

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: WARNETT, PAUL

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

Occupation: POLICE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 13 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: PAUL WARNETT

Date: 04/07/2017

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

This statement is made in relation to my actions and decisions which were made in response to CAD 482 of the 14 June 2017, this was a call to a 6 pump fire at Grenfell Tower, London, W11, where a single flat on the 4th floor was 75% alight.

On this date I was the D/Superintendent on Night Duty, with responsibility for South London, this includes the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. These responsibilities range from considering custody PACE reviews, authorising urgent communication checks and attending scenes of significant crime, it also includes the attendance at any Major Incidents to assume the role of Gold as required.

I am an officer of over 28 years' experience, I am trained in the management of Major Incidents and am also Public Order Trained qualified as a Cadre Officer.

It will be hard to convey, the scene, the danger and the raw emotion experienced by both victims, their families and the emergency services, but I intend to try as this is a key element of how and why decisions were made as well as the challenges facing me and my staff on the night.

At approximately 0116 I was sitting in my office at Kensington Police Station aware that a call had been received indicating that a single flat was on fire, at this point I monitored more intently than perhaps for other calls, more because the call was on my home borough than any expectation that it would escalate as

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it did.

Through listening to radio traffic, I could tell that this incident was more than a simple house fire, but an event that was rapidly developing into a Major Incident. At approximately 0126 BS1, Inspector THATCHER stated that the incident was now a critical incident. I specifically asked him if it should be declared a Major Incident, knowing that this would put in place a significant response. He asked me to standby as he was still en-route.

I decided at this point to make my way to the location to assess the situation, arriving at approximately 0145. Whilst on route Inspector THATCHER had declared a Major Incident.

Inspector THATCHER is a thoroughly competent officer, who I have experienced to be calm and decisive under pressure, knowing that he had declared it a Major Incident immediately gave me cause for concern, he is not one to exaggerate situations.

Throughout the first few hours of this incident there was a general feeling, supported by London Fire Brigades assessments that the Grenfell Tower may collapse, it was with this in mind that I worked with my officers. I would not say that I was scared of collapse but very conscious of the possibility.

Upon arrival at Grenfell Tower and in particular outside the Leisure Centre it was clear that this situation was out of control and that a significant number of people were in serious danger of losing their lives, this not only included people within the tower but also potentially people outside of the tower who were either escapees, family members, neighbours or general onlookers. There were several hundred people very close to the tower in immediate danger due to smoke and falling debris.

At this time the police on scene were limited, (Perhaps numbering 15 - 20) their primary role was to facilitate the movement of the London Fire Brigade to the tower whilst keeping members of the public at a safe distance. The geographical area that required covering as large.

I would describe the scene a complete chaos, the tower was burning in what can only be described as a rapidly moving fire, the speed at which it was transitioning both up and across the building was almost unbelievable, to the point where I momentarily had to stare in awe at the scene before me.

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I had been one of the first officers at the Lakanal House fire in Camberwell, and the way this fire behaved was very different, whilst that one was contained to a degree, this one was not.

Many people in the crowd were crying and screaming, shouting at police to save their families, they were shouting out flat numbers indicating who was inside. It was impossible with the resources available at that time to do much more than maintain the initial cordons, failure to do so would inhibit the London Fire Brigade and London Ambulances ability to save lives.

Multiple people were breaching the cordons, some to try and film the towers as they burned, whilst others were trying to get to the tower in which their families were located.

A large number were obstructive refusing to move back for officers getting in the way of LFB attending, on more than one occasion force was needed to be used to push individuals back or to physically escort them from inside the cordon. Verbal commands were often ignored.

Some of those inside the cordon appeared to have good intentions, I specifically remember a large Australian Male, who indicated that he was an ex-firefighter and had assisted in evacuating people early on. He had to be physically removed as he was in an area of danger, he was escorted to the outer cordon initially by me and then by other uniformed officers, whom I asked to get his details.

