

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: SAUNDERS, JONATHAN

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 21 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: J SAUNDERS

Date: 27/11/2017

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

This statement refers to the fire that occurred at Grenfell Tower on the Tuesday 14th June 2017 in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. On the night of fire, I was on duty posted as driver at Soho Fire Station on Red watch.

During the course of my statement I will be mentioning Firefighter Lawrence STAVELY aka Bo STAVELY, who was based at Soho fire station as well and who I worked with on the night of the fire. He is now retired. I will also be mentioning Firefighter Theresa ORCHARD who is based at Soho fire station and on the night of the fire was assigned as driver of the pump (A242), which followed me to Grenfell Tower. When I first entered Grenfell Tower and entered the lobby area I saw Firefighter Terry ROOTS, who is also from Red watch at Soho fire station. I remember he called out to other fire fighters to bring a more BA sets. Also present that night was Station Manager Sam KAZMANLI who is based at Soho fire station. I also worked alongside Firefighter Adam JOHNSON, who assisted me with direction from Soho fire station to Grenfell Tower. I worked with Fire fighter JOHNSON out of Soho fire station. I will further mention Firefighter Jason KING and Crew Manager Andy PEARCY, who are both from Soho fire station and who I saw at Grenfell Tower on the night of the fire. All of these people are on my Watch — Red Watch, Soho fire station. Apart from Station Manager Sam KAZMANLI who was Soho's Station Manager at the time of the fire. He has since been replaced.

I started my training for the London Fire Brigade in June 2009, so about 8 years' service with London Fire Brigade. I had been at Soho fire station for about 8 months at the time of the fire, which is where I am still currently posted. Prior to that, I was posted at Erith Fire Station in South East London, and while

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there, I had experience of attending a fire in a kitchen in a block of flats. I have worked as a Retained Firefighter in Kent for 12 years and still do, working this job on my days off from London Fire Brigade. From the [REDACTED] I have worked as a firefighter, which makes me competent. While at Kent, in my on-call, role I was involved in exercises where we had lecture training in high-rise blocks from time to time, I cannot remember any dates. I have not completed live fire training in a high rise in a long time; I cannot remember when it was. I have had training around sandwich panels, which I would imagine are similar to cladding, but have not had specific training on cladding.

I would describe Grenfell Tower as a high-rise block of flats located in a residential area in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Prior to the fire, I had never been there before. Through the main entrance of Grenfell Tower, there was a mezzanine floor. Through the doorway from the mezzanine floor there was a small lobby. This lobby had concrete stairs leading from it. I did not notice a fireman's lift in that area. The stairwells were narrow with concrete steps leading to the various floors. On each floor, there was a door leading into a lobby area. There were six flats on each floor, three on the left and three on the right. On Tuesday, 13th June 2017, I came on duty at 8pm as per normal, for our first night shift. We do two days and two nights, so this was the first night shift. I was assigned as driver of A241, which is the pump ladder at Soho Fire Station that has the watch manager in charge of it. We have three appliances at Soho, one of these being a Turntable ladder. It is worth noting we didn't actually have a turntable ladder that night, we had an aerial ladder platform, which is the other type, our turntable ladder had been taken away to be used for training and we'd been given an aerial ladder platform, which we weren't too happy about but that is what was required and it was what we were using on that night. It was our aerial ladder platform that had gone to Grenfell.

On the night of the fire, I was assigned as driver of A241, Soho's Pump Ladder. Prior to the fire I had never been to Grenfell Tower before. I started the shift as normal and did my checks with the appliance, which includes checking the blue lights, testing the pump works correctly and checking for any damage things like that, and all was ok. From what I recall, the evening was busy. We were called to Tottenham Court Road Underground station, possibly around 10pm or 11pm; the call was for a person under a train. On arrival, it was quickly established that there was not anyone actually under the train as they had been pulled to safety by members of the public before the train pulled into the platform. We were not there for very long, whilst we were there the HART team were there. Firefighter ROOTS knew one of the HART team, they had a brief chat, and the HART said they would pop by Soho Fire Station for a cup of tea, so we all headed back to Soho Fire Station and had a cup of tea. I think at that point we had heard a message

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over the radio in the fire engine that something was happening at Grenfell Tower, but I didn't pay too much attention to it at that point I didn't realise the scale of the incident.

The HART Team work for the London Ambulance, they are a highly trained level of paramedic who can wear breathing apparatus, work from lines and things like that. They are technical and their work crosses over into the Fire Brigades work.

At midnight, we are allowed to go to bed, so it was around that time maybe a bit later about 1230am I got into my bed in the dorm. All the lights would be off then and everyone would be in their bed at this time. Around 1am, we were mobilised. When this happens all the lights come on automatically, the bells go, and then it is announced which call of Fire Engine is being ordered to go out, which was our pump A242 and the pump ladder A241.

As per normal, I came down to the watch room to look at the route to incident on the map. Prior to being mobilised we had an information message printed, telling us that our Aerial Ladder Platform had been mobilised to Grenfell. It had been at another incident nearby to Grenfell.

