

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CLARKE, ADAM

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 9 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: A CLARKE

Date: 06/02/2018

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

This statement is about the night I attended a fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington and Chelsea, London on Wednesday 14th June 2017.

I am a serving Fire Fighter with London Fire Brigade (LFB) and I have been a fire fighter for about nineteen and a half years (19.5). My training level is competent and I currently hold the rank of Temporary Crew Manager. I have been a Temporary Crew Manager for about a year now and I am trying to gain some experience in the role. This is the next rank up from Fire Fighter.

I am assigned to Wimbledon fire station and the code for this station is H34. Prior to working here I have been based at Croydon fire station for a year and a half (1.5). After Croydon, I was posted to White Watch in Wandsworth for about nine and a half (9.5) years. For the last eight or nine (8 or 9) years I have been assigned to Red Watch at Wimbledon. On the night of the fire I was on duty with Red Watch and I was posted to fire engine H346 which is a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU).

In this statement I will mention my colleagues on H346. The driver of the FRU engine was Fire fighter (FF) FRIEND. We often only have two on the back due to recent cuts however, this night we had three (3) people. These were FF RICE, FF PEACOCK and FF HAROLD.

An FRU is a Fire Rescue Unit. There are sixteen (16) of these in London and each one has a slightly different qualification. Our speciality is Line Rescue.

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At Wimbledon we also have a pump ladder. In the fire brigade we have a pump and a pump ladder. A pump would usually go to smaller fires like bin fires as essentially this appliance usually carries water to pump it. The pump ladder is a fire engine that carries a slightly longer ladder and they would usually all be BA wearers. On the pump ladder that night was Watch Manager (WM) MACKAY, FF STUART, FF ALLISTON and I can't remember the other two fire fighters that were assigned to this appliance that night.

We also have an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) based in Wimbledon and this was also operational that night.

Assigned to the ALP that night was CM EVANS and FF MEDINA.

At Wimbledon we only have one appliance; the pump ladder along with the FRU and the ALP.

I will also mention Grenfell Tower which is located in North Kensington which is not close to our station and not normally covered by Wimbledon. I have exhibited a map Grenfell Tower and the surrounding area of it. I have exhibited this as ALC/2 and I will refer to this exhibit throughout my statement.

On Tuesday 13th June 2017 I started work at about eight o'clock in the evening (8pm). It was a fairly normal night where we had a roll call and then completed our checks. This is where we do tests on the machines and then we move on to our breathing apparatus (BA) sets.

The driver will have a set list of checks that he has to do on the engine to make sure that it is ok and working. For example checking that all of the lights are working correctly.

All fire fighters then complete an A test on our BA sets. We wear our BA sets to enable us to go in to smoky environments. There are two (2) kinds: Standard Duration BA (SDBA) and Extended Duration BA (EDBA). My crew are EDBA wearers. This is a heavier set as you are carrying two (2) cylinders compared with SDBA who carry one (1). This means that we are able to stay in smokier environments for approximately forty five (45) minutes which is about twice the time of SDBA.

The A test checks that the BA set is working correctly. We check that the cylinder has a minimum of 270 bar which is the amount of air within the cylinders. However, if it is low, for example 273 bar, you would probably change the cylinder as the pressure is likely to drop before an incident. The maximum amount of air it contains is 320 bar. The pressure can vary as it is affected by things like the weather.

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I cannot remember what pressure my set had that night but I would have recorded it in the BA log book.

We check that the radiation meters are working correctly and the crew will complete an inventory check to ensure that all equipment is there and if it isn't, we check the items on board to check where it can be found. As Crew Manager (CM) I will then attend the office to ensure that figures have been confirmed, check petty cash and then update the board on the wall for the next shift.

Once these were complete, I had a cup of tea and a break. I can't remember precisely what else we did that evening but I remember going to bed as we usually would.

At about 0220 hours in the morning of the 14th June 2017, a call came through to the station. The bells sounded which is the system that alerts all people in the fire station that there is a call. This will turn all of the lights on in the station along with an alert for us to stop what we are doing and go.

As CM I went straight to the engine whilst the driver went to the watch room to get the call slip which had the details of the call and where we were going.

I rigged in to my PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) which is my tunic, fire boots, fire leggings and my helmet. I didn't have my smoke hood and gloves on at this point.

