

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: LEYTON, NICK

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

Occupation: LOCAL AUTHORITY LIAISON OFFICER

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: NICK LEYTON

Date: 20/09/2017

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

I am the above named person address known to police, this statement has been provided to the best of my recollection at this time of the fire at Grenfell Tower W11 on the morning of 14 June 2017.

In this statement I will be mentioning David KERRY who was the emergency planning officer for Kensington and Chelsea Borough that morning, David opened up the Borough Emergency Command Centre otherwise known as BECC, Robert BLACK who is from the TMO, I will also be mentioning people and their positions within the emergency services but I cannot recall their names, all of this was logged at the time on the morning of 14 June 2017, not logged by myself personally.

I work for Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council in the capacity of Council Liaison Officer, this position is an on-call position 1 week in four 24/7 hours. I have had this position for the past 15 years but have worked for the council for the past 22 years. I work full time for AMEY which is a contractor through Kensington and Chelsea on the security side of things such as CCTV access control systems customer service and dealing with the more difficult customers we have at the town hall receptions. On the morning of 14 June 2017, I was working for Kensington and Chelsea Borough in the capacity as the on call Liaison officer and was mainly situated with the silver fire command on base level which was a fire truck placed within the ground of Grenfell Tower, we had approx. hourly silver meetings that

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involved Fire staff, Police staff, Paramedics and doctors, my duty that night was to report on what was happening with the survivors, trying to organise rest centres for them, locate the Red cross at these rest centres and generally try to find out names and flat numbers of the survivors for record purposes, this was proved to be more problematic than first expected and generally give as much support as possible from the council.

On the morning of 14 July 2017 at approximately 0210 hours I was at home asleep in bed, I was woken by a phone call from GDIT stands for General Dynamics Information Technology, this is the out of hours call centre, they told me that there was a fire at Grenfell Tower and provided the address and also said that there were potentially four deaths, first thing I did was call David KERRY who is the council's Emergency Planning Officer to escalate the incident as I believed that more assistance would be required as it would be a major incident. I relayed all I knew which was very minimal and hurriedly made my way to Grenfell Tower. I initially drove my personal car from my residence, when I got closer to Grenfell Tower I realised there was no way that I was going to get anywhere near so I parked my car at the first available space I then started walking towards the Tower, I was approaching the Tower from the Southside from the direction of Nottinghill Gate.

As I approached I could see that the fire had taken complete hold of the top the Tower, there were at least 6 - 7 floors completely engulfed in flames, also there were flames from the bottom going to the top, I was completely transfixed, I had no idea the enormity of what I was witnessing, I had never seen anything like this even in my 22 years in the army and 22 years working for the council. I walked towards the Tower until I got to a police cordon and asked them where the command station was and showed them my ID, they directed me in the direction of where I was meant to go which was towards a fire truck at the base of the Tower situated on Bomore Road near Kensington leisure centre while I was making my way to the command centre I could see debris falling, I had no idea what the debris was the fire smelt like a fire to me, I did not notice anything different than what I would have expected, but neither did I know what to expect, the scene was overwhelming I was not prepared for the mass devastation on this scale, as I approached the Command Centre I could see people being escorted out of the Tower, they were being helped by police, as far as I could see at the time these people could walk and I could not see physical injuries, but I could see the trauma in their eyes, the shouting or screaming was not coming from the people coming out but people stood at the side-lines talking on their mobile phones to persons still in the Tower waiting to be told what to do or to be saved, these people were shouting at police or anyone that

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would listen as to where their friends or family members were in the Tower, this I think was approximately 0300-0330 hours. I could see debris falling from the building but it did not register to me what it might be other than burning building material. I did hear police calling over their radio for shields so that they were able to escort people out of the building without debris falling on either of them, like I say the debris was chunks of something some big some small but I have no idea what it was. I also heard police ask for back up over their radios as the crowd had started to get quite rowdy and it looked like they may cross the police line.

Shortly after I arrived at the scene I was asked if the sports centre could be opened up to use as a mortuary, I agreed to this and gave permission for the doors to be forced.