We call it a tip sheet and it has the incident number, time of the call, time we were immobilised the address and what appliances were attending. It said 20-pump fire, which means 20 fire engines. I've been aware that in the past there has been big fires where there had been 20 pumps or around that number and there hasn't actually been that big of an incident, so when I read that I thought it's possibly a bit over kill probably isn't much, but as I heard 'make pumps 25' come over the radio. I heard radio traffic with FSG call information. It was when I heard that I guess I realised then that actually maybe it is something a bit bigger, and this time it is worthy of 20 - 25 pumps.

There are various other bits of information on sheet but the main parts I picked out were FSG calls in progress. Fire Survival Guidance calls are when our operators giving advice to people saying they are trapped in their flat or where they might be in the building, they are given advice over the phone. The operators would also give 'Stay Put' advice, which is policy for somebody who is trapped in a fire situation in particular high-rise buildings or residential care homes. This is because when there is fire or smoke somewhere in the building they stay put until we rescue them or they are told it is all clear. That information will then be relayed to the fire engines, in particular the ones already in attendance, so they write down that information that control is passing to them about their location flat number what they're doing and where they are in their flat that sort of thing.

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I think at that point we had heard a message over the radio in the fire engine that something was happening at Grenfell Tower, but I didn't pay too much attention to it at that point I didn't realise the scale of the incident.

I then got into the driver's seat and was ready to go, and then there was some confusion but I can't quite remember what the confusion was, but there was some confusion with our ordering as to whether we were going there or if perhaps standing by at a different fire station for cover. It was either my watch manager or my crew manager, I think both, went to the watch room to make a phone call to control to establish whether or not we were actually going to Grenfell or whatever.

Whilst they were doing that I was still assuming we were going on blue lights to Grenfell and so I programmed into the Satnav the address, which is a normal satnav that you just have to type the address into, which I get from the call slip from the office and get the address from there. Then the watch manager came back to the fire engine and said 'yes we're going to Grenfell', and that was when I left Soho Fire station on blue lights, which was possibly around 1 am. I turned left out of the station, through Piccadilly Circus, along Piccadilly, round Duke of Wellington Place, I believe I then followed the A315, along Kensington High Street. After this I'm not sure of the route I took as I was taking directions from Firefighter Adam JOHNSON. I was also following the Satnav. I parked the fire engine on Bomore Road. I was not sure where Grenfell Tower was I had never been there before; I wasn't too familiar with the area. Partly because I had only been at Soho Fire Station at that point for probably about 8 months so I was still learning the area, but in the back on my fire engine was a fire fighter who knew the area well and so he was shouting directions to me while I was looking at the Satnav and confirming that was the route I was taking.

The roads were very clear actually, which is a rare occurrence around Soho, so it was quite an easy drive. I cannot remember all the roads I took but I went down Piccadilly and wherever I was then directed by the fire fighter who knew where Grenfell Tower was. While I was driving, I could hear a lot of radio traffic from control giving details of Fire Survival Guidance calls, so at that point I knew that we had something big, and I also heard the assistance messages coming from the fire ground making pumps 25. We were ordered on the make pumps 20, but I think it was when I pulled out the fire station I heard make pumps 25, so it was a very short time frame between make pumps 20 and make pumps 25.

I was driving the pump ladder, generally, the pump would follow the pump ladder, so the pump was behind me and FF ORCHARD was driving that appliance. I noticed that she was trailing quite far behind me at some points, but due to the urgency of the call, I did not slow down to wait for her appliance. I did

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not see the Tower at any point whilst I was driving, I guess because of the surrounding buildings. I came to a cross roads and the traffic lights were red for me, so I started proceeding through at a crawl and as I did another fire engine came from my right and that was West Hampstead's pump ladder I believe or pump, so I let them cross through the crossroads. I was sure they must have the green light so I let them through and then followed on behind which was for no more than 10 seconds probably. That was very near to Grenfell Tower.

We had been given a rendezvous point to go to and as we came down to a small residential road West Hampstead's fire engine turned left at a T-junction. My watch manager who was sitting next to me in the front said, 'turn right and don't do a left like West Hampstead'. The chap in the back, firefighter JOHNSON, also said turn right, so I did that. I do not know the name of the road. That led me down fairly close to Grenfell Tower and onto Bomore Road. There was no other fire engines down this road I had gone down, I think this was near to the leisure centre next to Grenfell Tower. As we came around the front of the leisure centre our aerial ladder platform, the height vehicle, was there on the grass next to Grenfell Tower. Upon arrival, around lam I think, the fire had already spread at that point.

It was actually quiet inside the fire engine, I think everyone was just listening to what was happening over the radio. The watch manager officer in charge sitting next to me in the front was concentrating, I think, on the route we were taking as well, he was looking at mobile data terminal screen in the front looking at the map on that. I think they were allowing for firefighter JOHNSON in the back to give me directions, so it was a bit quiet for that.

When I arrived, I think it was at the end of a dead-end road or very near to it, but I think the way the cars were parked meant I could not quite get to the end anyway, I cannot quite remember. The road was quite narrow due to the parked cars but it didn't delay my progress too much it just meant I had to be a bit more cautious. I knew I was close enough and we stopped there. I could not see all of the building I do not believe, I cannot quite recall I noticed a few police vehicles as I came down the road and a lot of members of the public standing around filming or talking on their phones just in a large crowd in front of us and to right.