In over 28 years of policing, this was by far the most challenging situation I had ever been involved in already, and it was only to get worse.

I met with Inspector THATCHER and discussed the situation setting clear priorities, which were to get the public a sufficient distance from the tower, in order to both protect them but also to give the emergency services a working environment that was sufficient in size to be effective. At approximately 0150, I nominated myself as Gold Commander with responsibility for acquiring sufficient resources to allow Inspector THATCHER as Silver Commander to manage the scene effectively.

Whilst in a perfect world those roles would be very separate and clear, with Gold managing the strategic

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elements of the operation and Silver managing the tactical elements. I am not convinced that we ever truly achieved that structure due to the size of the scene, the lack of supervisors on the ground and also the youth, inexperience and already early trauma of the first officers first on scene.

Clear decisive leadership was required, I am satisfied that both Inspector THATCHER and I provided that leadership throughout the night, ensuring clear understanding of tasks allocated. Perhaps as important was the welfare of the officers throughout the night, which required constant reassessment of roles and responsibilities this included peer to peer welfare conversations between Inspector THATCHER and me.

Due to the nature of the event, it is not possible to give absolute clarity as to who made some of the decisions and at what time, many many discussions were held between Inspector THATCHER and I and from those conversations came actions.

I will take ultimate responsibility for decisions made in those circumstances as the senior officer present.

The first task was still getting people back and away from danger, this had largely been achieved to the North East and North West of the tower but there were still significant challenges in particular outside the Kensington Sports Centre, at Bomore Road J/W Grenfell Road and Silchester Road J/W Lancaster Road.

At the sports centre, crowds were so close that debris from the tower was landing near to them, whilst much of this debris was lightweight insulation, it was still very hot and had the potential to cause injury.

In the early period of the fire, it was the East aspect that was the most dramatic and also nearest the main entrance of the Tower which is why perhaps there were far more people in this area.

Throughout the evening my sole point of contact within SOR was CI Duane BARRETT, who was the Met Grip CI. He and I spoke on a regular basis regarding the incident and what resources I required. It became clear within the first hour that this incident would require as many resources as were available across the MPS, I believe at its peak all available resources were allocated to me.

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One of the main reasons for the large amount of resource was the sheer scale of the incident and the complex geography of the site, which required a large number of officers to contain. The area has many small alleyways that could be accessed from further afield, each of these required an officer as any left unattended were quickly identified by members of the public and used to try and access the site.

After approximately 1 hour, I was satisfied that the cordons were generally in the right places and that we had some control of them. The reason I say some control of them was that I could not guarantee that if a large group made an attempt to cross the cordon, we would not have been in a position to stop them. This was a very real concern which was supported by the anger and desperation being directed at me and my officers. Cordon officers were constantly abused throughout the night into the early hours. As stated, on these cordons some of the people were family and friends who were talking to their loved ones trapped in the tower, they could not understand why in their view the police were not "doing anything"

There was an expectation that the police should have been entering the building to rescue their loved ones. Despite trying to explain that the LFB were inside and doing everything they could, it was a difficult message for them to understand. I have put myself in their position, both on the night and subsequently on reflection, and even with my knowledge of the processes in place, I would have probably felt the same as they did and potentially tried to save my family. I know this is may not seem rational in the cold light of day, but under the circumstances completely understandable.

Throughout the night, there was a very real danger of the building collapsing, which added to the urgency. This threat was reiterated by the LFB at certain times as the dynamics of the fire changed. There was some frustration as it took several hours for a structural engineer to be found who could give an informed decision on the stability.

