

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: COLLINS, STEVEN

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

Occupation: POLICE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 4 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:

Date: 19/06/2017

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

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This statement is made in relation to the incident that occurred at GRENFELL TOWER for WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE 2017 which I attended. CAD 482/14JUN17 was the original CAD. I started work at 2200 hours on TUESDAY 13TH JUNE 2017 in full uniform posted as the driver of a marked police vehicle BS22N in the company of PC BUCK 314BS.

I have not viewed my body worn camera of this incident and recall turning my camera on and off during the incident. I have made this statement as soon as practicable and am aware that the exact times of the incidents and my actions will not be precise due to the severity and scale of the tragedy. Throughout the incident I don't recall how many people I instructed to get back from the fire and who exactly I used force on either. Whether it being gently walking people to the edges of the cordon or physically taking hold and forcibly pushing them away from the danger the fire presented. This was to allow other emergency services to carry out their jobs. This force was always done under common Law as to prevent the loss of life and for their, others and my own safety during such a dangerous incident. I always had the fear that the tower may collapse as the incident developed. On recalling the fires heat and intensity which was extreme with copious amount of debris falling around me at throughout.

I recall the time of the call was around 0100 hours on WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE 2017 stating a fire was being dealt with at GRENFELL TOWER by the LONDON FIRE BRIGADE (LFB). I was at the time in LOTS ROAD SW10 and made my way to the area, being informed via my personal radio that the RVP rendezvous point was set as BOMORE ROAD W11. PC Sangha 119 BS had stated that the incident was CRITICAL, which means that the incident was very serious and needed urgent support. I was aware that

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prior to my arrival that BS1N Inspector THATCHER had stated over the PR that no officers are to enter the tower. I arrived on scene entering the area via LADBROKE GROVER, CLARENDON ROAD and positioning myself on the verge of the pavement next to KENSINGTON LEISURE CENTRE.

I vividly remember noting on travelling NORTH on LADBROKE GROVE a plume of smoke emitting from the area around GRENfell TOWER. On parking up I was met with a sight I will remember for my entire life. I looked up at GRENfell TOWER noting that on the EAST side of the building flames flicking from the fourth floor upwards covering the next three or four floors.

I recall PC 621 BS REES stating he needed help on the EAST side of GRENfell TOWER as the crowd was too large and encroaching on the building. I remember finding PC REES at the base of the tower with a group of around 50-60 people all very distressed. I could hear the screams and shouts coming from the tower which were so clear. I could hear banging from the people hitting the windows behind me. I looked round to see numerous women, children and men banging on the glass windows of the tower. I turned to face the crowd shouting over the noise asking them to move back numerous times. Some responded and moved back to where I wanted them at the junction BRAMLEY ROAD. I vividly remember someone stating, "Why are you not helping them?" This made me angry and also shameful that I could not help those that were suffering a few feet from me. I reiterated my commands for them to move back. I even stated that once I had moved them back I could go and help more. Once the crowd had moved back I recall looking above to BARNDON WALK which runs within metres of the TOWER and noting a lot of residence and members of public all stood looking up at the building. I was scared for their safety and potential debris falling onto them. I left PC REES at the location walking towards the walkway again noting people at the windows of the tower. I felt sick to my stomach and deeply scared for those within the building wishing I could do more. I continued up to BARNDON WALK via the staircase at the entrance of GRENfell TOWER. I saw a continuous stream of Fire Brigade staff entering the building. As I entered the walkway I ushered residence back into their homes or removed those down the footpath away from the building. Again some of the residence were taking heed of my requests while some who were clearly distraught having friends/family that were within continued to attempt to stay or even get to the tower itself.

I briefly recall once the walkway was clear seeing two ladders from the fire brigade that had been extended to the SOUTH and WEST side of the building. I then saw two or three MALES come down the ladder being escorted to the bottom of the ladder by a firefighter. The MALES seemed shocked and disorientated yet still physically able to stand. I escorted them to the exits to get them medical attention

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passing them down a chain of officers at different points as I then ran back to get the next one. I remember looking up to see a MALE push a chain of towels of bedsheets out of a window on the SOUTH side. Numerous people shouted up stating stay inside as the makeshift rope left a twenty to thirty foot drop. The MALE didn't get out onto the rope and I cant recall what he did as I then had another MALE passed from the ladder and directed him out of the area myself.

