

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CRINION, ADAM

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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.

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Date: 20/10/2017

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

This statement is my account of what took place on Wednesday 14th June 2017, the night of the Grenfell Tower fire.

I am employed by the London Fire Brigade as a Senior Operations Manager. I have been in this role since May 2017. Prior to joining the London Fire Brigade I was working for the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMB) within the control room.

Both I and Joanne SMITH are the Senior Operations Managers (SOM). As a SOM my role is to specifically deal with HR/attendance/sickness and other line management related matters. Joanne deals with incident management as she has many years of experience within the LFB. There was no set allocated roles, it has just panned out that way. I work Monday to Friday during office hours. I am also on call outside of office hours if there is a big incident. The on call rota is between myself, Joanne SMITH and our Principle Operations Manager Scott HAYWARD. Normally, Senior Managers are updated by Pager on any fires that are 8+ pumps, fatal fires or incidents that pose serious risk to public interest.

My training in the LFB has been limited. I just did a normal induction course which included a couple of days in the control room and familiarisation visits. I also had basic training on our VISION system, which is what the LFB uses when taking calls. I will say that my previous experience within SECAMB has helped my understanding of call taken and despatch even with the services using different systems. I started working for the LAS in 2004 as a call taker with the control room. I did this role for 4-5 years. I

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then became a Supervisor and had three areas to manage within our control room gaining experience in managing incidents. I later moved to the South East Coast Ambulance Service where I was a Control Room Operations Manager. I joined the LFB and came directly into the role of Senior Operations manager. You can directly join the LFB in this role, whereas if you were an Operations Manager you would need to go through the ranks prior. Since joining this year, I had shadowed Joanne SMITH for months to gain experience in how to deal with big incidents.

I will now describe the Control Room setup. Our Control Centre is based in Merton, South West London. The SOM's are also based there but do not sit within the control room itself. There is a fall back Centre in Stratford, East London which we occasionally need to use due to IT upgrades at our centre in Merton. In our control room we run a minimum of 11 staff accommodating sickness and leave into those numbers. There is 1x Operations Manager (OM) who is in charge of the control room and manages operations, 2x Assistant Operations Manager (AOM) who assist the OM, and 8x Control Room Officers (CRO) who are the call takers and despatchers. The staff work on a six day rota. Three working days/nights followed by three days off.

There is a set procedure for when calls come in to the control room. A call is initially answered by the BT switchboard. The caller will be asked if he/she wants to fire/ambulance/police, and will be put through to the relevant service. On being put through to the Fire Service, one of our Control Room Officers (CRO) answers the phone and asks set questions. This includes the address and type of incident. Calls are normally short and quick. The CRO then mobilises our appliances. For a more major fire where it becomes 8+ pump response, the SOM's are paged for information purposes. If I get paged I would normally ring our Control Room to find out what is happening and get basic details. It is merely a brief discussion based on the last report from the scene, whether there are persons trapped or any Fire Survival Guidance calls. I would be available on the end of the phone and monitor the radio channel as to what is happening. As a SOM, I would wait for the next radio message which would either be a 'stop' message to say that no further resources are required. Or alternatively there would be a further 'make up' of appliances. If a fire becomes a 13+ pump response, the on duty Senior Manager will come into work to the Control Room. The on-call rota is between myself, Joanne SMITH and Scott HAYWARD. We rotate every few days.

I will now talk about Fire Survival Guidance calls (FSG). This is not my job and is something that the Control Room Officers know best, but I can broadly describe what it entails. Fire Survival Guidance is

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given when somebody cannot escape from a fire. The CR0 would give the caller advice to stay in the flat, shut doors and block any smoke. The policy relating to FSG states that Fire Survival Guidance can be changed from the scene of a fire and subsequently relayed to control to pass on to callers.

In the London Fire Brigade (LFB), we have a buddy system with North West Fire Control if there is any overflow of calls. Before overflow calls are answered by another brigade, our control room would recall any staff on breaks using an alarm/tannoy in the building. If the overflow of calls continue, then they will be answered by the North West Control. The North West Control will then ring our control room on our critical phone, which is kept open for emergencies, passing on information as appropriate.

Prior to the night of Wednesday 14th June 2017, I did not have any pre knowledge of Grenfell Tower. My only other knowledge on high rises fires is from the Lakanal fire in 2009 when I was working for the London Ambulance Service.

I will now talk about the night of Tuesday 13th June 2017, going into Wednesday 14th June. That night Joanne SMITH was on-call. I was at home during the evening. At around 1.30am I got paged informing me there was a 25 pump fire. I called the Control Room, who were based at our fall back centre in Stratford that night. I spoke on the phone to one of the Assistant Operations Managers Peter MAY. He told me there was a 25 pump fire, and they had no further information. Peter said they were really busy, so I told him I was on my way in.