At approximately 0220, just when I thought we had the area secured, I noticed that there were a group of people on what appeared to be a roof area near Barandon Walk. Not being familiar with the area, I was unsure how they had got there, but what I was sure of was that they were in real danger, as the roof area was no more than 10 meters away from Grenfell Tower and debris was falling into this area. I went to this area to try and establish how they had got there, in order to do this I ran under the roof they were standing on and found a set of stairs which indicated flats numbered in the 300's Barandon Walk. Upon climbing

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the stairs I found that the area where the public were standing was a walkway that was used to access flats in Barandon Walk, Hurstway Walk and Testerton Walk. These areas were groups of flats that splay out from Grenfell Tower to the south and contain 100's of flats.

As I arrived at the top, I saw a number of uniformed officers trying to move the crowds off of the roof and back into the blocks, the small number of officers was making this challenging. Due to the close proximity of the tower and the spreading fire, you could feel the heat and as it spread rapidly to the south, debris was falling onto our location. I obtained further officers to assist in moving these people back getting them either inside the three blocks or away from the area to the east which was a safe distance.

Most of these people appeared not to be distressed family members, but onlookers filming the scenes. The reason I say this is their demeanour and way they were acting, which was very different from distressed families. Once the area was cleared, officers were posted inside the three blocks and at the end of the alley near to station walk to prevent a further incursion.

What was very distressing at this point was the screams and calls for help coming from the tower, I could distinctly hear individuals pleading to be saved, the voices were of both adults and children. As I looked up I could clearly see people at their windows, shining torches or other lights in my direction to get attention.

It is hard to convey in a statement, the feeling of helplessness at that point, knowing that I could do nothing physically to save them. What I knew I could do was ensure my officers maintained clear areas for the LFB to perform their roles, to protect those outside the building, often from their own behaviour by preventing them from standing in areas of danger.

There were two sets of flats covering two levels directly opposite the tower, these flats numbering about 20 were in very real danger of catching fire from falling debris, the insulation was very light and easily moved by the wind blowing in the direction of the flats. I attempted to seek advice from the LFB regarding evacuation, but due to their attention being on undertaking rescues in the tower could not find anyone to give a clear answer.

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I had an honest held belief that if the flats were not evacuated, there could be further fatalities, as such I returned to Grenfell Road and identified resources that were available to assist in the evacuation. I took a team of about 6 officers to the stairs below Barandon walk and briefed them of what was required.

What I did not do and in hindsight and should have done was ordered them to use Section 17 PACE to enter any properties where they got no reply, in order to prevent life and limb (This I did later with other areas that needed evacuating).

As we got to the top of the stairs again ready to begin the evacuation, the heat was intense and falling debris was increasing at this time the fire had not broken through the south side in all areas. At the top on the corner between the south side and the east side, the fire was curling around, it was burning ferociously at the top and large chunks looked as if they would fall off. I could see the piece at the top moving curling down, but somehow not breaking away in one large piece. Smaller pieces that were alight were falling.

I identified an area of concrete that gave significant protection to my officers and placed everyone there until I could further assess the situation, when I was satisfied that the side of the building would not immediately fall off, I gave them instructions to evacuate. The officers involved moved forward placing themselves in potential danger to evacuate the residents of this area.

As they did so I remained on the walkway monitoring the building in order to be able to give advanced warning of any increased danger. As I monitored the building I moved myself into an area near to junction of Grenfell Walk and Testerton Walk which gave me some protection and allowed me a view of my officers.

It was at this point that one of the lasting memories of the night was etched on my mind. As I looked up towards the west side of the tower, I saw an 1C3 female standing in the window of a flat I believe to be on the 8th Floor, the lady was wearing a red top and had what appeared to be an afro. She had both of her hands placed flat on a closed window and her mouth was wide open. I could not hear anything, but as I watched her I saw a veil of smoke surround her and she disappeared from my sight - helplessness does not even begin to describe my feelings. I asked one of the PC's present if it was the 8th floor and he confirmed he believed it was. I do not know if this lady survived the fire.

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Looking around I could see shadows of people within flats, further calls and screams and also further lights being shone in our direction.

I could see the stress of the faces of my officers, who like me appeared helpless to help those inside the tower, however they all maintained their professionalism and did exactly what was asked of them quickly, efficiently, and effectively.