I found myself at the RVP at which point I was aware that medics were working on casualties by my van and recall that a morgue was requested by I believe BS1N. I vividly remember seeing two individuals being worked on by LAS doing chest compressions which I felt was not something the public should see. I used my van to conceal the medics and casualties as they were being worked on, as the sports centre was next to RVP it was decided that entry would be gained to allow an area to place the casualties and deceased. I had an enforcer on board my vehicle which I used to enter via a side door rather than smashed two large glass windows. The door was forced and an adequate area was located to place the deceased and used a room I recall stated 'MEETING ROOM 1' as the Morgue. I passed this information on via my PR. I was asked to check to reassure a member of public as they were so distressed to see if their family member was among those deceased at the sports centre. I remember seeing the faces and being overwhelmed with grief and a knotted stomach. I noted the description and none matched, returning to tell him that some casualties had already been taken to hospital.

I again found myself at different cordons assisting where I could and directing units that arrived to the required positions around the tower. I vaguely remember seeing large pieces of debris falling from the WEST side of the building as I was making my way around the tower. I can't be sure but recall hearing via my PR state someone had jumped. I am not sure if the debris I saw fall was a person.

As the morning wore on I helped at different locations but recall a MALE who had been stood at the cordon next to the RVP. I believe he gave his name as Amdel an [REDACTED] MALE who appeared very sombre. I do remember him wearing a red T-shirt, I asked if I could help and he stated that his family were on the twenty second floor and was on the phone to his wife but had heard no voice for the past twenty minutes. He stated they had been banging pots and pans but it had stopped all that could be heard was the crackling of the fire in the background. I noted the floor and went and informed LFB command unit. I was told to tell him that if he spoke to them to get out by any means. I returned to the male and as best I could tell him the message but knew I could do nothing to help. I will be haunted by this as he just responded simply, "I've lost my family, their all gone" "Their dead aren't they?".

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I hugged the Male and tried to console him the best I could knowing it would never be enough, I asked if he had anyone else that I could contact for him. He was joined by another man to which I then was required to get an enforcer to BARONDON WALK and evacuate the blocks next to the tower. The task made me focus and not dwell on the shock and loss the man had suffered.

I helped carry enforcers to numerous blocks which were then handed to the designated serials to clear the blocks. I was later asked for a volunteer to sit on TREDGOLD HOUSE as it had been cleared of residence. I was sat at the secure gate until relieved by serials attending. Whilst I waited for further instructions at the RVP, a volunteer I was requested. I felt that I needed to keep occupied and offered to help and was supplied with articles that were taken from FLAT 16 GRENFELL TOWER LANCASTER WEST ESTATE LONDON W11 1TG by London Fire Brigade where it was believed the fire had originated from. These articles were supplied to me by DSI PAUL WARNETT at 0916 hours of WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE 2017. I was instructed to go through a white Carrier bag and note any details of people on the documentation inside. I took the articles to a quiet location in the sports centre and with gloves on I proceeded to examine the contents. The bag contained numerous letters and two Santander Bank cards plus a council card. Also a folder containing numerous other documents [REDACTED]

The following names and details were noted from ALL the correspondents within (some repeated numerous times)

MR BEHAILU KEBEDE-GOLBENA letters within MR B KERBEDE — Payment Card

MRS NEGASH (ALMAZ) — [REDACTED] — Taken from Immigration papers

Noted on the form was the [REDACTED] — These items were dated back to the year 2010  
MRS KINFU — no other relevant details

MRS NEGASH - [REDACTED]

DOB [REDACTED] BORN — [REDACTED] Speaks [REDACTED] also noted that she had documented elsewhere a date of birth as [REDACTED]

Linked paperwork stated she has been seen by [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. It was stated that her current health Visitor is [REDACTED] based at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I sealed all the documents in evidence bag marked MPSE53027792. Once I was relieved from the area I proceeded back to KENSINGTON where a de-brief had been arranged. I booked the items into KENSINGTON POLICE STATION BD

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Form MG11(T)

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66/1251 reference and 105/1947, I exhibit these as SMC/1. I would like to add that the incident was the most saddening and horrific tragedy I have ever felt with in my twelve years service of the police. I will always remember the sights, sounds and emotions from this incident always hoping I did enough.

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2017

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