It was when I arrived at the incident I then turned my personal radio on and I heard radio traffic saying to get BA sets, hose and breaking in equipment. One of the fire fighters shouted out about getting the hose, branches, which is a nozzle that goes onto the end of the hose, and breaking in equipment and BA. At that point, there wasn't a lot of talking everyone was just busy getting the equipment off the truck and their BA set on.

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As the driver, you do not wear your fire gear when you are driving, so I had to jump out and get into my fire gear quickly whilst the rest of my crew had already taken the equipment of the appliance. I got in my fire gear and put a BA set onto my back. I looked back behind my fire engine to make sure our pump was behind us and that it had followed on and saw FF ORCHID getting her fire gear on as well, but she was a bit slower than the rest of us, I had already got mine on at this point. I am not sure that anyone waited for her; we just headed straight towards the building with what we had. We did not slow for her. When I came around the corner that was the first moment I saw Grenfell Tower alight. There were no other appliances where we had parked. I now know that Paddington was in attendance and North Kensington. Any incidents' that have four pumps or more would have a command unit sent, or unless it is requested. They will manage the incident from there and get up maps of the incident. It is an office, which is brought to the fire ground to manage the incident more effectively. I believe more senior officers took command as the incident escalated.

I have used two printed maps to help assist me in identify locations and will be referring to them in my statement. JAS/01 refers to a small map, which is a close-up of Grenfell Tower and the surrounding roads. JAS/02 relates to a larger map of the same area as JAS/01 covering more roads. Looking at JAS/02 I originally thought it was a dead-end road, but I might have remembered it wrong. We walked along the Grass toward Grenfell Tower. I have made some marks on JAS/02 to help show locations. Point A I think is where we were, which was Bomore Road. I am sure we were next to the leisure centre. The second vehicle was behind. Point B is the entrance to Grenfell Tower where there was a fire engine parked which I think was possibly Paddington's fire engine and that was pumping, they were trying to supply water to the building I think. It was a couple minutes between point A and B.

There was a large crowd of people, members of the public standing there, shown on JAS/02 as a few small crosses; there was also a few police officers. They all rushed over to me and my colleagues and were asking what they could do to help, a couple of them tried to take bits of hose off the appliance for us, we had to tell them not to worry to stand back because they weren't helping the situation. We then had to try and get through a crowd of people that were all standing there; we had to shout at them to make way. I think they were so focussed on what was happening in front of them that they weren't really aware of us trying to get through them to the building, it wouldn't have hindered us too much or for too long though.

We crossed over a small area of grass down a bank and then we were right next to Grenfell Tower. There was a fire brigade officer, possibly a watch manager, standing outside, who was telling us to stand back

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against the wall because there was debris falling down. He was under a roof type of thing, close to where point B is marked on JAS/02. He was cautiously looking up every now and again from the cover trying to see when it might be safe to run across to get in the main entrance to Grenfell Tower, at which point he said it was clear we ran across and went in. I was quite anxious at this point and quite worried because as I walked down I looked up at the building and saw the scale of it already. I could see the east side of the building, a diagonal wall of flames up the side of the building, which looked from 7th to maybe the 15th floor or something like that possibly. Normally the fire should not spread beyond the flat so we would not have had any training scenarios for an incident like Grenfell. I saw the east side alight and was aware that the West side was alight too. Three fire fighters on the east side and three on the West side with main jets on the outside of the building were trying to put the fire out. The cordon would usually be pushed out further.

I am not sure if it was then or later on in the incident but there was a lot of water spraying out of a hose that had been split I think from the debris that had fallen down on top of it. I went up the flight of stairs that was in the main lobby area, saw a couple of firefighters on the mezzanine floor landing area, and headed towards them with my watch. We dumped the hose at the top of the stairs and the breaking in equipment. There was not a lot else happening in the lobby at that time. I could not hear any alarms and the visibility was clear it was fine.

Entry control was through a door around to the right so I could not see in there or what was happening at that point. There was a watch manager standing in the doorway stopping us going through trying not to let it get too congested in there. With everyone being so eager to get in the building everyone kept surging forward towards the door, he had to keep shouting at us to get back and line up. Three or four minutes later I then looked round realised there was a lot more fire fighters lined up behind me at this point, there was a queue of fire fighters in breathing apparatus all the way down the stairs towards the front door. One of my colleagues from my watch, firefighter ROOTS, shouted over the balcony to the fire fighters in lobby to get some second set bags, I don't think anyone responded to him, I then heard him shouting it again a couple of minutes later. Shortly after that, I saw a fire fighter come through the front door with a second set bag, but no BA set in it in because he shouted up there was not any spare BA sets anywhere, so I saw the bag get dumped in the lobby and left there. Then the next thing I knew I was next in line to go through the doorway to entry control, we then got called through into the bridge head. It was really loud in there with everyone shouting. The bridgehead is where our entry control boards would be. Each of our

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breathing sets has a tally, we plug that into the board, and that is always monitored on how much air we have left and if we get into trouble. That is where the BA operations are managed and where briefing are given to crews.