I drove to Stratford from my home. I was listening to our Fire Brigade radio and heard that this fire was made up to 40 pumps. That is a big fire. I rang Joanne and told her that I was on my way in to assist. She told me that Scott Hayward was also on his way to the Control Room. I cannot remember the exact time that I arrived to the Control Room but it was around 0200 hours. I couldn't swipe in as I did not have card access. I waited for a few minutes and luckily Scott arrived to let me in. I went in to the Control Room and it was extremely busy, but calm. I heard buzzers going off, which indicates that a call is waiting. I walked to the Supervisors desk at the back of the room, but everyone was too busy to talk. There was a very quick verbal briefing telling me about the large high rise fire.

I am quite involved in social media. I logged in to twitter to see the scale of the incident and to get images of the scene. I saw photos of Grenfell Tower on fire, the whole building. It was a high rise building with many floors. I showed some Supervisors to help us get an overview of what we were dealing with. There were a lot of Fire Survival Guidance calls going on at this point. Our critical phone line was ringing and I

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ended up answering it 2-3 times. However on answering all the calls, a CRO had picked the phone up before I could gather any information. If a call was not answered we would take the number and ring them back.

I walked around the Control Room a lot. It is a small control room and was busy with lots of people. By this point, both Joanne SMITH and Scott HAYWARD were in the control room. Very shortly after I came in, a decision was made to change the fire survival guidance to 'get out of the building'. I wasn't part of these discussions and was told it had changed. I think the decision was made by Joanne SMITH or the CM Alexandra NORMAN in the control room; but subsequently I know this was a decision made in conjunction with the fire ground officers. Being new in post I was unsure when or by whom this decision would have been made, hence why I read the policy after. I forwarded this new information to some of the CRC's. Decisions are usually recorded on the CAD system. There are no paper decision management logs, and they don't exist in the control room. There is no re-call procedure when advice is changed. The new advice would have only been given to fresh callers, unless repeat calls continued to call throughout the night.

I spoke to Joanne about staffing levels and we had discussions as to whether we needed any more staff to assist us. I logged into our roster system 'STARS' and looked at staffing. We have no recall to duty procedure in the Control Room so I looked at what staff members lived close to Stratford Control Centre. I rang 4-5 people, because there were not enough seats in the Control Room to accommodate more. I spoke to both Pauline WARNER and Kate RANSON who are AOM's on other watches. They both volunteered to come in. The other people I call did not answer.

After this I stood behind the Supervisors desk and was just observing what was going on. I let them get on with their roles. I felt like I was a bit out of my comfort zone. Normally I would have taken calls but my role as the Senior Operations Manager is different. I decided to provide support to the staff in the control room. I could see some officers were getting upset and tired with the sheer overload of calls coming in.

With regards to visual aids, at Stratford there is a normal sized television. Nothing like at our Control Centre in Merton. On this night it was turned off. I did turn it on but other people wanted it off, saying it may be too distressing for some people to watch. Some people were watching the news, but this was on their own personal mobile phones. We had no 'heli tele' at our Control Room in Stratford. There is a

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'Heli Tele' at our Control Centre in Merton, but I find that Sky News Channel is just as good. The Heli Tele is not essential, but is an extra option and an extra tool to have it certain circumstances.

As a couple of hours passed the calls coming in began to decrease. I tried to start getting welfare breaks for staff. Between 4-5am Joanne SMITH called our wellbeing unit to request a Counsellor. Shortly after that I went to McDonald's and bought food for the staff in the Control Room. This took me about 30 minutes being so early in the morning. When I got back, I again couldn't get into the building with no card access. Our counsellor arrived at the control room at the same time and she allowed me access.

I remember there being issues with getting diesel to the scene. There was no set process or route to get to the tower and vehicles were just being blocked in by one another. Assistant Operations Manager Peter MAY was dealing with this. I also re call there being a rescue of a Chinese guy who was standing by his flat window. It was around 7am and all calls had stopped by then. Our Control Room staff directed resources on the scene.

I finished work at around 8am. I wasn't really involved in any handover. Scott HAYWARD said there was nothing more I could do and told me to go home. I went home and spoke to Scott again at 2pm asking him if they needed me to come in again. He told me no, so I stayed at home.

It is unusual for me to have to come in as a Senior Operations Manager. I am regularly paged, but am able to monitor an incident by calling into the Control Room requesting information, and listening to our radios from a remote location.

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