Just following the evacuation at approximately 0240, I was aware of a male landing a few meters from my location in the children's playground, to the West of the building. I had no idea where he had jumped from. My first thought, was that there was a possibility he could still be alive and as such needed to get to him ASAP, I was probably the closest officer to the male and so decided to try and reach him. I ran into Testerton walk, where I saw a number of police officers, I asked for one of them to come with me, as it turned out 2 followed me PC 440BS Martin Hart and PC Alice Jacobs.

My priority at this point was to get to the male, I initially tried to find a safer route through to the playground by running through Testerton Walk down the stairs to the ground floor and then out into an area between TestertonWalk and Barandon Walk, my intention was to go through one of the other access doors closer to the playground. Upon arriving at the door it was locked and required a key fob to open, I called to a member of the public who was looking on to see if they had access, they did not as such I needed to find another route to the victim.

I ran with the two PC's back the route we had came and looked for alternatives, after a couple of other dead ends, we made our way to the base of Grenfell Tower, as this was the only route to the children's playground. As we approached the base of the tower under a large concrete overhang, the heat intensified and the falling debris also intensified. I remember considering my options in particular in relation to my own safety and the safety of the PC's with me. I moved slowly forward and could see that although debris was falling on the west side near to the playground, the volume was not as great in other areas and again appeared to be mostly lighter insulation.

I noted that there was a small walkway that was about 10 feet high following the building line of the tower which although not solid, did give some limited protection to us. PC Hart and I moved into this

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area, I asked PC HART if he had a torch, which he did and he illuminated the location of the male.

I saw 2 LFB officers and told them that we had identified the location of a person who had jumped/fallen and asked if they could assist with the recovery. They immediately came with me under the covered walkway to a point 3 meters from the male. As they had protective helmets and clothing on, they moved forward into the playground and grabbed the male by his arms dragging him towards me.

In the short time that we had been at this location the debris fall, had intensified and as such the priority was to get us all to a place of safety. The male that had been recovered clearly had serious injuries, with at least one leg at an unnatural angle, and a clear head injury.

I remember placing 2 fingers on the man's neck to check for a pulse, due to my own exertion and heavy breathing, I could not be sure if I could feel a pulse. I am sure he was dead and perhaps it was a desire to see him survive that made me think I felt something. I said I was unsure and PC hart asked me if I wanted him to start CPR. I indicated that the priority was to get him out of danger and to the LAS who were only a short distance away.

I took hold of the males left arm, whilst PC HART and the two LFB officers took his other limbs.

The male was heavy and the route we needed to take was cluttered with fire hoses and fire officers. We managed to get through to the LAS and place the male on a gurney, the LAS gave a quick assessment and then indicated that the male was deceased, at which point he was covered.

Throughout this event PC HART displayed great bravery and presence of mind, working with me to identify a route through and also in the recovery of this male. PC JACOBS was with me until we moved under the covered area but did not assist with the recovery.

Following this incident, I made my way back to the Leisure Centre looking for Inspector THATCHER to discuss where we were operationally. I was aware that there were now a number of deceased lying outside the leisure centre and as such requested that tents be brought to the scene to protect their dignity and also any evidence that may be held on their person. They had to be laid very close to the LAS

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assessment centre but this was also too close to the cordon in Avondale Park Road in my opinion.

I became aware some time later that the Leisure Centre had been accessed by police and that this was being used as a temporary morgue. Throughout the night, there were regular calls from cordon officers for assistance as people tried to breach the cordons, this necessitated a request to SOR for more units.

There was a real concern that there would be some significant civil disobedience if we did not get the situation under control. One of the main areas of concern was Bomore Road J/W Grenfell Road. This location was in direct line of site to the tower and the closest cordon point. The cordon was moved back on a number of occasions but the feelings of the members of the public was such that it was very challenging to negotiate with them.