Once I was on the machine, I acknowledged the call on the mobile data terminal (MDT) and changed our radio channel to number two (2). When FF FRIEND got on the engine he handed me a paper copy of the call. I looked at the call and it said that it was a forty (40) pump fire which means forty (40) engines and their crews were required. I have never heard of a forty (40) pump fire before as this was unprecedented. I can't remember what else the call slip said precisely.

Once everyone was present, we exited the station.

I asked the crews on the back to look for the location in the street atlas as the call was not local to us and we needed to know where to go. I remember that it took quite a while to find the relevant page as the call was far off of our grid. In the end it was quicker to put the location of the call in to the maps on my phone and allow this to direct us to the call on the quickest route.

I think that the route took us through Putney High Street then Fulham Palace Road, past Hammersmith fire station and then right in to Shepherd's Bush. We went over a roundabout and I think we went on Holland Park or Ladbroke Grove but I can't be sure as I don't really know the area. If you looked left you

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could see the tower but I don't remember looking at it but I heard the boys on the back saying "fucking hell, this is unbelievable".

Eventually we pulled up and parked in Dulford Street which was the closest place that we could get to park as the road in front was blocked by other fire engines. We parked here as other machines were there and I didn't think we would be able to get any closer to the tower. We could have looked for another place but this would have just wasted time. I am not sure what time we arrived on scene.

I think that we were parked behind another FRU but I can't remember where this was from.

This was the first time that I saw the tower and I remember thinking that it was just a towering inferno.

I remember saying to the boys that this was really serious and we need to make sure that we are all switched on and focussed. The last thing that you want to happen is to lose anyone.

Usually when we attend an incident we have time to go the Command Unit (CU), check in with them, pass our Nominal Roll board to them and find out what we are required to do before we put on our BA sets.

The Nominal Roll Board is a metal board that has the date on it along with the names and ranks of people assigned to an engine/crew. This is a physical record that can be handed to the CU so they know who they have available to deploy. Also if there is an emergency evacuation, they can account for who was on scene. It was my role as CM to ensure that this was handed in to the CU.

The role of the CU is to command an incident. They receive any information that comes in. They have all of the Nominal Roll Boards so that they can deploy crews. Decisions are made at the CU as well and they can monitor how a job is unfolding. They basically keep control of personnel and the tasks that need to be carried out. They also hold maps and safety information for the area. Their job is very hard and they have to make tough decisions on what fire fighters have to do.

I don't know if any others were in use.

I thought that we would be put in a holding area and that we would have time to go back to the engine and grab our sets so I didn't take mine with me but the rest of the crew did.

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I have marked on ALC/2 where we parked our engine in Dulford Street. I have then marked arrows along the route that we took to get to the tower. We went through a little estate through to Lower Clarendon Walk and then went on to Silchester Road before we came out by a college or leisure centre. We were then confronted by the East side of the tower.

I think it took about five (5) minutes to get to the tower from our engine. I didn't want my crew running with their sets on and getting tired so we got to the tower with a fast walk.

There was an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) in front of us that was pumping though it didn't look like the water was at full capacity. I have marked where this was as ALP on ALC/2. That ALP did a cracking job protecting an area of the eleventh (11th) floor where there was a man waving from a window. This enabled fire fighters to later rescue this man.

It seemed that the tower was burning down except for the area where the ALP was putting water. I think that the ALP was struggling to get pressure. They had one (1) pump supplying it with water. The ALP had a hose reel tied to the cage with a ceiling hook securing it on and using it as a water tower.

Close to the ALP was a safety officer who I think was a Watch Manager rank. I think that part of his role would be to watch the spread of the fire and whether the fire is out of control and keep all parties updated. The South side of the tower was alight and there was loads of debris falling from it. The debris looked like sheets of material falling down from the tower. I think that these sheets are what we now know as the cladding of the building. There were also windows falling out as well. The amount of debris was enough to make it hard to get safely to the tower.

I believe that the dry riser was charged when I arrived. As I passed the South side there was a fire fighter that was putting water on to the dry riser feed and protecting the inlet from falling debris. I have marked DR on ALC/2 where I believe the dry riser was situated.

The dry riser is supplied by one (1) pumping appliance. This pump is charged to ten (10) bar and used specifically for the dry riser which feeds water up the tower through a rising main. There is an outlet on each floor that connects to the rising main which you can then plug in to and control that outlet from that floor. I did not have anything to do with the rising main on the night of this incident as this was already in place.

