

Party: Core Participant

Name: Emanuela Disaro

No: 1st

Date: 1st June 2018

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF
EMANUELA DISARÓ

I, Mrs EMANUELA DISARÓ, care of Hanover Bond Law, Juxon House, 100 St Paul's Churchyard, London, EC4M 8BU, will say as follows:

1. I am the mother of Gloria Trevisan, who, at the age of 26, lost her life alongside her boyfriend Marco Gottardi in Flat 202 on the 23rd Floor of Grenfell Tower during the terrible fire that took hold on June 14th 2017. I now understand that Marjorie and Ernie Vital, who also lived in the tower, took refuge in Flat 202 and also lost their lives there.

Background

2. Gloria was born on 2nd December 1990. [REDACTED] I felt like we were joined together by fate. Her father Loris and I brought Gloria up in the

Emanuela Disaro

family home in Camposampiero, in the province of Padua in the Veneto region of Italy. She was [REDACTED] younger than her brother Giulio.

3. Giulio and Gloria had a very close relationship, very affectionate. Giulio would call her "my doll". He was protective of her.
4. Gloria had an interest in art from a young age. She would sketch with pencil and pen and her drawings seemed to be real. I was very proud, very honoured to have such a daughter.
5. Gloria was so good at design that, after she had finished school, she went on to study at a higher level arts school. But, knowing you cannot live off art alone, she decided to enrol in an architectural institute because she had an interest in old buildings and wished to work in restoration. She studied architecture specialising in new and antique buildings at IUAV – Istituto Universitario Architettural Venezia (University Institute of Architecture of Venice). Gloria had a particular interest in the restoration of old buildings and aspired to find a job that would allow her to do this.
6. It was while studying at university that Gloria met Marco, who was also an architecture student. They were very happy together. Gloria, who lived at home throughout her studies, graduated on 18th October 2016 and then tried to find work near where we were. Marco had graduated some time before her in July 2016. Gloria did find a job but it didn't give her any satisfaction because there wasn't the opportunity to do restoration work and the pay was low.
7. Gloria and Marco had life plans together and they would not be happy just surviving. They were both in a similar situation so they talked about it and, in around December 2016, they decided to move to London simply because they could learn English and could turn their hand to any sort of work. Their dream was to become part of a studio where they could fulfil their professional aspirations and where the quality of their work would be appreciated. Speaking economically, Gloria didn't want to be a further burden on the family, [REDACTED]

Marco
Giusanuele

████████████████████ They spent some time making plans to move to London. They would learn English and find a job. If they could not find a job related to their profession, they would do something else.

Moving to London

8. Gloria and Marco eventually moved to London on 4th March 2017. They had a basic understanding of English and did an intensive 2-week English course. They spent their first fortnight studying and living with a family. They stayed with one of Marco's cousins until the end of March while looking for a flat.

9. In their search for a home together, Gloria and Marco viewed two or three flats. They eventually chose Flat 202 on the 23rd Floor of Grenfell Tower. They moved in around early April and seemed to be very happy there.

10. Gloria found work before Marco after applying for a job at Peregrine Bryant Architecture & Building Conservation in Fulham Palace. She had told me "mum, pray for me that they take me on". When she learned that she had secured her dream job, she rang me and said: "Mum, I'm happy that they want me". She had achieved her main aim. It could have taken years but she managed to find it in a few weeks. Gloria loved where she worked and sent me photographs of the beautiful surroundings around her office on her first day. On the morning she arrived (on 5th June 2017), she told me "look mum where I'm working, it's in a wonderful park". It was stupendous work, exactly what she wanted and the wage matched her capacities. She felt that she had been justified. She was finally doing the work that she had dreamed of doing, helping to restore old buildings to their former glory.

11. A little after Gloria found her job, Marco also found work as an architect at CIAO (Creative Ideas & Architecture Office Ltd).

12. Gloria was so happy because she had found what she wanted. But she missed her home very much. She missed the food, the sun and her family, her brother and their

Diario
Stevanola

friends. They didn't have the same friends in England. But she was happy with work. I used to speak to Gloria almost every day and when she didn't speak to me, she would speak to her father. She would also speak to her cousin Georgia every day, they were like sisters.

13. I never visited the flat. I should have gone to see her. Marco's parents did visit them in April but I was waiting for her to come back in June. Gloria would tell me about the incredible views she could see over London from the flat. It was very nice because of the height – they'd never seen such a panorama, such a view. Gloria sent me photos of rainbows at dawn. She was happy – they had found work, a flat, they loved each other. They were beginning to build a life for themselves in London.

