

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: TYLDESLEY, ADRIAN

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 7 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 TYLDESLEY

Date: 21/12/2017

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

On Sunday 19th November 2017 I provided an account to Police Constable Christopher LOIZOU and Detective Constable Roxanne DAWE at East Ham Fire Station regarding the Grenfell Fire also present was my union representative Martin LEACH.

I am currently a fire fighter for the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and have been since I joined the service on the 25/01/1988. For the first six (6) months of my service I was posted to Richmond Fire Station and then I was posted to Twickenham Fire Station. Once my 12 month probation period ended in 1990 I requested a transfer to Euston Fire Station and served there from 1990 until 1998.

In 1992 whilst posted at Euston I undertook a 4 week course to join a specialist unit within the London Fire Brigade known as the FRU (Fire Rescue Unit). This is a specialist unit and has the capability of carrying a varied range of specialised equipment for firefighting and rescue operations which you are trained on in the course and in addition the unit also offers Urban Search and Rescue Line rescue which I complete a refresher training on every six (6) months and Water Rescue which I complete refresher Training on every twelve (12) months. We are also trained on the EDBA. (Extended Breathing Apparatus)

As the FRU carries specialist fire rescue equipment the Fire engine used to ferry the equipment is longer and bigger and requires a one day familiarisation course in addition to the standard response driving course you undertake to drive fire engines to emergency calls.

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The LFB has Ten (10) FRU, strategically placed in fire stations across London so there is always cover and we can be mobilised anywhere within London if needed.

Since beginning my service we have had lessons on different scenarios that have occurred in the country in relation to firefighting which discusses techniques and changing policies. This has included fires in tower blocks. I have had a lesson on a component used in construction and renovations called composite panels and the dangers of them letting off toxic fumes when alight. This lesson resulted from a fire in Bristol where a firefighter died as a result of inhaling the toxic fumes.

This incident happened in the 1990s and there has been guidance on composite panels since then. This would be relayed to new recruits when they join.

In March 1998 I transferred to East Ham Fire Station on the FRU and have been based at this station until this present day. I have never been posted to any other unit whilst serving in the Fire Service.

I was not familiar with the Grenfell Tower and have never been deployed there during my 29 years and 10 months service as a firefighter. I do have experience of fighting fires in Tower blocks although never on the scale of Grenfell Tower. I have been on a section 7 (2) d familiarisation visits to buildings that are at risk if a fire starts due to the amount of people or have hazardous materials within. Each station will have a list of these buildings. The visit to a tower block involves turning up to the tower block on a day shift and inspecting the dry risers and knowing where they are positioned making sure they are closed and to make sure there is parking available for emergency vehicles, you would also make yourself familiar with where the isolation points for the utilities in to the block are such as gas and electric. I am aware of the procedure that should be in place on arriving at a fire in a high rise building this is to have the entry control point and bridgehead established.

In my statement I will be speaking about my crew that I was posted with in the Fire response unit. Crew manager Martin STEVENSON, Firefighter Richard THOMAS, Firefighter Marc THORPE and Firefighter Steve SOMERS. I will also be speaking about Pat GOULBOURNE who is a Divisional Officer who I have known for a number of years as he used to work at East Ham Firestation but has since moved on within the LFB.

On Wednesday 13th June 2017 I was on my first night duty which had begun at 8PM in East Ham Fire Station. I was posted to the FRU call sign F446. During my shift whilst in my bed resting when at around 03:30hrs the call system was activated and the lights in the room came on. This activation stated through

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a speaker that F446 were required. So I got up and made my way down to the fire engine and sat in the back seat. At 03:35 we were fully mobilised in the fire engine crew manager STEVENSON was in the front passenger seat, the driver was Richard THOMAS and sitting in the back with me was Marc THORPE and Steve SOMERS. I was then informed by the crew manager that we were going to Grenfell Tower to a 40 pump fire.

At 3:40 Hrs we made our way to Grenfell Tower. We travelled west along the embankment along Trafalgar square and in to Bayswater Road and in to Holland Park Avenue which is where I first saw the tower. I felt shocked and I got an understanding of how serious the fire actually was. I could see a lot of smoke and flames coming from the building we then turned right towards the Tower. I personally did not receive any information from control whilst on route to the fire. Our vehicle is equipped with a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) which allows us to receive updates from control and the crew manager was updating us on route to the location from what I believe was through the MDT.