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As we got nearer, I saw Watch Manager (WM) BROWN whom I know through my various postings and I think that he is based at Battersea fire station. He said to us that he needed us to get drinking water for the crews coming out. My guys were already in BA and I didn't want them looking around for bottles of water. Another person, whose name or rank I don't know, said that they need BA crews and took the rest of my crew with him, leaving me alone. That was the last time that I saw my crew for a while. They all made their way to the tower.

I would describe the whole scene as carnage. There was fire fighting equipment everywhere, BA cylinders on the floor and under cars, Thermal Imaging Cameras left on grass banks. It was unbelievable.

I then took my Nominal Roll Board to the CU. Someone told me that the CU was located on Bomore Road by a cycle hire station: I have marked this on ALC/2 as CU. I made my way down Grenfell Road to the CU and handed in the Roll Board and I told them that my crew had already been deployed. It took between two and three (2-3) minutes to get to the CU.

The CU was really busy. I am not sure who I spoke to in there as there was so much going on. I was not given any instructions from them.

I then made my way from the CU, back along Grenfell Road to the South East corner of the tower. I remember that there was a BA holding area close to the leisure centre. I have marked where this was as BA on ALC/2. This area was where BA crews would assemble and wait to be deployed in to the tower.

I then came back to the sector where WM BROWN was who told me to stay with him so that I could complete any jobs that may be required. He asked me again to source some water so I made my way back to try and find some. At this point, members of the public (MOP) were asking if they could help in any way and I said that if they wanted to help us, could they please grab any bottles of water available and bring them to the fire fighters. What water I could find, I took back to where WM BROWN was.

The route in to the tower was dangerous due to the falling debris and I remember saying to WM Brown that we need to get another route in. He asked me to go to the CU and ask if they have anything on their maps to give a different route in to the tower. I did this and spoke to someone in the CU but they couldn't offer a better route than the one we were using. I returned to WM BROWN and updated him.

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I then helped take crews from the BA area, across the uncovered area of the South side to the tower. We were using whatever we could find to help get the crews in to the tower. I remember using a table or old sheets to protect the crews as they made their way in to the tower. We would hold these above our head and escort two (2) fire fighters wearing BA in to the tower. One would be in front of me and the other behind. This would stop the debris falling on our heads.

I have marked Shields on ALC/2 to show where I escort the fire fighters from. There was a door on the West side of the Tower, close to where the S is on the word "Surgery" . This is where I escorted the fire fighters to.

I am not certain of the exact sequence of events. I am not sure how many times I made these runs or how many crews I helped as my memory of these moments is a bit blurry. I am not sure how long I was doing this role or what time I started or finished it.

Eventually we commandeered some riot shields from the police which we used instead of tables but I am not sure at what point we did this.

At one (1) point, WM BROWN asked me for another six (6) BA wearers and I remember helping them get across to the tower. I can't remember where the crew were from.

I have marked FSG on ALC/2. This was an area under a walkway opposite the South side of the tower. There was between two to four (2 - 4) fire fighters there and maybe a CM as well. They all had notes and pads on the floor that they were writing on them. I wasn't sure what their role was. One of them called me over and said "we need to get these to the bridgehead as soon as possible" and I realised they were notes for fire survival guidance (FSG).

In this scenario, FSG is where someone is trapped on a floor and they are in communication with our control room. Control then liaises that information to the fire ground crew so that crews can be directed to certain floors where there are survivors trapped. Control will stay on the phone to the survivors for as long as it takes. I think that there were fifty five (55) FSG calls to control that night. I don't know if this number is correct, but I know there was a lot of FSG calls that night.

The FSG fire fighters asked me to take two (2) paper slips to the Bridgehead with the FSG information. I didn't look at the slips but I was told that one slip was for a family of five (5) who were trapped on the

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twenty something floors. Three (3) of them were children and a woman was pregnant. The other related to a couple with a child trapped on a certain floor but I can't remember the exact details. The first one stuck in my mind because the woman was pregnant.

I am not sure why these messages were taken by paper and not communicated over the radio. This is something that is decided by people of higher rank than me and is procedural rather than a break down in radio comms.