I recall at approximately 0300, attending the cordon and trying to reason with some of the more vocal people there. I indicated that my officer's main function was to allow the LFB to do their job and rescue people, I told the crowds that the more officers I had to deploy to maintain the cordons, the less I had to undertake other tasks that were very important.

As I spoke, again I had family members calling out flat numbers specifically asking me what I was going to do about it. I tried to explain that the LFB were doing a systematic search of the building trying to rescue everyone inside. This was not what they wanted to hear, and could not understand why the LFB were not targeting the specific flats they indicated.

It was an impossible situation to try and get most to understand what we were trying to achieve, and I fully understand why that was, they were thinking of their loved ones and not the greater picture.

This was I believe a unique situation where was I not only being asked to manage the policing response to a Major Incident, but also trying to stop a serious public order situation developing. I am not sure that any of my training had identified these as combined issues that I would ever face.

Throughout the night there were hourly Silver meetings (Sx) Chaired by Assistant Commissioner Andy ROWE of the LFB - He was for my entire tour the officer in charge of the incident, whilst the

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Commissioner of the LFB was present for much of the evening it was AC ROWE who was running the operation.

The first meeting was at approximately 0330, this meeting was attended by the Police, LAS, LA, and LFB and was a briefing designed to ensure that all key partners understood the situation and also allowed requests to be made inter-agency for assistance or information. During this first and all subsequent meetings there were updates in relation to fatalities, casualties and the LFB response. These meetings were minuted by AC ROWE's loggist.

Of particular note in this meeting the LFB raised significant concerns regarding the disorder on the cordons and the sporadic breaches of those cordons. They made it clear that if there was an incident that places LFB staff in danger from civil disobedience then they would have to consider withdrawal of some or all assets. The rationale being that they would need to regroup and it could become a different rescue operation, rescuing other LFB officers affected by an incursion or indeed, people who had gone into the tower.

At 0332 AC ROWE made a formal request to me to ensure the safety of his staff and the integrity of the cordons. I gave reassurances that, my officers were fully briefed and understood the consequences of a breach, I also reassured him that I was satisfied at that time that the cordons were secure and that I had additional resources coming to give additional security.

During this meeting two significant pieces of information were given as follows:

1. AC ROWE had accepted that the building may no longer be safe for LFB officers to be inside, he had already deviated from the norms of fire safety in order to save as many people as possible.
2. Staff at the call centres and officers on cordons were now to tell persons trapped to try to get out themselves as there were no longer any guarantees that the LFB would be able to save them.

The second point, was an important point that all staff needed to understand, as this was a major deviation from standard advice that is given to stay safe and await rescue.

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Via my PR I contacted GT and gave a specific message stating that the message from the LFB was that any persons trapped were to be told to try and self-evacuate. I repeated the message understanding the significance of it, I recall asking GT if they completely understood what I had said and asked that it be repeated verbatim. The operator informed me that they were reviewing the tape to ensure that it was put out as I had requested.

I remember feeling quite emotional after putting out this message, knowing from speaking to LFB crews what the situation was like inside the tower, and praying that any trying to self- evacuate were able to do so and survive.

I recall speaking to a number of the TSG officers who had just arrived at the Leisure Centre, and telling them to put on their helmets as they were required to go near to the building to assist with further evacuations, I believe Inspector Thatcher told them to put on their fire retardant overalls as well.

At 0410 I requested units to evacuate Tredgold, staff were to use Sec 17 PACE if necessary and this evacuation was carried out by TP officers 0415 HAT car requested - to offer advice in the early stages, although this was still a fire investigation, my concern having learnt lessons from Lakanal Tower was that it could easily turn into a criminal investigation.

At 0420 I was asked by the LFB to evacuate Barandon House as it was also in danger of igniting, on this occasion I specifically briefed the TSG Sergeant that I wanted every flat entered. I was concerned that due to the early hour, there was a possibility that people could be asleep and not hear the door as such they were to use section 17 PACE to gain entry.