It was quite a small area so it was quite hard to hear each other and understand what was happening. We were then given a brief to go to the 7th floor and check for any casualties there. I was with firefighter STAVELY, who was from my watch at Soho, who is now retired. I was also with a crew manager who I do not know or what station he was from and another fire fighter, so we were a team of four.

We put our masks on and, as we call it, went under air. Once the mask is on you put your fire hood over the top of that then your helmet and gloves and then you are ready. You then take your tally off your BA set give that to the entry control officer who would put it into the board. At this point, just as we were about to proceed up the stairs, we were told by a watch manager who I believe was from Kensington, in fire gear white helmet and possibly a Scottish accent, that our brief was being changed and we had to go to the 9th floor as there were two children on an FSG call, calling from that flat. I can't remember the flat number.

I checked with my team because it was so loud that they had heard the brief, they said yes, so started going up the stairs. We could not smell smoke because we had the masks on and there was not anyone in the stairwell in front of me at that point. The stairwell was quite narrow. There was not anything of interest just concrete stairs. The first couple of floors the visibility was ok, there was light grey smoke logging, but I could see, and then all of a sudden at around the 5th or 6th floor the conditions changed just as we went up into the smoke layer and it was pitch black with the smoke and we couldn't see anything it was zero visibility. I think there was a light possibly on every floor but I not sure. It didn't really help through the amount smoke that there was, I was aware of some sort of glows. I was team leader, so I was what they call number one. When I refer to team leader, it means that when you have a team of fire fighters going into a building in breath apparatus one of you will be the team leader, you do not necessarily have to be of a higher rank or role such as crew manger or watch manager. Generally, it is the more experienced fire fighter that would take the number one position or team leader. I think for Grenfell I just happened to be the team leader just because of where I was stood and I was in front of the other three as we came through the doorway to entry control. Having said that I do think I have enough experience to be the team leader and number one in the BA team.

The other three were behind me and FF STAVELY was holding on, I could feel his hands on my BA cylinder so I knew he was behind me and I assumed the other two were doing the same behind him. As

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were going up the stairs I realised I was not sure what floor I was on. I knew I had to get to the 9th floor, but I'd forgotten, where I had been going through the brief in my head over and over again I had forgotten to count what floor I was on. There were not any numbers on the walls for what level you were on, although later someone had written on the wall with a chinagraph pencil that we carry. I turned around to my team and I asked them if they thought we are on 9th floor yet, at that point the crew manager in my team said, "no we're going to floor 7", he was thinking we were on first brief that we had been given he hadn't heard the second brief when it got changed. I had to tell him 'no we're going to a flat on 9th floor', and they said Ok and were not sure what floor we were on either so I carried on. I think I spoke to a fire fighter I came across in the stairwell and he told me we were on floor 9, so I turned right through the door into the lobby where the flats were. When we got the 9th floor it wasn't that clearly defined as to who should be the team leader then. The crew manager was giving his input and saying what he thought and we were all working together. It was not as if I was having to lead the team through following walls and things like that. We all worked together, we were all team leader at different points. I am a Temporary Crew Manager in Kent Fire and Rescue Service, so I have some experience in that role.

When I got in through that door, the door closed behind us. It was very lightly smoke logged; the visibility was Ok particularly if you crouched down. I could see a lot better, I could see clearly all the flat numbers on the doors so immediately saw the flat we needed and found it straight away, but I can't remember the number it might have been flat 50 something but I don't know. We had the hose with us and the breaking in gear but we did not plug the hose into the dry riser at that point because there was no fire and because we were there to get to the two children as quickly as possible and then bring them out. I went to the flat door, which was the second flat on the right as you enter the lobby door. The visibility was hazy but good enough to see each other quite clearly. I could not hear any alarms sounding anywhere. The door was closed, so I banged on the door shouting 'Fire Brigade' and to open the door but there was no response. I knew we had the breaking in gear so was prepared to use it but banged one more time and shouted as loud as I could through it, which is quite difficult to shout when you have BA mask on because it muffles the sound quite well. At that point, a fire fighter opened the door who was not wearing his breathing apparatus. I did not recognise him but I have since heard he was a fire fighter from Paddington. I said that we had been sent to get two children from this flat, and he said do not worry we already have them. At that point, I looked around the door and saw two young girls in the lounge and two other fire fighters with them. They were taking their breathing apparatus masks off, putting them onto the children, and comforting them. I saw them put the neck loops over and around at least one of the

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children's heads ready to put the mask on, which is how it is normally done, the loops go around and then then loops over the back of the head. I did not look for too long it was only a very quick look towards them. Their flat was clear and there was not any fire, it was Ok.