I had to take these messages across an area that was uncovered and debris was constantly falling from above. There was a WM that was looking out, checking when it was clear to run through to the tower.

I entered through the door, in to the lobby and there were BA crews everywhere waiting to be deployed. The lobby area was a bit smoky but I made way around the foyer. At this point the bridgehead was in the lobby and people were writing on the wall. I handed the FSG slips over to someone who seemed in charge but I don't know their name or rank. I did reiterate the importance of them to the person I handed them to.

As I turned around to leave, I was handed a female casualty who was foaming at the mouth. She was quite a large female but I am not sure how much she would have weighed, I'm not sure how old she was but probably between twelve and fifteen (12 and 15) years old. I think that she was wearing a woollen jumper that may have been burgundy. I don't know what she was wearing from her waist down as I focussed on carrying her top half. She had an oriental appearance. She did not speak as she was lifeless. Her head was rolled back and the foam was coming from the sides of her mouth.

I don't know who handed the girl to me or how she was handed to me. As I turned around she was there, facing me and I just remember thinking "she has got to get out of here" so I just picked her up in a sort of bear hug, wrapping my arms around her. As I picked her up I noticed that she had a child behind her, a small boy. Another fire fighter that was there said "have you got anymore family in there?". The boy calmly replied "My brother is in there but he's dead". The thought of that boy and how he spoke has stayed with me and still upsets me now.

I knew I just had to get the girl out so I picked the lady or girl up and took her out of the tower. She was still foaming at the mouth so I wanted to get her out as quick as I could. We went out past the park

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towards an area where LAS (London Ambulance Service) had set up to accept casualties. This area was to the West of the tower and I have marked this as LAS, close to the WEST label on the map.a

Just before I got to the LAS area, close to the W of the word WEST on the map, another fire fighter was there and he took the casualty from me. I don't know who the fire fighter was and I don't know what happened to the girl after that.

The area around the base of the tower was quite smoky and acrid. There weren't visible plumes of smoke but it was still smoky but different to a normal smoky smell. It really stuck in the back of your throat. I had not been wearing BA at this point and I remember that I had taken on a bit of smoke by inhaling it and I was coughing up quite a bit. Someone asked me if I was ok and I said that "I was fine".

I did not see the boy who had spoken in the lobby and only heard his voice. I think that the boy was probably this girl's sister but I don't know for certain. I didn't see the parents of the boy and girl. I don't know if the boy came out behind me as I just got the girl and went. I would like to think someone else grabbed him as there were a lot of fire fighters about in the foyer. He may have been taken to the other ambulance point by the leisure centre.

I returned to the area I was in previously with WM BROWN.

Once I had returned, I was called up by CM EVANS who was in charge of our ALP. He had one of my FRU crew with him, FF HAROLD that had already worn BA and been in the tower. FF HAROLD was trying to find me and the rest of the crew.

Around the same time, WM BROWN asked me if I wanted to wear a set and go in to the tower. I answered that I did.

I made my way over to FF HAROLD. I spoke about what his brief was and what he had had to do in the tower and talking generally about what was going on. I said "if you can do an A test, I'll get my kit and go in with you". He was happy to do this so I went to get my BA set from the engine.

I went back to the appliance using the same route that I had taken earlier to get to the tower. Once there I got my set and put this on.

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As I was walking back I was approached by a black fella with dreadlocks. He asked me if I could get to the fifteenth (15th) floor because his Dad was trapped there with two (2) dogs. I said that I'd do my best. I went back to FF HAROLD who I think had been joined by FF RICE. They were in the BA area on the East side of the tower, by the leisure centre. They had already been in to the tower and worn BA together.

We then made our way under the walkway towards the West side of the tower. There was a BA holding area close to the word West on ALC/2. By this time there was a lot of riot police there who were ferrying fire fighters in and out of the tower with their riot shields. Similar to how I was doing this earlier with a table, only with a long shield. There was a children's park close to this area as well.

I was in the BA holding area with FF HAROLD and FF RICE.

I don't know how long we were in the BA holding area but our pump ladder crew has turned up which is call sign H341 . They were all wearing EDBA sets. They came and joined us so we ended up as a watch all together. I was talking to FF Friend who had already been in to the tower wearing his BA set. He said that they had found a lady who they believed to be over thirty (30) stone. He had been in a crew of three or four (3 or 4) and they were struggling to lift her.