The day of the fire

14. On Tuesday 13th June we went to the seaside, to Jesolo. We sent photos to Gloria because she had lived in Jesolo for a month when she was studying for her thesis and she loved it there. She replied to me "bella, mami" (beautiful, mum). We knew when she came back she would be going there. We told her "we'll be seeing you soon". She adored the sea.

15. I know Gloria went to work and, from a photo I have been shown by the police, she came back to the tower at 7:55pm with Marco and they took the lift to the 23rd floor.

16. The 14th June 2017 was our [redacted] wedding anniversary. This is the irony of fate. I had asked Gloria to come back for our anniversary. However, it was Marco's birthday the week after and so they planned to come to us the following week. They had booked flights home for the following Wednesday 21st June.

Calls from Gloria on Wednesday 14th June, 2017

17. In the early hours of Wednesday 14th June we received a series of Whatsapp calls and voice messages from Gloria. Italy was one hour ahead of the UK so the times I mention are the times in Italy. Throughout the night, I would always wait for Gloria

*Marco's
Anniversary*

to call because I didn't want to interrupt them in case they were able to escape. At the end of each call, Gloria would say mum I'll call you later. I didn't know what she was going to do in the meantime, to flee or whatever it was but I didn't want to interrupt by calling her. I thought they would get out, or someone would come and get them. I didn't want to disturb them. In total we received 4 calls but we only recorded part of the third call and the whole of her final call. She also left 3 voice messages – to her friends, her cousin Georgia and to me. Much of our conversation that night was personal and I wish to keep that private between us.

Call 1 – 02:34am (01:34am UK)

18. At 02:34am (01:34am UK) Loris' phone rang. He answered but couldn't hear anything.

Call 2 – 02:34am (01:34am UK)

19. Then, straight after, at 02:34am (01:34am UK), my mobile phone rang. It was Gloria. The first thing I thought was that she wanted to wish me a Happy Anniversary. Instead, the first thing she said to me was that there was a problem. She told me straight away that a fire had broken out. She was obviously very frightened. She said she woke up because she could hear hard knocks on the door. There was a woman shouting and screaming. Gloria and Marco opened the door and found two people outside, a young man and a woman. Gloria thought that they must have lived on the same floor. They let them come into the flat. These are the only two other people Gloria talked about that night. I now know from the police that these two people stayed in the flat until the fire came. They died alongside Gloria and Marco. I only found out last month that the woman and son came up to the 23rd floor from a lower floor because they were told by firefighters to go up to seek refuge rather than to go downstairs. They knocked on the door an hour and a half before the end. Surely there would have been time for them to get downstairs. Gloria and Marco were two young people, they could have got out.

Diario
Stewart

20. When Gloria and Marco opened the door they could see straight away that the floor was filled with a thick, dense smoke. They ran straight to the window. She told me that there was fire downstairs. She was extremely frightened and I couldn't calm her down. The first thing I asked was what floor was the fire on? I was trying to understand the seriousness of it. She said she thought it was the 3rd or 4th floor. She told me there were firefighters downstairs and a lot of people there.

21. Gloria was so frightened that I asked to speak to Marco. I wanted to speak to him because he was very reasonable and never exaggerated. I asked Marco to tell me what the situation was. He said the firemen are there, there were a lot of people downstairs. Everything seemed to be under control. I don't know how they were told but Gloria told me that they were told to stay inside. Marco said I shouldn't be worried because it wasn't that serious according to him, there will be a solution. Knowing Marco, knowing that he's not someone who lies, he's a very sound, grounded person, he wasn't lying, so I was therefore reassured. He calmed me down saying the Fire Brigade were there. I don't know if Marco ever spoke to the Fire Brigade. Marco was very rational, he didn't use instinct, he used reason. He wouldn't allow himself to be panicked. He followed the rules. If someone said don't go out he wouldn't go out, my own son would do the opposite.

22. Marco then passed me back to Gloria. She told me that she, Marco and the two people who had woken them up were making signs to make themselves visible. I told Gloria the first thing you have to do is to get a wet towel, put it around your mouth and get downstairs. Gloria said they absolutely could not get out because there was too much smoke. So I told her to go up to the roof. She said they could not because there was a locked gate blocking the door to the roof. They decided to stay inside. They were saying "they told us to stay inside" but I don't know who "they" is.