Both the children were black girls quite small and in their pyjamas, I think. Possibly around 7 and 5 years old. I discretely said to the fire fighter that had opened the door, if that a good idea because obviously they had to get out themselves with the children, I don't remember what he said I think he said 'yeah' I don't think he listened to me saying that really. I then said 'we'll leave them with you' and he said 'ok' and then closed the door to stop any smoke going in. I'm not sure who in my team had the coms on their breathing apparatus, but we tried to radio to entry control to tell them the children were already rescued from that flat, but there wasn't any response apparently. I had my handheld radio turned on to the correct channel and I tried to say that through the radio myself. I do not remember there being any response to that either. There was a lot of radio traffic and there were problems getting messages to send and receive. We decided then that the best thing to do rather than to go back down to entry control, wasting time and air, that we would search the other areas on that floor. The Crew manager and fire fighter on my team that I did not know stood to my left at the flat next door, which was on the right of the flat we had been sent to, had the enforcer and were preparing to knock the door through. I said to them 'wait let's try and plug the hose into the dry riser and get some water supply before we go in there', which they agreed with. This was because in case there was fire inside then we have something to tackle it with immediately. We then plugged in the 45 hose and made sure it was charged and ready to use. The dry riser was located in the far left corner as you come through the lobby door on the other side of the lift. It was not too far to go with the visibility being ok at that moment. I plugged some hose into the dry riser, which was fully charged, with firefighter STAVELY who plugged the branch into the end of the hose and said are 'ready' before I turned the water on, he said 'yeah' so I turned the water on and it charged. It filled up and inflated with water, I knew we were ok and had water flowing through it.

At that point, we gathered round and got in position by the front door. The crew manager made the assessment that we should put the door through he said, 'yeah let's do this'. I think it was the firefighter with me that I did not know who actually used the enforcer to knock the door through. That was when we realised it was well alight inside and very hot so we and crouched down. I was on the left-hand side of the door, firefighter STAVELY on the right-hand side. The crew manager and fire fighter I did not know then took the branch and hose and they went into the flat, firefighting and searching. I and firefighter STAVELY stayed outside the flats front door managing the hose through for them. They then went down

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the hallway inside the flat around a corner so we lost sight of them, we were calling out to them to make sure they were ok but they were not answering. So firefighter STAVELY crawled in quickly and had a look and as he was crawling in to check on them they started crawling backwards back around the corner making their way out saying, 'it's too hot in there, we're getting out'. They then came out of the flat, so at that point all four of us were outside the flat again, and then myself and firefighter STAVELY said we would have a go. I went as number one, and was operating the branch, firefighter STAVELY was behind me. I could see as far as the lounge and it was well alight in there. I was mainly just looking for any people if I could see anyone lying on the ground anywhere. We put quite a bit of water into the flat that was alight trying to knock the fire back, but it was not really having much effect. It was getting really hot so I was struggling to push in any further into the flat so I looked in as much as I could. I could see it was a wind driven fire I guess through the window failing, the fire was shooting towards me. Firefighter STAVELY then grabbed my shoulder and said, 'it's too hot we're going back out', which I agreed with so we crawled backwards out of the flat. I put some more water into the fire, as we were doing that I tried to manage some of the hose back out of the doorway and thought I had better shut the door to that flat. However, I think we damaged it so it would not shut easily and at this point, there was a lot more smoke in the lobby the visibility was almost zero. I guess where we had put the door through the visibility had reduced significantly. I then realised I did not know where my team were anymore all three of them were gone and moved on without me. I was calling out for them to see where they were, but I was not getting any answers or responses. I was worried they would be somewhere else looking for me and we were wasting time looking for each other, and I was also worried I couldn't find my out of the lobby. I knew I could not be that far from the door, I roughly knew where it was. I quickly felt quite disoriented and lost. This is where the training should have helped me, normally you stick to a wall and follow the same wall, say the right-hand wall into a building and then turned around and follow the same wall back and keep following the wall. I did not know if they were in the lobby area or gone to another flat or if they had gone back to the stairwell. I hadn't expected the visibility to disappear like it had and I just backed out of a door a lobby pulled the door shut turned around and found myself off the wall. I was probably a little bit panicked I suppose when I realised I could not hear or see my team. I then realised that I was in the lobby on the 9th floor on my own. I was not too sure where the door was to get back to the stairwell. I do not know if I remembered at the time but I suppose it should have been instinctive to make my way to the left onto the wall that would lead me to the stairwell, but I did not. It felt like a few minutes, but it was

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probably only seconds. I found the door by walking out ahead, found it luckily, and got myself out into the stairwell again.

I still did not realise how many people were trapped, it was only later that I learned how many, I just do not think the scale of it had sunk in. If I'm honest I was feeling quite scared, particularly when I went up the stairwell to the 9th floor and the visibility disappeared because I was in a building I didn't know the layout of, never been in there before and suddenly I can't see my way around so I'm having to feel my way around. That was quite a big thing for me; I was feeling quite worried and scared.

When I got to the stairwell, there was a lot more activity out there, than when we had come up. There was a number of fire fighters there and there were casualties being dragged out that were unconscious. On the left, I saw there was a large gentleman that was unconscious. I saw three fire fighters round him trying to pull him and drag him down the stairs and their whistles were all going to let them know they were all low on air. I am guessing they had been moving him from quite high up in the building because their whistles were going on their sets to let them know they were low on air. All three looked exhausted, I could just tell by their body language and the way they were trying to move him. When they were dragging him down it looked quite brutal but it was necessary, he was thumping down the concrete steps, they did not have time. The casualty I think was bald, a white male overweight and wearing white t—shirt I think. I also saw a female being pulled and dragged out I believe by another team of fire fighters. She was in her nighty, which was all twisted up by her face from where they were trying to pull her with. Again, she was being dragged quite forcefully down the stairs unconscious; I think that crew were low on air and desperately trying to get out. There were also fire fighters trying to come up the staircase to get to wherever they had been briefed to go and there was not enough room for them to pass properly. So, the fire fighters coming in were pressing themselves into the walls and up against the walls as flat as they could whilst the teams with casualties were trying to drag and go past them. This is what you would be taught to do in training, if there is a crew coming out they are the priority, you just get yourself out of the way against a wall or crouch down low, and they will pass you, which is what was happening there. To my right and in front of me there was more fire fighters, everyone was in breathing apparatus so I could not tell who was who, and a lot of shouting and noise and the visibility was getting quite poor. I think there was a light on down to my left on the half landing on the stairs. I seem to remember because that is where I saw the casualties being dragged around.