In the BA area there were probably about thirty (30) BA wearers. This was a mixture of SDBA and EDBA wearers.

I remember thinking how worried everyone looked. I felt worried too. The scale of this fire and the amount of fire fighters there just made me wonder how we were going to get through the night without losing anyone. I was really concerned and I think this was weighing on everyone's mind as well.

I am not sure how long we had been in this area but I remember sending a text to my wife and it was about half five, six in the morning (0530 - 0600 hours) so we had been at the incident for about three (3) hours. The sun was up at this point.

In the time I had been there the fire had spread all the way down the sides of the building and spread around the corners. I had not been around to the North side of the tower so I don't know what the fire was like on this side.

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Eventually we were called to make our way in to the tower holding area. On the corner, by the park I think there was a CM calling how many BA wearers he needed. He called for ten (10) EDBA wearers so ten (10) of us made our way over to him.

As we walked to the edge of the walkway (where I have written shields on ALC/2) there were approximately ten to fifteen (10 - 15) police officers in riot gear holding their riot shields. We then queued to wait for them to ferry us under their shields, two (2) fire fighters at a time. As we went across there was debris falling all around us though I don't remember our shield being hit with anything.

We entered the tower through the door on the West side. As I walked inside I remember seeing hose everywhere and there was about ten (10) inches of water on the floor and my boots were getting wet. The bridgehead and entry control point had been moved to the base of the stairs. We were ferried around in to this room and queued to go up the tower.

I don't know how long I had been outside in the BA holding area but I had been wearing my BA set the whole time - a twenty two kilogram (22KG) set on my back only to then go in to the tower and have to wait another twenty to thirty (20 - 30) minutes to be called through.

In the lobby were loads of other BA crews. Some I knew, some I didn't. They were all waiting to go up the tower as well. I remember seeing the look on everyone's faces in this area. There was real worry about what we were going to come up against in the fire.

A Borough Commander called Pat came in and gave us general brief about the fire and saying that we are going to have to push above and beyond.

At this point there was no water as I believe they had lost the dry riser due to debris falling on it outside. Once they got the water back on there was someone trapped on the eleventh (11th) floor and they wanted to flood the area with personnel to rescue this person.

The nearest person to me was FF ALLISTON from the pump ladder so we paired up and waited to go in together. We were at the front of our crew from Wimbledon but at the tail end of another group of EDBA wearers. I don't know who the other EDBA wearers were but we got tagged in with them to form a crew of four (4). The two (2) other guys we were paired with were from Paddington though I'm not sure of their names.

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The ECO was at the bottom of the stairs. The Entry Control Board creates a contact between a BA set and the Entry Control Point (ECP). The board can help to monitor a set to see what the air consumption is, how much air we are using, how quickly we are using it and how much air we have left in our cylinder. This gives them an idea of how much longer we should be in there for. The set links to the board through telemetry. It does not monitor your exact location through GPS but they will know how much air we have left as long as there is a connection between the two.

The Entry Control Officer (ECO) is in charge of that board and he will manually enter the time you go in, past the ECP. They will also monitor everything else that is going on with the board.

As the ECO records your details, you hand him a tally from your BA set. This tally is connected to a key on the Automatic Distress Unit (ADSU). The key comes out and goes in to a slot on the ECB. This is what creates the connection between the ECB and your set. The ECO will then check your air pressure and you give them your name and how much air you have got.

The Automatic Distress Signal Unit (ADSU) is a safety device that communicates with the ECB and monitors your motion. So if you are still and stop moving, the ADSU sounds an alarm and also informs the ECO that you are in trouble. If you haven't moved for a certain amount of time, the ADSU will sound a pre-alarm. This is to prompt you to move or shake it so that it knows you are conscious and ok. If you still don't move, the ECO is notified.

The ADSU also has a button that you can press to let the ECO know that you are making your way out but you are not in any trouble.

I am not sure how long we had been in the lobby but eventually the water was back on and we were called forward. We received our briefing from the Borough Commander called Pat.

Initially our brief from him was to get to the fourteenth (14th) floor without water and complete search and rescue there. If we could find a branch there then use that.

We were using forty five millimetre (45mm) jets with the Rose and Bower branches. The branch is put on the end of a hose and allows us to aim the jet of water that comes from the hose. The branch also allows us to select the angle of the jet and the amount of litres of water that you are using.

