

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: WOODMORE, SIMON

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

Occupation:

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This statement (consisting of 6 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: S WOODMORE

Date: 06/02/2018

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

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This statement refers to my attendance at the Grenfell Tower Fire. I have made this statement referring to the Incident Report Book that I complete on scene at the fire and to the London Ambulance Service Call log (247 14/06/17) for the incident. I have also marked various locations on a map that I produce as exhibit SPW/1.

I am Simon WOODMORE, call sign Y292, a Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) Operations Officer for the London Ambulance Service. I have worked for the London Ambulance Service since 1991 and qualified as a paramedic in 1995. In 2000 I became an officer and have worked at HART since 2006 and have been in my current role since 2010. I am trained as an Operational Commander for the Ambulance Trust and nationally, a TAC commander, a National Inter Agency Officer and an Incident Support Officer. I spend time on call for these roles. I am currently based at the HART base on [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

HART staff are trained as an Incident Response Unit (IRU) to deal with major incidents with large numbers of casualties. We are also trained to work in hazardous conditions such as flood water, fast flowing water, to work at height, to work under CBRN conditions and provide support to police firearms operations. I provide support as an officer to Incident Commanders advising what HART can do to assist but can be also be an Incident Commander myself. At Grenfell Tower we were used in our IRU. The HART uniform is not designed to go into fire and is not structured with thermal protection. Therefore

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HART teams are not deployed in fires when active firefighting is underway. This is standard kit across the country. We are equipped with breathing apparatus and can work under smoke conditions.

On the morning of Wednesday 14th June 2017 I was at home [REDACTED] asleep in bed. I'm not sure the time but I got a phone call from the HART East team saying were all going to a call to a tower block fire. They said that they were going on the request from the first team on scene and they had also asked the East team to call me. They did not have any further information and there was no reports of patients at this time but I don't think that anyone knew really. The person who had called me was Ian SIBTHORPE. I had worked with him before on Lakanal fire and the way he described it as big made me think that it was on that level.

At 02:04 hours Geoffrey LONG, call sign EP04, called me and told me what was happening and to make my way to Grenfell Tower. He told me that there was a 25 storey building on fire with multiple patients and a mass evacuation. He said that there was patients reported. He asked me to attend the incident as an Incident Support Officer. This call was a few minutes after the first call that I had received.

I left immediately. It took me about 30 minutes to get to the RVP which was on Clarendon Walk at the junction with Cornwall Crescent. I have marked the RVP on the map. I drove on blue lights in my unmarked car. The route I took [REDACTED] was down the M1 to Edgware Road before going into Kilburn and turning right into Ladbroke Grove and onto Clarendon Walk. I arrived at about 0240 hours and the call log shows me confirming the RVP at 0246 hours. I do not remember seeing the tower until just before I arrived at the RVP after Ladbroke Grove. There was a lot of people on the roads around the tower.

I was shocked by the size of the fire and ferocity of it. I thought that the tower was going to collapse and did not think that there was anyway the tower could stay up. I could see debris falling off the tower and felt the heat coming from the fire as soon as I got out of the car. There was a lot of orange flame on the outside of the tower and I thought that it was strange as normally you see the fire coming out of the windows of a building, not the actual building on fire. This is what made me think that it would collapse. There was a lot of noise; sirens, shouting and screaming and you could hear the debris falling when you got closer.

Geoffrey Long arrived at the incident at a similar time to me and after we had confirmed that we were at the right place for the RVP we dumped the cars. I put on a high visibility green and white tabard with ISO

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or Incident Support Commander written on the back and a white helmet. I was not wearing the HART PPE, just the standard green ambulance service uniform. Quite a few other resources and people seemed to arrive at the same time as us and there was a London Ambulance Service (LAS) Team Leader who asked if I want him to be in charge of parking. It was a job that needed doing so I said yes. I do not know who the team leader was.

We made our way towards the tower, going through an alleyway off Clarendon Walk. In the alleyway I saw Andrea RIGGS, a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) medic, call sign Medic 2. She said to me that they were thinking about bringing the patients down the alleyway to the ambulances. There were a lot of people in the alleyway and she asked me to clear the alley. I spoke to a police officer and told them that we needed the alleyway clear. They said that they would go and find someone to help do it. I needed it done immediately if we were bringing out patients so I shouted for people to clear the alleyway. After a few shouts people moved once they understood that it was for patients. I do not know if the alleyway was actually used as it was for Sector One, the east of the tower, casualty clearing whereas once at the tower I went over to Sector 2, the west of the tower. I have marked the two sectors on the map.