I was calling out for firefighter STAVELY known as Bo, which was what I was calling. I could not tell which one he was or if he was even there. The next thing I knew another fire fighter came down from the

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stairs from the floor above with a child in his arms and shouted casualty or child, one of those two. He then handed me the child that was unconscious. I was then holding this girl approximately 8 years old. I looked at her, called out for Bo one more time, and did not get an answer. The child was possibly mixed race, she had dark curl bushy hair down to her probably shoulders, I cannot remember what she was wearing. She had her eyes closed, she was making the occasional groaning sounds but I was not sure if this was her unconsciously making those sounds, or if it was unconscious sounds from me moving her around and knocking trying to get out.

You are not meant to leave each other, you are meant to stay with you team, but I had a casualty that was unconscious so I decided I had to leave; Bo was still with another two fire fighters. I then started trying to make my way out. The girl was over my right arm, kind of limp and floppy. I was talking to her anyway saying 'don't worry I'm getting you out now we're going to get out in a minute', I guess hoping for some kind of response and trying to think of what more I could be doing for her. It was difficult to get past because there were BA crews who had been dragging the unconscious man and woman were in front of me and there wasn't much room to get past. I shouted at them to make way because I had a child, but I think where they were so wrapped up in what they were doing they were not listening to me, they were low on air trying to get out as well. Eventually I think one of them noticed me, and they all pressed themselves up against the wall on the half landing and I squeezed past. I then came across another casualty being pulled out down the stairs. I was trying to get past them, and then another firefighter came from behind me, I don't know who it was, and tried to pull this girl out of my arms and take her himself. I'm not really sure if he was trying to help me or what he was doing at that point, so I passed the child to him and then I climbed over the banister to get around the casualty that was being pulled. I think I might have trodden on them, and then he passed the child back over to me once I passed. This firefighter caught up with me again and he was kind of trying to help hold her, it was a bit of an awkward carry down at that point between us where we were both holding the small child.

I looked at the girls face and she had her eyes closed and sort of dark black bubbles coming from her mouth. I was not sure what else to do at that point I couldn't tell if she was breathing so just tried to clear her mouth with my fire gloves of some of this froth thinking it might help clear her airway. That seemed like the only thing I could do for her at that point as I was trying to get out. It was still quite congested in the stairwell, with firefighters coming up the staircase. I then got to entry control and I handed over the casualty to a fire fighter or crew manager I think, who might have been from Hammersmith fire station. He took her straight out my arms and disappeared out of the building. I never saw the child again after

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that, although I think I saw her in a newspaper, but I cannot be sure it was her. I think it was one of the [REDACTED] sisters. There were two sisters in hospital together and older one died later of her injuries. I believe it was her, the older of the two.

I think it was maybe only a few minutes to get from where I was handed the girl to get down. I was running at every opportunity I had and was going as quickly as I possibly could. I fell over at one point into the wall and damaged my helmet head butting it. Apart from that, there was not much delay, apart from firefighters coming up the stairs who mostly moved out of my way. At that point, whoever was at entry control started taking my helmet off and my mask and assisted me in getting the breathing apparatus off, then told me to make my way out of the building. It is a bit of blur after that, I cannot quite remember coming out. I remember being in the lobby just before I came out because I saw a firefighter I knew from Battersea. I spoke to him briefly and told him what it was like in there so he had an idea of what to expect.

After I left the building, I went to point C, which is shown on exhibit JAS/02. I could see my aerial ladder platform and my crew trying to operate it, but they were having difficulties with it. It was not operating properly. I am not too knowledgeable about the aerial ladder platform I am not trained on it, but from what I understand it was in slow motion mode so it was moving really slowly and then they also had problems with the water supply. There was not enough water to the aerial ladder platform for it to spray onto the east side of the building. It requires a lot of water, but there was not much water being sprayed onto the building on the east side. I understood that the hydrants could not supply enough water to everyone that was needed for the Fire Brigade. There was one water main from what I understand, that tried to supply everything. Water would have been going into my fire engine, which by this point had been moved to point C on JAS/02, with then more hose to the aerial ladder platform, but it could not supply enough water as it was running dry. The hydrants were not supplying enough water, we needed more than what was being provided, we were over running the supply.

For the lower levels of the building, it would only require a main jet the 45 hose, or a ground monitor but it would need a good supply of water, the aerial appliances would be beneficial as well. It would only require basic training to operate the hose from ground level.