23. Gloria was extremely afraid, really terrified. I told her to get her documents, put them in a pocket and go downstairs. I was thinking at least if they faint and are rescued, the emergency services will be able to identify them.

Marco

Gloria

24. Some time after the fire, I saw a Youtube video by a [REDACTED] man who I think lived on the same floor. I saw a [REDACTED] woman knock on a door and we heard Marco's voice respond and say "we can't get out". I believe the video is still available on Youtube and will endeavour to provide a link to this.

25. Gloria told us that the doors were very hot and Marco had put a wet towel at the door to stop the smoke from the stairs coming in and that they could hear a siren but I don't know if it was the emergency services outside or an alarm inside the building. I told Gloria to keep the towel and breathe in and to go and wave out the window so the firefighters could see her. The call lasted 30 minutes and 53 seconds and ended at 03:05am (02:05am UK).

Call 3 – 03:08am (02:08am UK)

26. At 03:08am (02:08am UK), Gloria left a Whatsapp voice message to her group of friends saying goodbye. I have since heard this message. The call lasted a few seconds. The girls in the group could hear an alarm in the background. I think this sound came from the building.

Call 4 – 03:12am (02:12am UK)

27. At 03:12am Gloria called me again. I could hear an alarm in the background. Gloria was talking to Marco. I heard them say what are they going to do? Then I heard Marco speaking in English to someone else but I don't know who. Gloria told me "I'm putting the phone down now." I assumed this meant that they had found a way out and they would talk to me later.

Call 5 – 03:13am (02:13am UK)

28. At 03:13am, Gloria called back, this time with a video call. An alarm continued to go off in the background. She was very frightened. She said they were just waiting to know what they should do, if they should go out. I told Gloria to go and breathe out of the window. She told me: "No, I'm not going to do that", but I don't know why. I thought perhaps the firefighters were there but I didn't know. Gloria just didn't

Handwritten signature: Amanda

know what to do and told me "it's not a small fire, it's a very large fire, look London is locked up, have a look". Then she put the phone out of the window to show me outside. Outside the window I could see 3 or 4 fire engines, lots of lights and from either left or right I could see fire but I don't know which side.

29. I couldn't see Gloria, probably because there was smoke or because there was no light, I don't know. I kept telling her to go to the window put her head outside the window to breathe. Gloria said they're never going to put out the fire, it's too big, it's impossible, it has come to the 23rd floor and they have fire inside the home, the smoke has reached the windows of the sitting room and it's black. She said the smoke is coming in through the living room windows. I said I think that's because they're broken and Gloria said "it's black smoke, I can't understand how this fire is so big". She said "we're trying to understand what can we do and where can we go". Gloria kept saying that smoke is coming in from everywhere. I kept recommending her to keep the wet towel in her mouth and breathe through the towel. Gloria continued to cough. I heard her shouting "help" out of the window. Gloria asked me how long a fireman's ladder usually is usually because they could see firefighters extending their ladders and wanted to know if they would reach them. I didn't know how to respond. She said: "I don't know what to do mum, I'll call you later."

Gloria's Final Call – Call 6 – 03:45am (02:45am UK)

30. The last call came at 03:45am and lasted 22 minutes. I put the call on loudspeaker and my husband recorded the conversation on his phone, probably because we saw the fire on television and knew we should do it. I realised at this point that there was no hope. Gloria told me "I'm throwing myself out of the window, I swear to you the fire is here, it's in the sitting room, the fire is everywhere, we're just waiting".

31. Gloria told me that Marco was calling his parents. I asked Gloria if just she, Marco and this other woman and young man were the only people in the flat. Gloria said "Mum, the fire's outside my window". She said pieces of glass were coming in through the window, she said we've closed the window because there are bits

*Diana
Hume*

coming in. Then she said several times she's afraid: "We'd need a miracle, she's sorry that she came here and left us. It seems impossible that everything is over for us both." She repeated some of the things she has already told me about the people, the smoke, she told me that she cannot get out. I asked several times if they had asked for help and she said yes but she can't get out. She said: "I don't believe it's ending like this, I don't want to believe it." She told me she couldn't see anything outside, absolutely nothing at all. She asked me to take care of her cousin Georgia. She told me thank you so much.