As we approached the incident we had difficulty parking close to the tower due to other fire engines and emergency vehicles already deployed and the police cordons in place. Also as it was the early hours of the morning resident's cars were all parked outside their homes but there were no other obstructions. We negotiated our way through various cordons and side streets. I cannot remember the name of the street we entered but we eventually found a parking space and parked up between 4 - 4.10AM.

On arrival we rigged in our EDBA (Extended Breathing Apparatus). I put on my EDBA kit and had my face mask hanging around my neck. We then started walking towards the tower. I cannot remember the exact route we took but as we approached. I saw lots of residents in the street looking at fire in awe. As we approached the tower it was getting light and the visibility was clear. As we got closer I could see lots of smoke billowing from the tower and it appeared that majority of the tower was still on fire.

We then arrived at Grenfell Tower and made our way over to the grassed area by the sports centre facing the East Side of the tower and reported to a white Helmet (A rank of seniority) and announced our arrival to them. The crew manager Martin STEVENSON booked us in with the command unit and the rest of crew waited on the grassed area. I do not know the name of person who was overall in charge and do not know the name of the road the command unit was on. Whilst waiting for the crew manager to arrive on the grassed area by the sports centre I noticed that it was chaos. There was personnel everywhere trying their best to assist in what I can describe as "Not a text book scenario"

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We was then directed to go to the west side of the tower to the playground area. We walked around past the north side of the tower which was the entrance to the Block and then to the playground area. We then waited there and was informed we would be committed into the building. Whilst waiting I looked at the tower and I could see flames, smoke and debris falling from the tower like burning leaves floating in the wind and eventually reaching the ground. The debris was blowing in the wind all around us everywhere I can only describe it as an absolute mess. I noticed the windows on the west side of the tower were intact for approximately 7 floors up but the rest were blown out from the fire. I don't know who it was but I was informed by someone that the gas main to the block could not be isolated. As I looked at the fire I could tell that this was fuelling the fire more. Whilst waiting to go inside I could see a JCB digging up the road by the tower looking for a spot to isolate the utilities supplying the tower. I remember thinking this was very odd as usually the utilities would be isolated at this stage of a fire. This is usually done on instruction of the OIC (Officer in charge) by a fire crew and it would be relayed to control when completed. Each fire station will have knowledge of and should know where the isolation points are for the utilities in tower blocks.

After a period of time my crew Five (5) people were led in to the Lower ground floor of the block but due to the falling debris from the tower there was a risk that heavy debris may fall and hit us causing injury so we formed up in a single line and was led in one by one with a police escort using a plastic riot shield lifted above our heads to combat any heavy debris falling on us.

We entered the lower Ground floor which was the Bridgehead and the entry control point. Normal procedure for Highrise fires would be that the Bridgehead is 2 floors below the entry control point. I believe this was done as a safety measure as in a usual scenario you would know an area of where the fire was allowing the entry control point to be higher but as on this occasion the fire had spread everywhere, the safest thing to do was to keep both points lower. This area was full of water going ankle deep and full of firefighters waiting to be committed in to the building.

We were briefed by Pat GOULBOURNE. At this point I looked at my watch and it was 7AM. He briefed us and stated what had happened up to that point and stated our intention was to go up to the 11th floor and attempt to firefight. Pat GOULBOURNE said before we committed "Just do your best and be safe" we were informed that if we came across any bodies whilst committed in the building to not let it switch our objective to a rescue effort and continue with the main objective of firefighting as the fire was so out of control and had been burning for so long that it was believed anyone in that building was assumed

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dead.

I was not made aware of how the fire had spread during the briefing and was not informed of a firelift in the building during the briefing although given the extent of the fire I would not feel safe using one as the structure of the building would be called in to question and if there was a power cut you would potentially be locked inside a furnace. I was not made aware during the briefing that there was any cladding surrounding the building. I was aware that the stay put policy was in force and had not been informed if it had changed.

I was not made aware or had any prior knowledge of a pre prepared firefighting plan at Grenfell tower apart from the national policy for highrise fires to the firebrigade to have the bridgehead and entry control set up and set the dry riser in.