The dry riser works from the dry riser main. A fire engine would connect to a hydrant and then a plug a hose to their engine to the inlets at the bottom normally outside the building. They would charge that hose to 10bar of pressure, which would the fill the dry riser main throughout the building, and then often on each level there would be an outlet which then firefighters would then plug the hose in.

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When I came out of the building after my first BA wear my vehicle had been moved by someone and it had been used. I had left the keys in the ignition so they had been able to move it. They needed to use it to supple water to our aerial ladder platform so they had moved it onto the grass closer to a hydrant nearby, which is shown as point C on JAS/02. Our aerial ladder platform was next to point C marked as a star on JAS/02.

I then remember being on the grass outside and looking back up at the building and seeing how well alight it was and that it had spread more. There were three sets of fire fighters on the east side and three on the west side with a main jet trying to put water onto the building on the outside. It was more of a complete cover of the east side of the building from when we first turned up. I had not seen anyone from my own crew at this point, but I saw my watch manager managing the operations from there on the east side. He asked me where everyone was from our watch and if everyone was ok, I said I did not know, he then asked me in particular if I had seen firefighter Teresa ORCHARD, who was the driver of our pump that night because no one was sure where she was. I confirmed that I did see her at entry control after I handed the child over, I looked round and saw the back of her head, I was sure it was her, and then at that point he walked off. I was probably there for a couple of minutes and then sat on a bench. I then made my way over to the wall where I caught sight of the rest of my crew sitting on the wall and joined them by the leisure centre. That is when I found firefighter STAVELY. We sat there for a minute to cool off and rest, and then we were told to move up to the leisure centre to rest there. There was a salvage sheet laid out and we were told to sit on that, so I and the rest of my watch went there, but no other firefighters seemed to come over to that area, everyone was still keen to stay near the incident possibly to try to go back in. There was a police officer who came over to us and talked to us, he asked if we were thirsty and we said 'yes we're really thirsty', he said 'alright' and went off. He then came back with arms full of bottles of drinks he got from the leisure centre then he gave us all a drink. We then met two of Chelsea's crew, who had just come out, they spoke about what they had done and what they had seen. We were probably sat there for about 15 minutes.

There was a crowd of people who had been moved back. The police were on the corner with riot shields. Then there was what seemed like a fight near to us, I think it was members of the public and relatives that were trying to get to the Tower, and the police were trying to keep them back and calm them down. I then realised all they could really see was us, from their view, firefighters just sitting on a sheet having a drink and I thought this doesn't look good for them, they can't see what's happening down at the building. We decided we should move back to our original position by the wall, and then we all decided between

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ourselves we weren't just going to carry on sitting there waiting to be called down to go back in we were just going to make our way down there anyway. We all agreed on that and we all put a new cylinder on our BA sets and then at that point, I'm not sure who it was, a senior officer called us over and the other firefighters who were standing in that area, and gave us a little motivational talk. He told us there was still a lot of people trapped in the building and that he knew we were breaking procedures and things at this instant, but there were still saveable lives and he needed us to go back in, so we were going to carry on going in there, which we all agreed with. We were told to stay in that area but me and my watch moved down towards the building again, to point B on JAS/02. When we got towards the front door we were directed round to the back of the building, to the west side of the building on Grenfell Walk where there was some grass next to a playground, and to the BA holding area where we then sat for a long time watching the building burn, feeling quite useless I suppose. It had gotten light by this time. We were given some Mars bars to eat.

There was a lot of fire fighters there at this point, some of them hadn't even been into the building yet so they were to go in first because they were fresher. Every time they called out for more firefighters in BA there was a surge of crews all rushing over trying to get to go in, myself included. I was waiting there for quite a while. Then eventually I was called forward with firefighter STAVELY. We were asked to go into the building to take some rolled up hose to the 10th floor and to manage some hose dangling down on the banister and untangle it, and to change a length of hose that had burst.

On the 10th floor, there was so much hose it was really difficult to work. This was done without BA on, which I did without arguing because I was keen to get back in and do something. We were told to leave our BA kits on the ground; I don't remember who told us that. There was a couple of others that were doing the same with us, there was a watch manager without a BA on as well and we were on the 10th floor. It was only when I was on the 10th floor, in the later stages of the incident, when the fire wasn't as severe as it was the first time I was in there, that I started struggling a bit with the smoke and thought this is a really silly idea.

There was a woman casualty which I thought at the time was a man, lying face down on the stairwell. I believe it was a black female from what I have seen on the news. I could see there was burns to her arms and she definitely appeared dead, it was quite clear she was dead. We were working around her. We dumped the hose nearby and then a fire fighter from Shoreditch, I think, started saying we needed to try to move this casualty out of there. She was quite big and difficult to move so we were trying to come up with a plan on how to move her and were talking of getting a salvage sheet on the stairs and holding it

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tight and rolling her on to that and then all trying to carry the sheet with her on it. But, we then we all decided it would be too difficult. There was also a hose wrapped around where she as lying and on top of here so it was quite awkward, especially in the room we had to do it and without BA. It was quite smoky. Then a BA team came up to the floor where I was and opened the door to where the flats were and it filled with smoke in the stairwell even more than it already was, which made it really hard to breath. We were all crouched down with our eyes streaming and coughing, it was too much to deal with and we said this is stupid let us just go. As I was coming down the stairs, I could feel something soft under my foot and there was a dog lying across the stairs, there was more dead animals downstairs including cats as well. We then made our way back out the building. Police with shields met us, we paired up with a police officer each, and they lead us out the building to protect us from any debris that might fall down. I was feeling physically exhausted, I was really tired. Mentally and emotionally, I do not think it had really sunk in at that point. I was aware there were people still coming to the windows higher up and all I was thinking about was I wanted to get back in there, I could see roughly where there might be people, I wanted to go up there and do something.