32. Gloria told me that her eyes were burning and hurting. I asked her if they had both done everything they thought they could do. Gloria said: "yes". I asked are you definitely on the 23rd floor? Gloria said: "Yes". She said: "We can see the fire's too big and they have stopped trying to go up." I believe she was referring to the firefighters and the fact that they would not be coming to save them". Gloria said: "I can't see anything from the window, for example I can't see a helicopter that can come and get us. I can't see anything... I can't breathe." You could tell she was having problems talking. Her throat was burning, she was starting to feel unwell and she wanted to go quicker. At a certain point she told me fire was coming through the window. She wanted to stop the call. I said: "No, I don't want you to, I want you to pass me Marco". Gloria said Marco is on the phone with his dad. I told her I felt powerless. She continued to say she couldn't breathe. She told me again what she felt for us and that we have to say goodbye and we had to be strong. At that point Gloria said she was cutting off the phone because she didn't want me to hear anything and she said goodbye to us. She wanted to cut off the phone because she didn't want me to hear her scream. She said she just wanted to faint and she wouldn't feel anything and said "I just want to stay with Marco now". On this last call, I could not hear any alarms.

Diana's interview

Observations from the calls – alarms and smoke

33. Gloria had no health problems that would have affected her getting in and out of the flat. Throughout the calls, I could hear alarms in the background, until Gloria's last

call where I could not hear them. As the fire worsened, Gloria went through various stages – panic, terror, concern, awareness and then resignation, acceptance of how things were going to turn out.

34. Gloria said right from the beginning what the smoke was like, that it was hard to breathe. She was coughing a lot, her eyes and throat burned and as time went on the smoke was getting more black. From the first call she was describing the flames but not in her flat. She was saying she could see flames and bits of things flying. She could see the firefighters below.

35. Gloria didn't give a description of the fire but I was able to see the fire when she made the video call. Gloria put the phone out of the window and I could see flames below. I can't say which direction they were in but they were to the right of Gloria and I could see the colour of fire. I don't know what room Gloria was in as I am not familiar with the apartment. I couldn't even see Gloria. I could only see black darkness.

36. At about 3:30am Italian time I began watching the fire on Rai New Channel. I didn't want to believe it. I refused to believe that what I was seeing was real.

Failings

General Safety

37. At some point after the fire, Marco's parents told me that when they visited Gloria and Marco in April, Marco made comments that, from an architect's perspective, this isn't how a building would have been built in Italy. He suggested that English people seemed to be behind from a safety point of view. Marco's dad also mentioned that he thought he saw signs saying "In case of emergency, keep door closed" but I don't know where he saw these, whether it was in the flat or downstairs.

Diana Emanuele

38. I don't know if Gloria and Marco were ever given any fire safety information when they moved in or at any time afterwards. She never talked to me about the structure of the building. The only thing she ever mentioned was that when they moved in the bathroom wasn't finished but this was an aesthetic issue. Gloria never mentioned if there were smoke alarms in the flat and never mentioned any problems with the flat or the lifts in the building. She never mentioned any issues with electricity or lighting either.

Access to The Roof – locked gate and possible helicopter rescue

39. Gloria and Marco had tried to escape to the roof early on in the night, towards the start of the fire at 01.34am. She told me there was a door to the roof but that they could not access it because it was blocked by a locked gate. I would like to know why a gate that could have been used in an emergency such as this was locked. If the gate had been open they might have been able to get to the roof. I understand why a gate like that might need to be locked for security but I don't understand why it wasn't possible to open it in an emergency.

40. Had they been on the roof they could have made several calls and a helicopter could have rescued them. There was plenty of time from when they first learned of the fire at 01.34am (UK time) to their last call at 2.45am (UK time). We were told by the police that the firefighters don't have rescue helicopters. How can they not have helicopters that can come and rescue people? If the army has helicopters they should have sent them. Gloria and Marco first tried to escape at about 01:40am UK time. If they had made it to the roof, there would have been time to rescue them. I want to know why the gate was locked and why no rescue helicopters came. In Italy they would have had helicopters taking people off the roof and also flooding the building with water. In this day and age, I don't understand how Gloria and Marco couldn't have got out of the building in the hour and a half they had from when they were woken up.

*Diario
Gloria*

41. In a city like London, where they build skyscrapers, there should be at least one rescue helicopter available for emergencies.

Stay Put

42. Gloria told me that the mother and son who I now understand from the police were Marjorie and Ernie Vital and who first alerted them to the fire, had told them that firefighters had sent them upstairs. I don't know where the order came from but I know for sure that these two people who came up to the apartment were also told to stay put but came upstairs because they were trying to survive. They also died in Flat 202 alongside Gloria and Marco. I want to thank their family for knocking on Gloria's door and waking up her and Marco and giving me the chance to hear my daughter's voice one last time.