I remember this being the only time during the whole incident that I felt frustrated at a lack of urgency on the part of this Sgt, he didn't appear to grasp the urgency of the situation, instead getting out his notebook and asking, what was on my mind, to me a pointless question and what my name was. His team strolled towards Barandon House without a care in the world. This may have been a perception of mine but at the time did annoy me. I'd had over 3 hours of officers puffing themselves in danger to protect others with no protective equipment, and here I had a team in flame proofs, gloves and helmets with no sense of urgency.

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At one point, I am unsure of the exact time or exactly how the request came to me, I directed TSG officers to protect LFB officers with shields so that they could enter the building safely carrying their breathing apparatus.

This is not a scenario that is trained either independently or jointly with the LFB, but if the TSG officers had not been willing to undertake this task, the LFB may not have been able to enter the building as efficiently as they did and this would have cost lives. These officers were perhaps in the most danger for the most protracted period and showed immense courage in undertaking their tasks.

At one point a number of shields were placed behind the cordon at Bowmore Road J/W Grenfell Road for officers to collect, as they were placed on the floor a group of males surged forward and grabbed the shields in an effort to run down Grenfell Road towards the tower, they needed to be physically stopped from doing this.

The emotion was very high at this point, to the point of desperation. It appeared that the reality of the situation was sinking in and this was a last ditch attempt to rescue their families.

Again, I tried to reassure the groups behind the cordon that we together with the LFB were doing everything we could to save their loved ones, again they were calling out flat numbers.

It is difficult to describe the emotion being expressed and the raw anger aimed at police at this time, it would not have taken much for this to escalate into serious public disorder. Staff on the cordons were spoken to by me and other supervisors throughout the night to ensure that some large degree of latitude was given to people at the cordons.

I had a real concern that if an arrest had been made that was not proportionate taking all the circumstances into account, it would have lighted a touch paper, and serious disorder may have followed.

On more than one occasion, I warned individuals - primarily those causing issues just to film the fire that they would be arrested for obstruction.

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Force was used by me on the night, and I cannot indicate specifically against whom or at which times, but I am satisfied that any force that I personally used throughout the night was proportionate and lawful under the circumstances, the minimum force was used on all occasions and at the most the force used was the holding of an arm to encourage an individual back behind a cordon. There were no struggles that needed any further force.

Whilst I use the National Decision Making Model on a regular basis, the circumstances in which I found myself was almost information overload.

The information and intelligence was ever changing as crowds moved to seek out vulnerabilities within the cordons, and as the fire moved through the building and the weather changed.

A full assessment of the information available to me again was challenging due to the fast moving nature of the fire, the multiple information streams both from, victims' families, partners, officers, LFB and the PR. When looking at powers and policies, I was limited in what I could use to achieve my objectives, as they are limited in these circumstances.

Considerations were Common Law, Section 3 Criminal Law Act. Tactical options were vast and I believe used well to not only achieve my own objectives but to support our partners in achieving theirs.

The review process was constant, with almost every passing moment as new information came in, I needed to assess if I had the correct resources in the right places at the right time, that they were as safe as could be expected and that their welfare was being monitored. The supervisors on the ground, did an excellent job in monitoring welfare, ensuring staff got breaks were fed and watered and rotated away from constant pressure where possible.

At 0430 LFB crews required assistance in rotating their resources, it was not just the new crews getting in, but the LFB required safe passage getting out and would not move their crews until this could be guaranteed. Inspector THATCHER ensured that a suitable individual was tasked with this happening and the transition was uneventful.

One ongoing frustration for me was the inability of the LALO on scene to give me any indication of how

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many residents it was believed lived in the tower, or how many residents has gone to any of the rest centres, it appeared that any systems and processes that they had were failing. This information was important to give an indication of scale, but also to give an indication of who might be left in the building. There appeared to be a gap in this intelligence.