I went back to the holding area on the west side and found my BA set. There was a couple of guys from my watch who wanted to go back in as well so we waited at the front of the queue. It was the watch manager from Peckham that was holding us back and telling us how many to go through at a time when they needed BA crews. Then eventually he let me and some others through, and it was my turn to go back into the building in BA. I met up with the police officer again who lead us into the building. Firefighter STAVELY did not come with me who I was with previously I do not think he felt up to it. I was in a queue of firefighters in the lobby area of Grenfell Tower and by this point the lobby was filling with water over ankle height, it was pouring down the staircase. I then queued there for what felt like forever, possibly half an hour or forty-five minutes waiting to go in again. Then rest of my watch in their teams, all went back up the staircase when it was their turn to go in. I was actually on my own as I was not with my watch anymore, so I didn't really have a team. All the other firefighters behind me had themselves into their teams with their own watch, which is fair enough they wanted to work with their own. There were three Brixton firefighters behind me and they said 'come with us if you want', so I said 'yeah Ok I'll come with you guys'. I was then sent to the 5th floor I believe, which had then become the Bridge Head. When I got there the station manager, Sam KAZMANLI was there, he had just started writing on the wall the flat numbers and working out where had been searched, and then working out where needed to be searched.

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We were then told to wait again, there was a flat that was relatively unscathed with the door open so we were told to go into that flat and wait until we were called to go up, so I went in there with the three Brixton firefighters. I was then called through with one of them and we were told to go to the 7th floor and fully search it all and make sure it was definitely clear and there were no pockets of fire. We went up to the 7th floor, I went through every flat and looked in every area I could see and I couldn't see any casualties anywhere. Checked every cupboard if it was still there and looked over all the ash checking if there might be a person there and if we could see anything. There was only small pockets of fire at this points and visibility was ok. Whilst I was there I saw two firefighters from my watch, firefighter KING and crew manager PEARCY, they were a team together. For whatever reason, they had the same brief as me to check the 7th floor, so we were doing the same job we were going around together, and then the furthest flat was locked shut so we tried to get into there. We were using an enforcer on the door and it was not puffing it through for us, it was just punching holes through the door. So, then firefighter KING tried to reach his arm through one of the holes to unlock the door, but then his ADSU alarm started going into pre-alert to say he wasn't moving so it was going to go in to full alarm. He did what everyone does and shook it but it did not stop and then it went into full alarm, which means then you really need to come back out. I then had a go at what he was doing and then my ADSU did the same thing, would not turn off, and then went into full alarm. There was problem with it, it was broken. Firefighter KING had exactly the same problem with his ADSU.

The ADSU, Automatic Distress Signal Unit, is an alarm where you can press a button on it if you are in trouble and it sets off an alarm at the entry control board so they know that particular person is in trouble. Or, if you don't move for a set period of time it will give you a pre-alert to let you know the alarm is going to go off and if you don't move it in that time it will go into full alarm and will notify downstairs. At this point, I had already gone through all the flats, I think I plugged some hose into the dry riser with firefighter KING and we had done a small bit of firefighting. Although we were doing it without a branch on the hose because we could not find one, so we were just holding the lugs on the end of the hose to control it to firefight. I cannot remember which flat it was but everything was burnt out except a small pocket of fire, which was a cooker or fridge in the kitchen area we put out using our hose with no branch. Then carried on searching the rest of the 7th floor. We then came across what I believe was a gas main, alight, in one of the flats. We left that and did not put that out, we left it burning. We had been advised to leave it alight rather than extinguish the fire and let unburnt gas escape.

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We then came down, there was not as many crews coming up the stairs at this point. We went straight back down to the bridgehead on the 5th or 4th floor. I told them there was a problem with my ADSU and turned that off. I told them we had searched everywhere apart from that one flat we could not get through the door. I then came back out the building and to the rest of my crew who were waiting by the fire engine to leave. I noticed Surrey Fire and Rescue were there putting up their aerial ladder platform in place of our one that was there. The fire engine had been moved again, but was near point C on JAS/02. I took my fire gear off put the BA set in the truck and then drove back to Paddington Fire station to do my statement, which was late morning, possibly midday when we left.

The whole time while I was in the building I think the only alarms I heard were smoke alarms fitted by people themselves in their own flats. When I was in the stairwell, which was the only means of escape, I did not smell anything, did not see anything of interest as I went up the staircase initially and did not really hear a lot at that point. The doors into the stairwell from the lobby area were self-closing. The front doors to the flats appeared to be well-built and strong, hence some difficulties by some crews gaining access to the flats, and the fact that the doors were holding the fire meant we weren't fully aware of how well alight it was inside. I did not see any sprinklers in the building.

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