah, many times.

**Peter:** Right.

**Glenda Jackson:** Pull that off. See that's – that's a danger there 'cause -

**Peter:** Right, that is because that looks like it's about to fall.

**Glenda Jackson:** If someone didn't take note of that and went to get this one, that could fall.

**Peter:** Yep. So does that happen from time to time?

**Glenda Jackson:** Yeah, yep. They're stable up there until you actually -

**Peter:** Move them?

**Glenda Jackson:** Move one. Well the only way I can move this is like this or to actually lift the whole thing off the stand because -

**Peter:** Because if I lift this -

**Glenda Jackson:** That'll come out of there.

**Peter:** That comes off of -

**Glenda Jackson:** Yep. Just … be very careful there…

**Peter:** How do you do this on your own?

**Glenda Jackson:** It's just guesswork. Just get an aching back, but -

**Peter:** So, this has to be moved like this?

**Glenda Jackson:** Yep.

**Peter:** Mmm, okay.

**Glenda Jackson:** Did you get your shelves together?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** No, not yet.

**Peter:** Is there a reason you use a screwdriver rather than a drill?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Rather than an electric drill? Because the company hasn't supplied one and the company generally doesn't like to spend the money on those sorts of things when – when you don't need to use it that often.

**Peter:** Because this will do?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yeah. Yes, my wrist will kill by the end of it.

**Peter:** This is ridiculous. When you have a day like this, how do you feel at the end of the day?

**Glenda Jackson:** Exhausted.

**Peter:** So it's quite physically -

**Glenda Jackson:** Exhausting.

**Peter:** Exhausting?

**Glenda Jackson:** Yep.

**Peter:** Demanding?

**Glenda Jackson:** Yeah.

**Peter:** Does John bring these in here, does he?

**Glenda Jackson:** He does, yeah, and if I ask him and he's not busy, the other day he brought a box down for me.

**Peter:** No, you're not going to lift those. So John does?

**Glenda Jackson:** He does.

**Peter:** Hello John. Peter from ISRG. How are you doing?

**John McDonald:** Good thanks.

**Peter:** That’s the way. Good to meet you. It's incredible that people haven't tripped on this.

**John McDonald:** Yeah. I think everyone's just careful, you know.

**Peter:** So used to it, yeah.

**John McDonald:** Yeah.

**Peter:** Because they know it's there.

**John McDonald:** Yeah.

**Peter:** Do you undertake any training around safety?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** No.

**Peter:** And do you ever talk about safety issues with anyone else in the organisation?

**Peter:** Is there a forum at all in any way -

**Sarah Vanzetti:** No.

**Peter:** - or other store manager groups or?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** No, but the minute that you see something, someone's doing something wrong, well you stop that practice straight away obviously.

**Peter:** Okay. Do you highlight the safety risk there?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yes, "You shouldn't be doing that because you might fall off," or, "No, I will do that because that is too heavy for you," you know, there's lots of -

**Peter:** So you put yourself at risk before your staff?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yeah, absolutely. When we flooded 12 months ago the whole store got recarpeted for the first time and us two women pulled the carpet up with a crowbar.

**Peter:** You pulled the carpet up with a crowbar?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yes. Yes. Everyone hands on deck had to either roll it up or carry it in which way that they could, whether there's two or three people carrying a big load of carpet, it depends how much we got up in one go and that will get loaded into a truck out the front of the store.

**Peter:** Was there any discussion about how to carry out these duties around -

**Sarah Vanzetti:** No, no.

**Peter:** - keeping it safe?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** No, there wasn't. I should never have been pulling the carpet up on the floor. I still have trouble now.

**Peter:** When you say you still have trouble, what?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Occasionally I get a bit of an ache and it's just through that. It's just because I didn't rest it.

**Peter:** Okay. If you could give the management a message about safety, what would be the one single biggest message you'd want to give them?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** You need to listen to us and ask. We've never been asked what the issues are.

**Peter:** You think they're a bit removed?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yep. This store floods quite often, so I have to climb out the window. There's steps down there.

**Peter:** Oh wow.

**Sarah Vanzetti:** So, then I get on the roof and then I walk down and then I clamber up and over and up and over.

**Peter:** Up over the peak?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yes.

**Peter:** And up and over?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yep. I take a big plastic bag with me. There's obviously a reason why it's flooding, so I've got to get rid of the leaves, so.

**Peter:** And how do you know that it's flooding?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Because it's raining inside the building on the shop floor.

**Peter:** Right, the water's coming in on the shop floor?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Mmm.

**Peter:** So it could be rotted underneath there?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** It could be. It could be for all I know. Definitely.

**Peter:** Right.

**Sarah Vanzetti:** But I do it with work boots.

**Peter:** You do it with work boots?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yeah. I've got my own clothes here. I've got tracksuit pants and that's what I throw on to get out on the roof. Apart from the day that it flooded, I just went out with what I had on, threw my work boots out and just went.

[Music playing]

**Peter:** So all of this has been worth it just in that?

**Female:** Yep.

**Peter:** That was amazing. “*Do you think the timber has been replaced*?” "*Don't know. Probably not, but I still get out there*." How high up do you reckon that is? She's putting her – what's she got at risk? Her life.

[Music playing]

**Phil Smith:** I really got a lot more out of this today than I thought I would. I learnt a lot that I'm sure I wouldn't have learnt any other way. When talking with the staff and asking them about how often do they talk about safety, it quickly became apparent to me that it's simply not something that's on the agenda. What I have seen here today simply isn't acceptable and I need to – I need to act and I need to act quickly.

[Music playing]

**Phil Smith:** Thank you so much.

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yep.

**Glenda Jackson:** Well done kid.

**Phil Smith:** Thank you so much. It was - It was a –

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Oh well, with you here, that makes it pretty – you know – it's great.

**Phil Smith:** Pretty serious?

**Sarah Vanzetti:** Yeah.It's good that – you know – you get the CEO coming in, doing that.

**Phil Smith:** Seeing it first hand and looking at what you're doing and looking at the risks really, was gobsmacking for me. You know - the message we now have to get out to the people and you'll play a big role in it Sarah, because I think you can be strong enough to show some – you know – real leadership with this and just say "That's just not acceptable." The big message is “nothing is more important than safety, nothing”. And that's all there is to it.

We cannot have people trying to save time or money above safety. So it's a big thanks. I really appreciate your time and your effort, and your honesty.

[Music playing]

[End of Transcript]