I then put the mask on for my EDBA then my fire hood helmet and then my gloves which is the last thing you are trained to put on before going in to a fire under air. The set was then turned on. We walked to the entry control point and gave our tallies to the officer who was collecting them. This involves telling the entry control officer your name who will check your name matches the tally on a board. The control officer will then check the cylinder gauge and check to see how much time you will have before the air runs out and then marks the time against the board with your tally. This same process is conducted for your whole crew and the procedure is the person with the lowest tally is the turnaround time for the crew.

The turnaround time also depends on how much you exert yourself whilst under air and it could reduce significantly if for instance you have to climb multiple stairs or have to rescue people from the a fire and would breath more oxygen from the cylinder. Whilst doing drills in a controlled environment a person of good health who keeps themselves fit could get 60 minutes of air with an EDBA. If you are in a pressurised environment or being worn by a person not in such a fit condition then this will lower to 40 minutes. When your EDBA begins to get low on air it will issue an audible warning although it is good practice to conduct tally checks whilst committed under air.

We then committed under air to the stairway and began to ascend the stairs up to the 11th floor as per our briefing. I did not hear any fire alarms sounding on entering the stairs which I thought was odd as you normally hear one sounding throughout the building at tower fires. I would describe the staircase as very narrow as if 2 skinny people were to pass each other on the stairs they would brush arms. I noticed on

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entering that there was a huge amount of water cascading down the stairs like a waterfall which was not ideal as we were getting soaked through at an early stage. I was aware this was the only fire escape for the block which shocked me as there should have been more for the amount of flats and people there.

This water was being poured in by an Aerial appliance raised high with a hose line in an attempt to extinguish the fire. I felt this method hindered us because if there are firefighters in a building where this is deployed you are potentially making the area more hazardous and it is only recommended when there are not any firefighters in a building attempting to firefight.

There was multiple hose lines on the staircase which was making it difficult to get up as it was slippery. We made our way up at the lower floors the visibility still relatively good although there was not any lights in the stairwell. Every floor we ascended it got hotter and hotter I felt worried that the heat would turn the water on our tunics to steam which could cause serious burns to the skin. At certain points whilst ascending the stairs water was pouring through more than other points which was making conditions more slippery and I was having to move out of the way of the water in certain places which was making the objective slower. I heard thumping and thudding noises as we ascended I feared at certain points the building was going to collapse.

There was an extremely high amount of radio communication coming from our personal radios as we ascended the stairs I could not make sense of it.

As we got to the 8th floor the visibility began to get worse from the amount of smoke. From the 9th the visibility was beginning to get very poor but I could still see ahead of me the smoke did not seem to move in any direction and was completely static. As we ascended I looked for the floor numbers on the walls of the staircase to see which floor we were on but due to smoke deposits on the wall and I could not see every floor number. This did not disrupt my main focus at this point which was to follow the hose to the 11th floor so we could locate the Branch (Nozzle of hose) and firefight. As we got to the 9th floor I saw a body on the landing between a section of stairs which led from the 9th to the 10th floors this section of stairs did not have a door to enter a lobby. I could see the body was not responsive.

We got to the 10th floor where we picked up the branch and made our way up to the 11th floor. On the 11th floor stairs we attempted to enter a door on the right hand side leading to the lift lobby and flats. At this point we were on virtually on our bellies as the visibility was so poor because of the smoke. As we approached the door on the right side of the stairs which leads in to the lift lobby there was a body laying

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at an angle obstructing the door from being opened enough to make a committal in to the lobby. I presumed the body was dead as it was not moving. We attempted to move the body as much as we could but it was very difficult.

We could not get any further as the lady was obstructing the door from being opened further and it was also like a furnace in the lobby I would describe it as a high rise crematorium the heat was extremely intense and the visibility was near zero at this point.

As the crew attempted to open the door further to be able to get the branch in there to firefight I made my own decision to make my way up to the 12th and 13th floor to have a look to see if there was any information I could gather for the debrief to assist the other firefighters going up next. I did this by crawling on my hands and knees as the visibility was so low. I did however have a small torch on my tunic which assisted in visibility slightly. I began crawling up the smoke filled stairway between the 11th and 12th floor I saw a face looking at me on the tread of the stairs which on closer inspection was a cat. I reached the door leading to the lobby on the 12th floor which was slightly ajar to inspect the fire. I looked through the door and all I could see was thick acrid smoke and the heat was very intense. I did not have a thermal imaging camera with me to inspect the source of the fire and I am not sure if my crew had one. I then made my way up the staircase towards the 13th floor still on my hands and knees and on to the landing leading to the lobby. By the door of the landing leading to the lobby I saw what appeared to be a non-responsive body face down on the floor by the door entrance to the lift lobby. I touched the body to see if there was a response but there was not.