In addition we had information where the fire had started, but they were unable to tell me whether the occupant of flat 16 had presented themselves, which was key information from an investigative point of view. There were no records available indicating who lived in which flat, which again could have assisted in identifying the occupier of 16 at an early stage.

I recall seeing an Arabic male in the early hours of the morning, talking on his phone telling me that he was talking to his wife and two young children, I saw this same male sporadically throughout the night on his phone. As the sun rose I saw the same man sitting on the curb of the road, holding his phone crying being comforted by others. I do not know if his family survived but put this in this statement as one example of many where hope seems to have turned to despair.

It became clear that the media interest for the event would only get bigger and as such contacted GT and requested that a member of the Department of Media and Communication be allocated to assist with the press.

At 0551 AC ROWE indicated that he may need very soon to make the decision that no further lives could be saved, and it would turn from a rescue operation into a recovery phase.

By 0700 LFB reported conditions inside for their staff improving, but considerable numbers of fatalities.

At 0845 John ALLEN district surveyor indicated that he did not believe there would be a full collapse, but there could be a partial collapse with the corners potentially falling. This was the first time that we had any official line that the building would not have a catastrophic failure.

As the night moved into early morning, a certain calm fell upon the area. As the sun began to rise and the true horror of what had unfolded became clear, the atmosphere at the scene seemed to change. There

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appeared to be an acceptance that no one could have survived the blaze. In the early hours, I remember speaking to Police Commander Jerome and giving him an overview of what the situation was, he would ultimately become the Gold Commander for the incident.

Following the SX meeting at 0845, I was approached by Charlie PUGSEY who was the head fire investigation team, he was asking if there was any information regarding the occupants of flat 16, this was key to him in starting an early investigation, he was also interested to know who from the police would be his liaison. I supplied him with the details of the SIO at that time DCI Matt BONNER and the Senior Identification Manager DCI Andy CHALMERS.

At 0915 Charlie PUGSEY handed me a plastic bag that he said contained correspondents from flat 16, one of the fire Investigators Matt LEAVER (OK13) had found them in a cupboard and although they were damaged they still had potential documents that could identify the occupier. At 0916 I handed this bag to PC 412BS Steve COLLINS and asked him to go through them to see if he could ID the occupier and any contact details.

At 0920 I received a call from DI Will HODGKINSON who stated that a male had just walked into the from office at Notting Hill Police station indicating that he was the occupier of flat 16, DI HODGKINSON indicated that the male stated that he had woken up to see flames coming up through his floor. We had a discussion regarding interviewing him as a significant witness and I told DI HODGGKINSON to call DCI BONNER to discuss the way forward.

I informed Charlie PUGSEY of this development and he indicated a desire to be part of any interview so that he could use his fire investigation expertise. My understanding is that he spoke to the investigation team regarding this.

As the morning progressed I was contacted by CI Jo STOKOE who informed me that a command team had now been put in place and that he had been appointed as Silver, we discussed what was needed in regards resourcing going forward and I indicated my views. He told me that Supt Graham PRICE would be coming to relieve me on scene, this happened at about 1200.

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I had serious concerns about the welfare of my officers, what they had witnesses throughout the night was unprecedented, I requested that Occupational Health be contacted and be available at Kensington Police Station so that all staff could have an initial debrief.

PS Lewis WALKER who was at Kensington Police Station put in place a process so that all officers that were deployed throughout the night went via a preliminary debrief prior to dismissal. (Most TSG officers chose not to take part in this process, as they had their own processes in place). Being the senior officer on scene, there is a feeling that everyone is looking to you to make the right decisions, to know exactly what to do and at what time to do it.

This incident was unprecedented I am satisfied that the decisions I made at the time were the correct ones taking all of the circumstances into account. I have no doubt that at some point I may be challenged over some of those decisions - If this happens I will be happy to defend my position.

Signature: Paul WARNETT
2018

Signature witnessed by:

OFFICIAL