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I questioned the brief Pat gave as policy states that we don't ever go in to a burning building without extinguishing media. Part of the brief said that there were fires on the sixth (6th), seventh (7th) and eighth (8th) floors and we are going to have to make our way to the fourteenth (14th). If anything is breached behind us and the fire spreads, we potentially are stuck without any hoses or equipment or any way of getting out and to safety.

The Borough Commander's reply was "if you're not up for it then we'll find someone else". I said "there is no need to be like that. I am happy to go in but I am concerned about my crew's safety and my own safety". I questioned this brief because although we wanted to rescue people I wanted to be able to go home safely at the end of my shift and see my family. I appreciated that there may be people trapped up there but we were going high above the fire and may be in danger as well.

The policy states that we are not allowed to enter a building that is on fire without fire fighting extinguishing media. If it is a high rise fire we have a procedure to follow. We set up a bridgehead, we put covering jets on the outside of the building.

I could appreciate that this fire was unprecedented and I understand why he said that we have to push it but my job was also to protect my crew.

The interaction with Pat didn't leave a great taste in my mouth but I was still able to switch on as we had a job to do.

Pat came back and he changed the brief. We would go up as a crew of eight (8). The first four (4) would be fire fighting whilst the group of four (4) that I was in would be completing search and rescue. We would all go to the eleventh (11th) floor as we were told that there was definitely a hose there.

Once we had received our brief, we made our way over to the ECP to give our tally to the ECO. I did not have any other kit with me except for the BA set I was wearing.

As we made our way up the stairs, I remember that it was still quite clear at this point. I think that there were fire fighters on every floor without breathing apparatus though I don't know what their role was or why they were there.

As a group we carried on up the stairs at a steady pace. There was hose running everywhere. We weren't running up as it was quite a climb. There was water cascading down on us from above and it was like we

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were in a waterfall. I presume the water was coming from a burst branch higher up that had become compromised in the fire but I don't know that for definite.

The staircase was unbelievably narrow, so narrow that you almost had to walk in single file to get up them. There were no markings on any of the floors so we didn't have a clue which floor we were on. The walls were very sooty and black.

The visibility was fairly clear and not as smoky as I thought it would be. I can't remember whether there were any lights on the staircase or not but it didn't seem like I was in a dark room.

We made it up to a certain floor where there was an exceptionally large lady who was between twenty five and thirty (25 - 30) stone that was obviously dead on the landing.

As you looked up the staircase, I think that her legs were coming down and her head was up at the back but it was difficult to properly make it out. I couldn't see what race or colour her skin was and I can't remember what she was wearing.

I remembered what FF FRIEND had said about the large lady but I don't know if they had moved her there or how she came to be there on the landing.

I believed that this lady was dead because she was lifeless and also using the previous information I had about this large lady who had died on the stairs.

It was very difficult to pass this lady and you had to climb over her. I think I trod on her but tried not to but I had no choice because there was no space.

The crew of four that were in front had to climb over her in order to go up the next part of the stairs. They continued to make their way up to the next floor which they believed was the eleventh (11th). However, one of the guys in my crew from Paddington, who I think was called Martin, was confident that floor eleven (11) was the one with the large dead lady on it.

We explained this to the crew in front and said that we need to stick to our brief and go to the floor with the dead lady.

Because of how small the area was, it was very difficult to open the lobby door to the floor and go inside because the dead lady was blocking the way.

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The water was still pouring on us from above. Due to the amount of hoses that were laying around it was initially difficult to find the branch for the team to fight the fire. Eventually the crew in front found a branch and they tried to get in to the compartment and fight the fire. They said that it was so hot they couldn't get through the door.

They then found another branch which the other crew used so there were two (2) jets going through the door. They couldn't physically get through the door themselves because the heat was unbelievable. I did not take part in the fire fighting as I was stood in line, back from them. I could see what they were doing and could hear what they were saying.

All of the time that this was happening we were still getting soaked with water as it was still pouring from above. The crew using the jets began questioning their own safety because they were also soaked. If your clothing is wet when you enter a fire, you will heat up quicker. I would describe this as you being a boil in a bag. The heat will create steam in your uniform as the water in it heats and then scold you.

Around this point my BA set went in to pre-alarm. This is a warning about the amount of air that you have used and informs you that you should think about turning back to the ECP. I think someone else's pre-alarm also sounded as well.