43. Gloria told me that they had been told to stay in the flat. I do not know who told them this, it may have been passed on to them by neighbours or perhaps a firefighter. We now see that people who were on lower floors, particularly those up to the 10th floor where the firefighters' hoses could reach, managed to escape and survive. If they had known that they might have survived if they at least made it to the 10th floor, then I believe Gloria and Marco would still be alive today. They could have put wet towels over their faces and made it down 10 floors. There would have been time while the fire was catching hold. They were young, if they knew that they could have done this, they would have done it. I understand from the police that the emergency services were advising residents to stay put. It does not seem right to me that the people who were giving this advice could not see what was happening inside the building.

*Diane
Simons*

Cladding

44. I know that since the fire took place, cladding panels have been taken off other buildings. I would like to know, when buildings are restored, whose decision is it to put cladding on buildings. I am convinced that, had those flammable panels not been

there, all those people would not have died. So as I look at it as Gloria's mum, it's the person who made the choice to put that stuff on the tower who is responsible. That is the thing that is on my conscience. The fact that they are now being removed from many other buildings suggests that these panels should never have been installed on the tower.

45. When you do your job, you should do it thinking of others, and certain mistakes should not be made out of respect to others. This was lacking in this situation. I would like to know if the cladding was put on the building because it was a council building or if they have a rule about putting it on all buildings. Was this really an aesthetic issue? It is ridiculous that they would try and make something more attractive that would kill 71 people. If this type of cladding is put on a building just because it houses people from a lower socio-economic background and not on buildings for more well-off people then the whole society is divided. I think it was, as is always the case, done for financial reasons. It's unacceptable really. If they are not putting this type of cladding on luxury buildings then why are they putting them on buildings where people can't afford to live anywhere else? That's the thing that hurts me.

46. I would like to know if the firefighters had training for dealing with high rise fires like this. Maybe they didn't have the training to deal with it spreading so quickly with the cladding.

Emergency equipment

47. We read in the Italian newspapers that an Italian man who lived on the 10th floor survived until the next day when he was rescued. Someone managed to get him a mask and some goggles and he had a wet towel over his mouth – that's how he managed to survive. He waited until the next day and the police rescued him through the central stairs. As far as I know, there was no breathing equipment on the 23rd floor.

Diana Fowles

48. We know people threw themselves out of the window. Gloria even told me that she would have preferred to have thrown herself out of the window than be burned alive. Why didn't they have inflatable evacuation mattresses? They could have saved more lives.

49. Being architects, Gloria and Marco knew that it was possible to install extractor fans to remove smoke from stairwells on each floor, which would have made it possible to escape. Even though it was a high-rise building and the firefighters were unable to reach the upper floors with external hoses, they didn't seem to have any smoke extraction system in Grenfell Tower. Gloria and Marco were wondering why they didn't have these in the tower. If it wasn't for the smoke, they would have been able to get out. The smoke was burning their eyes and they couldn't breathe. Gloria was talking specifically about black smoke.

50. Why was the water only capable of reaching the 10th floor and not higher? Why was there no other system for making sure the water would reach the higher floors from outside?

Diana
Stewart

Fire Escape

51. How did a building with 23 floors not have a fire escape? I just want to express my astonishment at this.

General concerns

52. There are so many questions to be answered. So many failings, so many different things seem to have contributed to the deaths of Gloria, Marco and all the other people who died in the tower. The cladding, the alarms, lack of safety equipment on the 23rd floor, firefighters' hoses not reaching the top of the building so no water reaching the higher floors, no helicopter rescue available, no ladder long enough to reach the top floors, only one central staircase to escape and so much more. We later found out that when smoke rises the worst of the smoke rests at the top. Gloria and Marco were on the top floor. There seemed to be no extraction system to clear

the smoke. Perhaps if there had been, the stairs would not have been so filled with smoke and they would have felt able to risk escaping down the stairs. It seems to me that all these things and more contributed to this tragedy.

53. I believe that Italy is much more careful with regards to fire safety and they are much more competent on a technical level. Their fire brigade is definitely more well-equipped.

The loss of Gloria

54. I miss Gloria so much. Nothing will bring her back. That will stay with me forever. My state of mind is totally empty. However, I have no feelings of hatred for anybody. The loss of Gloria has left a big emptiness.

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....



Emanuela Disaró