Once the alley was clear we continued towards Grenfell Tower and outside the leisure centre on Bomore Road we met with the Incident Commander Lawrence IONALOU, call sign IR61. I have marked where I met the Incident Commander on the map by his call sign. Lawrence told me that he had been told that there was reports of patients being brought out of the other side of the tower to where we were. He asked if me and two other officers, Tom GLEESON IR71 and Maria CONYERS, IR41, could go around and find out what was going on and called the other side of the tower Sector 2.

We walked around to the other side of the tower. Due to the debris falling we could not walk straight past Grenfell Tower so we went south of the tower and around Whitchurch Road. We did not really know the way and were aiming for Latimer Road Tube Station. It seems to take forever to get to the other side of the tower but I think it was about 10 minutes and we were there about 0300 hours.

When we got to the west side of the tower there was an ambulance parked at the top of a ramp on Latimer Road. A paediatric resuscitation going on in an ambulance but there was a member of the public under the ambulance who I think knew the person receiving the treatment. Myself and a police officer pulled this person out and I told to the ambulance to leave straight away which it did. The west side of the tower was

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well alight from what I could see and there was a lot of debris falling into the children's playground. There was a few LAS staff already there and we started to deal with the patients that were there. I remember a police officer bringing over a mother and child who were suffering from smoke inhalation. The child was a girl, about 13 years old who said that she had come from the 21<sup>st</sup> floor of the tower. Most of the patients were suffering with smoke inhalation and we needed more equipment to treat them. Whilst I was not hands on with the casualties, I do not remember seeing anyone burnt. We put a cordon in place and started to treat people by a tree on the ramp where the ambulance had been. This was set up as the Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) which is where patients are brought to be put in an ambulance and taken away. The ramp down from Latimer Road to Grenfell Tower was cleared out of people who were not casualties. At the same time as the CCS was being set up a Casualty Collection Point (CCP) was being set up at the bottom of the ramp by Tom Gleeson and HART team. I was not very involved in the set up of the CCP.

Firefighters were bring patients out of the building to the CCP which was about 50 metres from the tower. Here they were triaged by the HART team and assessed on their injured. They were sorted into four categories depending on their injuries; P1 - catastrophic haemorrhage or in need urgent treatment, P2 injured and not able to walk and P3 who are walking wounded. The fourth category is deceased when recognition of life extinct is declared. P1 and P2 were brought from the CCP up to the CCS by either firefighter, police officers or by the HART staff, whoever was readily available. It was not a big distance between the two and the biggest issue was members of the public coming in and getting in the way. At the CCS there were HEMS doctors and ambulance crews to treat the patients and to take them to hospital.

The P3 patients were sent to a Survivor Reception Centre set up in the pub on Latimer Road by the tube station. There was a Medical Emergency Response Incident Team (MERIT) doctor and some LAS staff in the pub treating the people in there.

Initially, Tom GLEESON was Bronze Sector 2 and Maria CONYERS was Bronze Triage. However Tom went closer to the tower to where a triage centre was setup. This quickly changed as Tom was by the triage centre and Maria became Bronze Sector 2 and Tom became Bronze Triage for Sector 2. I was helping set up Sector 2 and was still providing my Advisor Role.

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Normally we do not move deceased patients unless it is to access the living or there is a dignity issue. We had one deceased brought back to the CCP and the recognition of life extinct was done. The deceased person was brought out to the CCP at about 0345 hours.

About this time I also saw a firefighter being treated. I think it was for heat exhaustion as I saw his hands being put in cold water. I updated control on the radio to say that there was one dead body and one firefighter injured. It was not a serious injury.

Shortly after 0400 hours I was asked by the fire brigade if the HART had structural fire kit. I replied "No." The firefighter explained that there was a bariatric patient on the 8th floor and they wanted life pronounced extinct but understood that we would not be able to do it with our kit. About this time we were told that there was a possibility of bodies being brought out of the tower and we were asked to set up a deceased holding area. British Transport Police brought down body bags which we do not carry to assist and it was set up behind the CCP. The body that was had been brought out was put into one of these bags.

I made at least one trip back around the tower to the command team in Sector 1. The command team had brought down a command unit from which to operate but I did not go in to the command unit and spoke to the Incident Commander again which was still Lawrence and we had a conversation about resourcing and what was going on in Sector 2. I took some HART and LAS staff back with me to Sector 2 but cannot remember exactly who. I am not quite sure what time it was when I went back.

It seemed to be about this point that the way that patients were being brought out of the tower changed and that they were all now being brought out on the west side and into Sector 2 and not Sector 1. From what I understand, Sector 1 had very few patients after 0300 hours. I think that this is why more staff were sent around with me.

