

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: PINNINGTON, COLIN

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

Occupation: HART TRAINING MANAGER

This statement (consisting of 5 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: C PINNINGTON

Date: 06/03/2018

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

This statement refer to the Grenfell Tower Fire and my attendance there. I have made this statement whilst referring to my incident log.

I am Colin PINNINGTON, call sign Y294, a Training Manager for the London Ambulance Service (LAS). I have been in the service for 15 years, the last ten of which have been with the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) team. 2 of these years were spent seconded out to the National Ambulance Resilience Service at Salisbury delivering HART training including urban search and rescue, breathing equipment and working at height nationally. Following that, I return to the LAS and have been a HART training manager for the last 2 years. I am based at the HART West base [REDACTED] As well as being a training manager, I am also one of the on call Incident Support Officers and can provide tactical advice regarding HART operations to the Incident Response Officer (IRO). Often the IRO does not have HART experience so my role is to tell them what the HART teams can do for them at the incident from a specialist's role but it is there decision whether or not to use those tactics or follow the advice.

On Wednesday 14th June 2017 I was at home but not on call. I received a page at about 0200 hours, which woke me up. It was an amber page said that there was a major fire and was asking about availability but that there was no requirement to do anything. I am on several pager groups and the messages that I receive are code either green, amber or red. The green messages usually indicate the end of an incident, the amber that there is a significant incident underway and the red that there is a major

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incident and that they need action from you. As I was not on call, I went back to bed but continued to receive more pager messages throughout the night. At about 0500 hours, it was clear that there was a large incident and the pager messages turned to red. I contacted the duty Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer (EPRO) by either phone or using my radio. The EPRO was Nick BELL. I asked him what he wanted me to do and he initially told me to standby but get ready to deploy. We had a second conversation a few minutes later when they asked me to go to scene on slow time so not using blue lights and sirens. They said that the situation was in hand but that they needed more resources. I set off about 0730 hours from my home [REDACTED], going down the A1 to the A406, down the A5 and through Harlesden and North Kensington. Traffic was fine until I reached Kilburn so I put the blue lights on and made my way to the incident.

I had the work radio on and there was no real drama. There are 3 different radio channels, one for staff on the scene, one for the HART and another command channel. I dipped in and out of different channels but mostly listened to the HART channel.

I parked my car on the bottom end of Lancaster Road by the sport centre. I got of the vehicle and put on my incident ground kit including HART PPE and a tabard with Incident Support Officer written on it. The HART kit is green trousers and a green jacket and white F10 firefighting helmet. The Surrey Fire Brigade Aerial Platform turned up about the same time as me on Lancaster Road and they were trying to work out what to do with it. This was when I first saw the tower and I was shocked by the size of the fire. I have been to quite a lot of fires and this was the biggest I've ever seen. It looked like the top 10 floors of the tower were still alight and there was lots of smoke coming off it. I was parked within a cordon so there was not many people around. I made my way to the sport centre to see the incident commander. I had never been in Grenfell Tower before but was familiar with the area and the Kensington Leisure Centre next to it as it is where we have a temporary base for the Notting Hill Carnival each year. I arrived on scene at 0837 hours and reported to Tracey PORTER, the EPRO supporting the IRO. I went to see the EPRO as the IRO will be swamped with work and tasks to do and the EPRO can feed my advice into him.

Tracey was at the reception in the Sport Centre. He gave me a briefing and told me that there was a building fire that had started at 0200 and had progressed up. Tracey said that there were 2 sectors with a sector on the far side of Grenfell Tower towards Bramley Road and another sector this side of the tower. There were two casualty collection points and he just said what they had done overnight. Tracey told me

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that I was going to be the Incident Support Officer, taking over from Simon WOODMORE. This was the role that I had expected to fill as there are a limited number of us who perform this role.

There seemed to be a little bit of a pause occurring in the activity whilst we saw what the London Fire Brigade (LFB) plan was then we would see how we could support it. I said that I would go and check on the HART team there and make sure that they were doing what they were supposed to be and check on their welfare as they it was still the night team at this point. Although I did not know the full in's and out's of their tasks, I needed to make sure that they were hydrated and looked after and know what was going on as it was getting close to change over time.

I made my way over to Sector 2 and spoke to the HART crew there. I made sure they had FFP3 face masks as there was a lot of debris coming from the tower. I was also aware that in the twin tower attacks a lot of people died from the respiratory problems caused by the collapse of the tower and I thought that there was a risk that this tower could collapse and that it might have asbestos in it so it was important that they were wearing these masks. They did not have them with them so one of the crew went back to their vehicle and picked them up. These facemasks are all personal issue to the staff and I do not think that they had previously considered wearing them.

At 0903 hours I took a handover from Simon WOODMORE, call sign Y292, who would have been the on call incident support officer overnight. I met him at the casualty collection area in sector 2. He told me things with a HART slant such as where the fire was up to and where the LFB bridgehead was. He did not think that there was a bridgehead in place but if one was established then we could consider deploying staff to it. He said that in Sector 1 there was one deceased in the casualty collection point (CCP) which I do not think had a police officer with it at that time but that one had been requested. I think that there may have also been a deceased person in Sector 2. He also told me that there were two HART breathing apparatus wearers in Sector One on standby should they need to deploy.

At 0925 hours I spoke to Tracey PORTER, call sign EP02. She was the Tactical Advisor on scene. I told her what I had said to the HART team about wearing the FFP3 facemasks as all LAS personal should have been issued with them. I was worried about the building collapsing so thought it was best that all staff had them. She went and spoke to Chris REEVES, who has a stash of equipment and he got a couple of boxes of the masks for staff who did not have them to use. I also talked to her about the options that we had regarding the deployment of HART staff.