As soon as I got to the command centre I contacted David KERRY and told him that we needed everyone, we needed rest centres open and the Red Cross to facilitate these centres, we were just looking for an immediate fix as to where we should place people in shelter and to be able to feed, water and to keep them warm and inside. Volunteers started coming forward very quickly and I was told by the police that a Publican in Shepherds Bush "Belushios" had volunteered his premises to accommodate survivors from the fire, these premises could hold approximately 100 people and 10 beds were available to utilise, police were going to organise busses to transport the survivors to this premises, I called David KERRY and confirmed that we could use this location even though it was further away than we would have liked, he then stated that he would deploy the Red Cross to give their assistance. It was not until much later that I found out that this premise was never utilised as I assume the enormity of the fire was taking a massive strain on all emergency services and no one could be spared to drive buses to different premises and the distance to the Pub was just not walkable from the Tower for the survivors.

At approximately 0315 hours we had the first silver meeting at the command centre that I attended, as far as I can remember there were 2 x senior police officers 2 x senior paramedics and a doctor 1 x incident commander 4-5 fire service people from senior ranks to operators. This meeting was to find out what each service was providing and what was actually being done, I do not remember the input for each service I do remember a senior fire officer saying that fire officers were not allowed to go above the 12th floor due to there being no access to water beyond this level, this was a major decision for someone to have to make the impact that would have on the survival of some people in the tower would be immense - My personal input was the one rest centre that I have previously mentioned and that the Red Cross had been

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requested for deployment to the centre and we were looking at a capacity of being able to shelter 110 persons at this present time until further rest centres could be opened. This was put forward in the 0600 hours silver meeting not the 0315 hour meeting.

Mike Rumble Council Liaison Officer on site to assist

At approximately 0330 hours I was informed that Harrow Rugby Club could be used as a Rest Centre by Michael PERKINS (premises Manager), this could hold approximately 150 people, there were no bed facilities though but the premises was in easy walking distance therefore emergency services were not needed to drive buses or escort people to the premises, I called David KERRY again and replayed the information so he would again deploy the Red Cross to the centre. What I did not realise and later found out was that there were a number of volunteers opening up places for the survivors to go into and rest and feed, these places were not accounted for so when trying to collate names, flat numbers of the survivors it was an impossible task.

At approx. 03:45 the TMO chief executive (Robert BLACK) arrived at the scene with 2 other TMO officers, I updated him with the little information that I had at this time and requested him to make staff available to assist in manning the rest centres.

At approx. 0400 hours I received a request for a duty building surveyor to attend site urgently, police are willing to provide blue escort if necessary

At 0430 hours attended 'Silver' meeting, as my update was that we had opened a 2nd rest centre and that the Red Cross had been called to give assistance at this location, we were updated on the current situation in terms of the incident and casualties.

Next meeting at 0550 hours

At the 0600 hours 'Silver' meeting I was asked to gather details (Names, flat numbers) of all the survivors that were currently gathered in the rest centres. All the teams gave their updates on their current situations/progress.

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I spoke to Robert Black and requested that he contacted his staff in the rest centres and supply me with the details of the residents in the centres (names, Flats) so that the emergency services could try to establish how many persons were missing.

Next meeting at 0700 hours

We had started to receive information of rest centres that had opened up that were in need of assistance St Clements Church and Latimer Christian Centre both of which were taking residents, I asked Robert BLACK if he had staff that could help, he immediately started to make some calls.

At 0645hours I spoke to Robert BLACK and told him that I had not received any information about residents in the rest centres and that the information was required by 0700 hours.

At 0700 I handed over the duty to Mike RUMBLE, I informed Mike that I had received no information about residents in the rest centres and hand over my notes from the night to him for reference.

During the morning of 14 June 2017 I made notes on the events that were occurring I sent these notes by email PDF file to DC Rachel O'Connor on Friday 14/09/2017, this is a copy of my original notes and I exhibit the copy as NLE/1. I am not able to provide the original as this was a running log and was handed over to the next person coming on duty.

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