

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: ALKABIB, AMMAR

Age if under 18: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation:

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: A ALKHTIHATIB

Date: 20/08/2018

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am the above named person and I am making this statement in relation to the fire at the Grenfell Tower on Wednesday 14th June 2017.

I am a friend of Omar and Mohammad ALHAJALI, I also know their younger brother Hashem. I am originally from [REDACTED] but I did not know the brothers in [REDACTED] I met them in London, I think it was in 2015 that we met and became friends. I am good friends with their housemate Mahmoud ALKARAD.

Omar, Mohammad and Mahmoud all shared a flat together in Grenfell Tower. I had been to the flat often to visit them I would say over fifty (50) times since they had moved in. I would often finish work and then go visit them after my shift. One of them would buzz down and open the main door. Once or twice the second (2) door to get in would not work so one (1) of them would have to come downstairs and let me in. I always used the lifts to go up to their flat. I never used the stairs, I did not even know where the stairs were. The flat was nicely decorated and new. The only problem they had was with the gas, I don't think they had gas for a long time.

On Tuesday 13th June 2017 I was at work in [REDACTED] in a dessert restaurant called [REDACTED] I was working from around 17:00hrs until it closed around 2am. Mahmoud was also working at the restaurant with me that evening. Mahmoud said that he wanted to go home as it wasn't busy that evening however I told him to stay with us until it closed, he decided to stay.

Omar's cousin Asim was in the restaurant that evening and he went over to Mahmoud and told him that there was a fire in his building. Asim took Mahmoud to the Tower. I was still in the restaurant working

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when Mahmoud sent me a video of the fire. I did not expect the fire to be so bad. I shut the restaurant between 01:30am and 02:00am. I drove to Grenfell Tower alone in my car, I drove along the A40 and could see the Tower on fire and lots of smoke. I cannot remember how far up the building the flames were at that point.

I came off of the A40 to the roundabout by the Hilton Hotel. I parked in the road opposite the Hilton Hotel. There was a lot of cars and traffic in the area so I decided to run and walk to the base of the Tower. On my way I had spoken to Mahmoud and he told me to go near to the tube station. I got to Latimer Road tube station where Mahmoud, Hashem and Asim were waiting.

I asked them where Omar and Mohammad were. Mahmoud told me they were still both inside. I could see the Tower from where I was standing, I was shocked they were inside but I thought they would come out. Mahmoud was on the phone to both of them whilst we were standing there, I think he was talking to Mohammad mostly. I told Mahmoud to tell them to get out of the flat.

I could see the firemen bringing people out of the building to the area where we were waiting. The ambulance staff were there and were treating the people being brought out. They were giving the people oxygen for around ten (10) or fifteen (15) minutes before taking them to the hospital in an ambulance. There were around twenty (20) people being treated in the area. We were waiting there for the firemen to bring out Omar and Mohammad.

We must have been waiting there for around an hour to an hour and a half before we saw Omar being brought out by a fireman. I think it was around 03:30am when he came out. The fireman was running and pulling Omar along. As Omar was brought over he laid on the floor. His face was black from the smoke, an ambulance man came over and gave him oxygen. Omar was shouting 'where is Mohammad, where is Mohammad'. He was almost fighting with himself, hitting himself shouting 'it's my mistake, it's my mistake'. He was in a bad state, shouting and crying. We tried to calm Omar down, the ambulance crew then took him away in an ambulance to the hospital.

I stayed at the Tower with Mahmoud and Asim. Mahmoud spoke to Mohammad on the phone another two (2) or three (3) times. Asim was on the phone to him a lot. I was telling them to tell him to put a blanket in the bath and soak it in water and then put it over him and try to leave the flat. They told him two (2) or three (3) times but I think he was too scared. I remember the last call to Mohammad was about 04:30am he said he was on the corner of the building where the water was being sprayed. He said they had just stopped spraying the water, he asked us to tell the fireman to continue spraying the water.

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We ran towards the Tower and told the fireman there that there was a male still alive in the corner of the building. The fireman took me closer to the building to a truck where there was people sitting in with laptops. I think he took me to the person in charge, it was a male, I think he was white, he was wearing uniform, I cannot remember the colour of his hat but he did have a plastic hat on. I said to this male that Mohammad was still alive and the floor number he was on. I cannot remember the floor number now, but I told him the floor which Mohammad was on. I told him exactly what Mohammad had told us, that the water had stopped being sprayed on to the corner where he was and that they needed to continue doing it, I had not even finished telling him the information, when the man in charge said to me 'it's not your job'. I was standing at the door of the truck and he was shouting at me and ushering me away. The fireman who had taken me over to the truck said to me he was sorry they he couldn't do anything. I felt very frustrated.

I then decided to call 999, I couldn't get through so they called me back. I told them what floor Mohammad was on and he was still alive. I told them what corner he was on. They took the information from me and told me that they would pass the information on to the people there. I called from my mobile telephone 0740 [REDACTED] 16. I only made one phone call that night to 999.

It felt very difficult to try and speak to someone in charge there to get them the information that we knew from Mohammad.

We then walked around the building, we could see the whole building and it was completely on fire. The fire was all over the building, right up to the top. We had tried to contact Mohammad but we could not get through. His phone was off.

We were standing around 200 meters away from the building, maybe a little further, by a church and we could hear the noise from the fire and smell of fire and smoke. It was very strong, there was a lot of smoke. We went inside the church, there were lots of people there with food and water. We used the toilet and took some water. We then came back out and were watching the building. We stayed by the church until around 10:00am.

At some point I drove my car to the hospital where Omar had been taken. He was there with his friend Farrah and brother Hashem. Farrah had called to say she wanted to collect her car from the Tower so I went to the hospital with Mahmoud to collect Farrah. We did not go into the hospital we just collected her and brought her back to the Tower.

Once we got back to the Tower we were asking fireman and ambulance crews if they had seen Mohammad or taken him to hospital. They were telling us that they had taken a lot of people and that we

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should check the hospitals. They told us there was a place where some residents were and directed us where to go. We went inside and gave Mohammad's name. They checked for us and told us Mohammad was not there. They told us to check the hospitals.

We continued to walk around and look for Mohammad. I knew in my heart that Mohammad had gone. I told Mahmoud this. It was around midday when I decided to leave the area. I told the others to call me if they needed anything. I then drove back home on my own. I had a shower and got some sleep.

When I woke up I went back into work for my shift. I remember it was a very busy night that night and lots of customers were talking about it. I really did not want to work and I couldn't concentrate. I worked there until 02:00 -02:30am when the restaurant closed.

I think it was the following day, on the Thursday, when I was at work and noticed that the bar man, his name is Adnan, he was very upset. He was sitting on the floor crying and holding his phone. I went up to him and took his phone and saw a picture of Mohammad. I didn't want to see the picture so I gave the phone straight back to him. Someone had sent him the picture. I did not want to see how he looked. I took Adnan outside to calm him down. I knew then that it was confirmed that Mohammad had died.

I no longer have any of the photos or videos from the fire as I have a new mobile phone.

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