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There have been previous incidents where we have deployed staff into the bridgehead so that the firefighter only have to bring patients down to the bridgehead and then we take them from there. This is to allow the firefighters to focus on the fire and not casualty removal. At this incident however there was no bridgehead and the fire was still in full flow. The HART uniform is not fire resistant and it is not suitable for them to deploy where there are still flames. HART staff could go in if there was a safe area or on a case-by-case basis depending on the casualty that the LFB are bringing out or not at all and let the LFB bring them out of the tower. The LFB were in charge of the incident and we were following their direction.

At 0935 hours I went and spoke to the day HART team who had arrived and taken over from the night HART team. I spoke to the team leader, Dave LAMBETH-WILLIAMS, and briefed him with the information I took and told him to get his team to take their FFP3 masks with him. I told him that at the moment we were not going into the tower until we were given further direction by the LFB that there was a bridgehead in place but that it was important that we were ready to deploy when they needed us.

The job had calmed down and there were no casualties being brought out and no known deceased being found by the LFB. At 1025 hours I was informed by police officer 45GD that there was a deceased person in the communal area one of the blocks of flats south of the tower and that people were taking photographs of it. I think the block might have been Testerton Walk and the block came out on to a raised area which went up to the tower where there might have used to have been a previous entrance to the tower. He asked if we could get the body and bring it to our morgue. I do not know how this body got there. I tried to speak to the Bronze Incident Commander but could not get hold of him as he was in a meeting. I thought it was important to speak to him about moving bodies which could be evidence. However police DVI staff started turning up at the scene so I went to spoke to one of them so that they could come with us and take care of the police evidential side of recovering the body and moving it. I cannot remember who the DVI officer was. They agreed so together with a team of HART staff and the DVI officers we went to the body. I worked out a safe route to the body as sheets of metal were still falling off the tower, going through the underground carpark and up the stairs into the block. He was close to the walkway. We went and got the body and the DVI team took part of the forensic side.

We got to the body at about 1130 hours, I cannot remember what they looked like but think that it was a man. I cannot remember any injuries but he may have jumped from the tower and landed on the walkway and was then moved into the block.

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In the back of my log I have drawn a map of the scene and this body is labelled as Y133 which is the call sign for Ian SIDTHROPE who was the person who had recognised life as extinct. Ian had been at the scene overnight and life had been declared extinct whilst he was on duty, before we got there. Once DVI had done the forensic work we moved him to the underground garages where there was already another deceased. I think this deceased was another jumper who had been moved into the garages. I have labelled him on my map as ground floor in garage. I think this area was where the DVI team started to take the bodies.

I went to leisure centre where I was then tasked by Colin PASSY with looking around the site for deceased bodies. I went around the site and marked them all on the map at the back of the log. The ones that I have circled were ones that I had seen in person. I already knew about the ones in the CCP's and the ones that were in the tent at the CCP so marked them on the map before walking around as much around the building as possible, avoiding the debris falling down. I went through the garages to Station Walk and checked the body in the CCP and that life had been declared extinct. There was a ticket attached to the body confirming that he was deceased stating that life had been declared extinct at 0335 hours.

I met with someone from the LFB who was also doing the same task on the LFB's behalf. We compared maps and he told me about bodies inside the tower which I then marked on my map. There were 11 bodies in total around the scene.

At 1441 hours I was informed that DVI were looking to get inside the tower and start the forensic work on the bodies that we knew about. I had a conversation with EP02, Tracey PORTER, about supporting the DVI team which were are trained to do so. There was to be a limited area of exploration to find the body of large person who was stuck in the stairwell on the 9th floor. There was a need to get that body recovered as it was blocking the stairwell and making it difficult for the LFB to get up the stairs.

I recommended to Tracey that HART would be ok to support DVI as the LFB had now pushed further up the building, the stairwell was not on fire, and breathing apparatus was not required. Tracey made an entry in her decision log recording her decision that we could commit HART staff. I think the decision went up the chain of command to the gold commander.

I went and briefed the HART team that was going to go in underneath the walkway opposite the entrance to the tower. The told them that they were going to go to floor 9 to assist DVI with the recovery of a deceased patient in the stairwell. The assistance that they would provide was by completing the

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recognition of life process. They then deployed into the tower with the DVI team and once everything was complete the team, DVI officers and the deceased came out. I think this was all complete by about 1600 hours but I did not enter the tower myself.

After this I had another walk around the scene to make sure nothing else had materialised before heading back to the sport centre. At 1630 hours I decided to shut my log as my role was not mostly now advisory so I would feed into the main log being completed by bronze medic. I was not making any decisions directly and the planning that we were doing was now focussed on preparing for the night and subsequent days. I met with Colin PASSY, the Bronze Incident Commander and we discussed the plan going forward for the evening and the subsequent days and weeks ahead as we knew that there would be a request from DVI and from the LFB Urban Search and Rescue for HART to be deployed to the tower to support these functions.

This continued until approximately 1800 hours until Simon WOODMORE returned to the incident and I handed back over to him. I summarised the day's events to him including casualty and deceased numbers. This took place at the sports centre. We may have had a walk around the tower but I cannot remember. Once the handover was complete at approximately 1900 hours, I left the tower and drove back home.

This incident was of a size and scale that I had not experienced before. I had attended the major fire at Lakanal House in 2009 as part of the HART response team and did go into the building. That was another compartment flat fire which spread downwards. On that occasion HART were deployed in breathing apparatus to assist in the evacuation of patients. The Grenfell Tower Fire was well beyond this in terms of size and scale.

I think I did attend a de-brief for the incident but cannot remember where or when as there were a considerable number of de-briefs last year and it is difficult to tell them apart.

I did not suffer any injuries at the incident and have received no treatment since. I have not given an interviews to the media about the fire and did not take any photographs or videos of it.

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