There was now a bit of a bottleneck on the stairs. There were us eight (8) that were originally committed and I think there was another four (4) now behind us. Because of the pre-alarms sounding and the bottleneck, I didn't realise that the pre-alarm on my ADSU had also sounded. I had been stood still for a period of time so I wasn't in danger but as I didn't acknowledge the pre-alarm, it then activated and sounded. I tried to communicate with the bridgehead to let them know that I was ok and ask whether they wanted me to return to them. My radio wouldn't work as I didn't have a signal.

I asked the four (4) fire fighters who were behind us to see if they could communicate with the bridgehead but they couldn't either. In the end, they sent a runner down the floors to communicate with the bridgehead and ask whether I needed to come out. The runner was FF PEACOCK who returned and advised me that I needed to return to the bridgehead.

I then made my way down the stairs on my own and left the other crews in there.

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Once I returned to the bridgehead, I reported to the ECB and I was confronted by Pat and another Borough Commander though who I am not sure who that was. I gave them a de-brief of what we had done on the floors and how difficult it was on that landing with the dead body. They said that they were aware of where the body was and they then asked me to make my way outside.

I was handed my tally which I put back in my set. I then closed my set down which means closing the cylinder off. If you do not do this, the set maintains a connection to the ECB which means that the ECO has to disconnect you manually which creates more work for the ECO. I then made my way outside.

I made my way out of the building and sat outside on a green area with other crews that were congregating close to the leisure centre. By now it was daylight.

I took my set off and I was absolutely soaked because of the water that had been cascading down on me. I took my tunic off to let that dry out.

I looked around and within seconds my set had gone; someone else had taken it.

I waited for the rest of the Wimbledon crew to come out from the tower. They weren't far behind me so we discussed what had happened.

All of the FRU crew were there and some of the pump ladder crew were there as well. They told me that they had rescued a Chinese guy who had been waving from the window on the eleventh (11th) floor. They explained that they had gone to the floor above where we found the dead lady to rescue this male. We then realised that what we thought had been the eleventh (11th) floor was actually the tenth (10th) floor. It was nice to hear that they had been able to rescue someone and it felt like a nice ending to something that had been horrible. I can't remember who the other crews were that were congregating but I think that one of them was from Wandsworth.

Most of my crew had now had two (2) BA wears inside the tower though I had only had one (1). I could see that relief was trying to be arranged for crews so that they could leave. I asked if my crew were happy to go, which they were.

I then liaised with the person in charge of relieving crews. I gave our callsign, how long we had been there and how many BA wears we had had. I was told that we wouldn't have to wait long so stand down. We then waited on the green until we received the final "ok" that we could leave.

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They told my crew that we could go around half nine (0930 hours), so we made our way back to our engine. At this point, the fire on the East tower was still fairly similar compared to when we had arrived. I think this was due to the fact that water had been put on to the area around the eleventh (11th) floor. Without that water, I still don't think that the rescue of the Chinese man would have been able to take place.

The South side was alight on all floors and I can't remember where the fire stopped. I think that there was a jet set up on the walkway above the car park on the South side.

I couldn't see the North or West side from where I was now stood.

I made my way to the CU to collect our Nominal Roll Board and walked along Grenfell Road. Once I had finished in the CU I realised that we could get back to our engine by walking along Bomore Road. The black fella that I had seen earlier came up to me and asked if we had managed to get to the fifteenth (15th) floor. I was honest and said that I hadn't made it that high up which made him very upset but he had people with him that could comfort him and he then went off, I'm not sure where to.

As we walked to our machine a lady collapsed right in front of us. We all did first aid and got a paramedic to help. We left the paramedics with her and went on to our machine.

It then took another three (3) hours to get our machine out as we were blocked in by other engines. By the time we eventually left the scene it was nearly twelve o'clock (1200 hours). The fire was still alight when I left.

We took the engine away without any BA sets, thermal imaging cameras or any kit. This was because they had all been taken by other crews to be used in the tower. I don't know where the kit all ended up. As we were trying to leave I remember it being quite emotional. Normal people were just trying to hand us drink and food. There was a lot of traffic as well as so many people were trying to get to the area. We eventually made our way to Paddington fire station though I can't remember the route we took. When we arrived, there were already quite a few machines there though I can't remember where they were from. We went to Paddington to write some statements about what we had done in the tower.