At 0438 hours a message came out on the radio from Ian SIBTHORPE asking if someone could bring a body tag up to the walkway where there was the body of a jumper. I went up the walkway, using the ramp that was by the CCS on Latimer Road, and through a door that was unlocked into the hallway of one of the blocks of flats off the walkway. The body was just inside the hallway was a deceased was an adult male of Asian origin. I gave the tag to Ian who put it on the body, the recognition of life extinct had already been pronounced. We wrapped the body in plastic sheet that was already in the hallway. I walked down to the far end of the hallway and opened the door to the other end of the block, furthest away from Grenfell Tower. There was a police officer on the door and I told him that there was a body in the hallway

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that we had wrapped up so that he was aware and would stop people going in. The officer acknowledged that he understood and went away. Following the incident I saw in the papers that some had taken a photograph of the deceased in the hallway and was arrested and charged for it. I think the walkway was insecure as the block had been evacuated and the magnetic door catches had been disabled by the fire alarm.

After I had spoken to the police officer, I went back down the hallway and through the door back onto the walkway. Coming out of this door on the walkway I could see an elderly male in the windows of one of the flats inside the tower facing south. The man was waving a cloth out of the window to get attention. There was a firefighter on the walkway with a ladder but the ladder was not long enough. The firefighter did seem to know that he was there but to make sure that the fire brigade were definitely aware I alert our control centre over the radio. I did not see the man get rescued but have seen since in the media that he was and was possibly the last person rescued from the tower. I had thought that he would not make it as there were flames above him that seemed to be working the way down the outside of the building.

As you walked around the tower and on the walkway you were walking over the debris that had fallen off the tower. Some of the debris was foam type stuff that I now know to be the Cladding. The foam would disintegrate when you stepped on it. There was metal and other stuff also coming down. The harder debris was close to the tower but the foam was lighter and had come down further away from the tower around the leisure centre and up toward Latimer Road. The debris got worse throughout the morning.

At about 0500 hours we were told over the radio that there were more calls being received by our control centre from people still inside the tower. We confirmed the resources that were in place and I told the teams not to switch off as the amount of people being brought out had started to decrease shortly before this. I wanted to make sure that we were ready to go if more people were brought out and no one had gone into post incident mode.

Other than the trip back to the Command Unit I stayed in Sector 2 until I was relieved. I think I was relieved at about 0630 by Colin Pinnington, call sign Y294. I gave him a hand over verbally saying what we had done and a timeline of what had happened. The day turn HART team took over. I walked back around to Sector 1 and spoke to the other HART team on the east side of the tower before going back to the command unit and speaking to Tracey PORTER who taken over a TAC advisor. I let them know that

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I was leaving the incident and left. I am not sure of the exact time but it was at some point between 0730 hours and 0900 hours.

The fire continued throughout the night which surprised me as I did not think there was anything left to burn. It was still going when I left. The biggest concern for me was the structural integrity of the tower due to the amount of debris falling down and I feared that the tower would collapse. The amount of damage to it that you could see I could not believe that it had not collapsed. You could see the windows were missing and the metal on the building was all twisted and burnt. We had set up the CCP in Sector 2 to try and be as safe as possible if the tower were to collapse. The safest place to be is in line with one of the corners of the tower as the corners are the least likely to collapse. The distance away from the tower that you should be is the height of the tower plus another half. This is what I have been trained through our Urban Search and Rescue Training and in my experience outside the job working in a disaster response team. However in this situation it was not practical for us to be this far away. We were able to get in line with one of the corners and behind another structure to protect us. The safety officer wanted to move us back at one point but I disagreed with him. We had a conversation with him as we needed to be able to treat patients quickly and it was not practical for them to be taken further away from the tower. As a compromised we moved slightly further away from the corner so provide more protection to the casualties.

In my 28 years in the LAS it was the hardest incident I have had to face emotionally as it kept going. We were being told that there was hundreds of people missing at the time and it was difficult knowing that calls were still being made from within the tower but we could not help them.

There was a debrief offered for all staff following my release from the incident but I chose to go home instead and did an electronic debrief later. I was sent back to Grenfell Tower the following night and for several days after this to provide clinical support to the USAR and DVI teams working in the tower in the days following the fire by recognising life extinct for the deceased still inside the tower. I have also being back inside the tower to provide medical assistance for residents visits to the tower.

Whilst at the incident I have used two CADs; 14/06/17 247 which finished at 2230 hours on 14/06/17 and CAD 2593 14/0617 - created at 1433 on the 14/06/17 and runs on until 20/06/17. I think the second one was mostly used for the post incident phase of the LAS response.

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Statement of: WOODMORE, SIMON

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