On the 13th floor landing the door was also slightly ajar but again the visibility was extremely poor and all I could see was thick black smoke. I could not see any sprinkler systems whilst looking in to the lobbies.

I made my way back down and informed the crew manager what I witnessed on the upper levels. I then assisted my crew, the 11th floor lobby was opened slightly more and crew managed to get in to the doorway slightly more and aim the jet of water at the fire in the lobby in an attempt to extinguish the fire. We were all on our bellies at this point and the visibility was extremely poor I would describe as being blind at certain points.

I do not know where the water from the hose was being supplied from and at this point I was not concerned. My only concern was that there was actually a charge in the hose and water would come out when needed I was not made aware of any faults in the dry riser I did not see the dry riser at any point. I

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was made aware at some point that the brigade was attempting to use lightweight portable pumps for the water supply but I did not know the reason.

We tried our best to get in to lobby as far as we could, we did unfortunately have to lay across the body blocking the doorway in an attempt to open the door wider. I remember thinking what a terrible situation this was as it could have been a member of my own family but we had to endeavour to complete our objective. A member of the crew (Richard) then stated his EDBA was getting low and the crew manager instructed us to withdraw from the tower.

We then left the branch and the hose on the 11th floor and made our way back down the stairs out of the tower by the time we reached the lower floors Richards audible warning for low pressure on his EDBA was sounding. We debriefed Pat GOULBOURNE as to the difficulties entering the floor lobby and we didn't manage to gain access to any of the flats on that floor. He was informed about what was witnessed on the 12th and 13th floors.

We were then instructed to return to the grassed area by the sports centre to re hydrate and rest slightly I do not know what time it was when we exited the tower. I remember that Surrey Firebrigade had arrived with an Aerial appliance with a greater reach than the LFB had. Whilst there I did not speak to any residents of the tower or any members of the public.

Three (3) of us offered to go back in to the tower as they were eager to retain EDBA trained firefighters to stay and assist.

Myself and two (2) others from the crew of F446 made our way back in to the bridgehead and waited for an extended period of time to be committed under air for a second time. Whilst waiting the day duty (blue watch) personnel echoed to us that the management from blue watch had instructed all red watch to leave the scene and return to a fire station as they had been at the incident for too long and allow blue watch to fully take control of the fire.

I felt disappointed as I wanted to stay and assist.

I did not have any injuries or need any medical assistance when I returned from the tower and I am not aware of anyone from my crew who did.

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We then returned to the grass area by the sports centre before being told to return to Paddington Firestation station to complete incident notes on the fire. We returned to F446 which was parked in the same place for the whole deployment and made our way to Paddington Firestation. I did not speak to any residents of the tower or members of the public on the return journey to the F446. After completing my notes a copy of which I exhibit as ADT/ 1 myself and the rest of the crew returned to East Ham Fire Station on the 14th JUNE 2017 at approximately 5PM. I was due back on shift at 8PM that same evening. Management stated quite clearly that we did not have to return but I felt a personal responsibility to return for duty to assist in any way I can in what was clearly a busy shift for the whole of the fire service.

On Saturday 17th JUNE 2017 whilst on day duty at East Ham Fire Station I was instructed to take a Bobcat which is rigid-frame engine powered machine with lift arms from my station to the Grenfell tower as the one being used at the tower was defective. I loaded this on my engine and made my way there with another colleague who was not on the FRU. When I arrived a crew of USAR officers working in the tower asked if I could assist them for the shift in the capacity of fitting festoon lighting which is lights in plastic cradles in the stairwell. This is one of skills you are trained in as a USAR. This was to assist with DVI officers as the stairwell was now just a dark gloomy shaft with smoke and fire damage everywhere.

When this task was complete the defective Bobcat had been fixed and I loaded the East Ham Bobcat on to my engine and returned to East Ham Firestation.

This is the biggest incident I have ever attended in all my experience as a firefighter.

I describe the body I saw on the 9th floor as a Short black female fully clothed. The body on the 11th floor obstructing the doorway was a black lady which I would describe as very large and fully clothed. The body on the 13th floor I would describe as a child I could not see their face and I only assumed it was a child as it was a small body they were wearing jeans and a tracksuit top.

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