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Once at Paddington, we gave our names, pay numbers and call signs which were all listed. We then had to queue. Eventually they called us up as a crew to write our statements. I did write some things down but kept it really brief as I was really upset and didn't want to write about it.

Once we had all finished, we were all offered counselling. I refused this at the time. All I wanted to do was go home, get away from it all and see my family. A couple of the lads on my machine felt that they needed to talk which wasn't a problem but I didn't feel I needed the counselling.

Once everyone had finished we made our way back to Wimbledon fire station.

I have handed a copy of the notes that I made to DC Foley and I exhibit them as ALC/1.

By the time we got back to Wimbledon fire station it was about half three, quarter to four in the afternoon (1530 - 1545 hours).

I gave Blue Watch a brief about the incident and that we had returned without any BA equipment, thermal imaging camera etc.

I didn't want to talk about it in detail and wanted to just go. I then went home and managed to see my kids for an hour. I then had to leave home at seven o'clock (1900 hours) to work the next night shift.

Although I was wearing EDBA on the night, I think that I would have been better off wearing an SDBA set. This is because the EDBA weighs a lot more because of the extra cylinder. This means that you are working harder and using air faster than if you were wearing SDBA. I had to wait around for a long time wearing my kit, for more than an hour which would have an impact on how tired I was when I eventually went in to the tower. I think that I was only in the tower for between fifteen and twenty five (15 - 25) minutes.

I thought that I had processed what happened that night. Providing this statement has shown me that I haven't processed it and I am still very upset about what happened.

Everything happened so quickly that night. There was no opportunity to stand back and think because there was so much going on. I remember that in the back of my mind I was worried that the tower might fall down. When I think of pictures of 9/11, I liken that to the lobby that night. I think every fire fighter had that on their mind.

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I don't think that I could change anything from that night. Some had more difficult roles than I did but everyone played their part. It was tough.

Prior to this incident I had not been to Grenfell Tower and I have not been on any familiarisation visit to this tower or one similar in that area. The LFB call these visits section 7(2)D. I was not aware of any pre-prepared fire fighting plan for Grenfell.

I have not previously worked on a fire safety department.

I don't remember being told any details about how the fire had spread or that it had spread to the outside of the tower prior to arriving at the tower.

Whilst I was on the scene, I did not hear any fire alarms and I did not see any sprinklers.

Access to the tower was difficult because we were hindered by all of the debris that was coming down.

The only staircase in the tower was tiny for such a big tower block which definitely caused problems. Not only for fire fighting but for people who needed to escape. It was very small and made the job very difficult.

I have any specific dates for when I have completed training but I receive training via lectures, refresher training and drills in the yard. We do not have any real fire training in high rise. In our refreshers we usually train in basements or train in compartment fire fighting.

I have previously fought a high rise fire. When I was based in Wandsworth, we used to get quite a few high rise jobs in Battersea. Generally the building would keep it contained to a compartment fire.

The system was the same and we would have a bridgehead still, connect our hoses then connect to the dry riser and you then deal with the incident.

All of the high rise fires that I've been to have been compartmentalised and not spread out of the flat. None of the fires that I have been to have spread outside of the flat or to the outside of the building.

I was not aware of any plan for if compartmentalisation failed at a high rise fire.

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Usually the stay put policy applies which is where anyone else in the building that is not affected by the fire is to stay put unless we, the LFB decide to evacuate. I do not know who was making decisions around the stay put policy or where these decisions were recorded on the night of this fire.

As far as I am aware the only means of escape from the tower is the one stair case.

The radio comms weren't great but this is an ongoing issue. The problem with the comms that night are the same as any other day.

Other than smoke inhalation I did not receive any injuries that night. I did not receive any treatment from the LAS and I have not sought treatment from my GP or any other medical team about this. I didn't see any of my colleagues get injured either.

I am not sure that we could have done anything differently to stop the fire from spreading up the side of the building.

I believe that the only way you could have stopped that fire is if you had internal sprinklers and external drenchers to put out the fire. Even if we had the tallest ALP, getting it set-up and close enough to the building to use would be difficult. The other option is to make sure that when installing cladding or whatever material is responsible for the fire spread, it is done properly. There needs to be a tighter control on where these materials are sourced from and how they are applied to buildings.

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