

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: HUDSON, ALAN

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.

Signature: ALAN HUDSON

Date: 06/02/2018

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

This statement refers to my attendance at the GRENFELL TOWER fire on WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2017 as part of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) response to this incident.

After leaving Grenfell Tower and returning to PADDINGTON FIRE STATION, I completed some notes in relation to this incident. These notes were made contemporaneously on 14 JUNE 2017, which I now exhibit as AJH/1.

The people that I will mention in my statement are Firefighter Gary HISCOCK, Crew Manager Paul GRAY, Firefighter Ben HOLEHOUSE, Firefighter Dan PEGRAM all from my Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) and Station Manager Pat GOLDBURN and Firefighter WILLIAMS.

I been in fire brigade in for almost 11 years as a firefighter. I been based here at Heston Fire Station for almost three (3) years now prior to here I was over in East London. I am on Red Watch and on TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2017 my shift started at eight (8) o'clock (2000 hours) My duty that night was in the watch room which is known as "the box" so if the duty phone rings I would answer it or deal with any messages coming in on the tele printer and assign the calls as to who's going where and other admin duties etc. At the start of our duty we are all responsible for checking our equipment including our own sets- this is the breathing apparatus -in order to make sure they are serviceable. At roll call I had been assigned to ride out on the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) call sign G386 on the back. A FRU does not carry ladders or water it's for road traffic collisions or where people need rescuing having fallen in hard to

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

reach places or in water. I believe that night there were only ten (10) FRU's in London. FRU's don't normally go to fires but we do carry Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) which goes above and beyond the Standard Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) EDBA weights about 18 kilos so is also heavier than SDBA. The difference is that the EDBA has two cylinders as opposed to just one and therefore lasts longer approximately 31 minutes on SDBA to about 45 minutes I believe. To be assigned to the FRU you need to be specially trained and I have completed various courses required to ride the FRU. My FRU course included a week's course on the EDBA usage and a water rescue course also a line course and a powerboat-training course. You can't go on the FRU without completing these courses.

[REDACTED]

Once this incident was resolved, we returned to our station I think it was around ten (10) or half ten (2200 or 2230 hours) we then checked our kit had a cup of tea. I then looked at the BOSS system, it's for incidents, I just happened to look at that and saw that there was a fire going, it was around midnight, I can remember looking at it and it had gone to twenty (20) then twenty-five (25) pumps and that is something you don't see very often with this I messaged, via WhatsApp, a couple of the crew to say there was a job going off I can't remember when the first trucks went off I think it was G382 they went to stand by at Chiswick then the printer went off again as I was in the box and it read forty (40) pumps! I thought what on earth is going on!

In eleven (11) years of service, I have not had that before! Our ladder then got sent and within five (5) or ten (10) minutes they requested ten (10) FRU's so then I knew that was us too. I can't remember the time but I think it was between two am (2) or ten (10) past two o'clock (0200 - 0210 hours).

We were then on our way to Grenfell Tower. I had never been there or to that estate before never been on the fire safety department or had any previous knowledge of Grenfell Tower. We left our station and went onto the A4 and then onto M4 over Chiswick to Hammersmith flyover then from there to Shepherd's Bush Green. I recall they made the RVP at St Anns Road. I knew Westfield's Shopping Centre and had a rough idea of where to go as our MDT (Mobile Data Terminal) wasn't working properly we pulled into a crescent and then saw three other FRU's coming towards us and we found out that there were road works,

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

British gas I think, up ahead. We spun round and together with the other FRU units, we had to find another way back onto the main road along Hogarth I think and made our way via Ladbroke Grove turned left into Ladbroke Grove all the way down by this time we still had not seen what was going on. I heard some stuff on the radio Fire Survival Calls coming in via the radio about people stuck in their flats children etc. As we got nearer parts of the building came into sight I could see it was quite well alight we made our way into Lancaster Road, there is a small dogleg on the right we took it, and then we could see Grenfell Tower, which came fully into sight the whole building. It was very alight! We all looked at each other at that point and commented on how are we.. what we are going to do.. we didn't know what was going on and there were more Fire Survival Calls coming in. Calls about firefighters not lost but split from their crews.

We then parked up on Bramley Road there were a lot of police a lot of civilians shouting and screaming but we managed to park quite well. Paul GRAY our Crew Manager (CM) was the officer in charge of our FRU he jumped off to find a command unit to find out what was going on and we got off and got the kits ready Immediate Emergency Care (IEC) kits (our first aid kits), our spare cylinders, the EDBA kits, we got that all ready and stood for approximately five (5) minutes waiting for Paul to return. There was still a lot of screaming and shouting going on and when Paul came back he stated "Whatever we do we're not going round that way!" indicating the way he'd gone, he added it was like a bomb had gone off LAS, people everywhere being treated etc. He added that we would be going in Whitchurch Road on to Grenfell Road. So we gathered up all our kits and made our main control point.

We mustered up on the green by the leisure centre. We all looked at the tower it was utter carnage and totally unreal a whole tower block totally on fire 24 floors I could hear a lot of screaming I saw large piles of debris on the floor around the tower more so on the north side of the tower with debris falling down making it very difficult to walk and access, my last tower block fire was a gas main fire on a 15th floor which was just a single flat with twenty-four (24) EDBA users being deployed and this was totally different. Gary, Ben, Dan PEGRAM, I, and we all wondered how we were going to get in and out of there we'd heard people trapped in the flats, crews were split there was so much debris coming down, some of the debris fell down fast other bits meandered down burning.

The fire had covered the whole of the East side save an upside-down v section and we sat on the grass waiting to be deployed. A senior officer and another senior manager came over and told us to drop our

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

OFFICIAL

sets to deal with a mass exodus of casualties so we dropped our kits and were waiting to deal with them but no one came through so after some time I heard that the FSG (Fire Survival Calls) calls had been abandoned and that people were being asked to come out I'm not sure who said this.

A FSG relates to someone who is unable to get out of their flat the phone line will stay live and firefighters try and get to them to get them out those trapped are given advice by the operator. We were told to get our sets back on and that we were going into the building. We could feel the heat from the fire sitting on the grass! All five of us said to each other were going in together and we'll be coming out together we're not going to get split up! We feared what could happen we heard as much from other crews on the radios trying to find colleagues we were concerned about the building about our safety and the fact it could collapse not to mention the way it was burning. The fire was all the way up from the 11th floor to the top!

There was flaming debris falling down we made our way in past some trees and I saw TSG (Territorial Support Group), riot police officers, with their shields who escorted us to the building via a walkway holding their shields up above their heads to protect us. We were escorted in and out this way one at a time as we walked into the building. I remember there was debris falling down around us, I have drawn two (2) route plans and exhibit these as AJH/2 and AJH/3 the first shows the route in on our FRU from Shepherd's Bush and the second AJH/3 shows where we parked and how we walked to the tower mustering on the grass in front of the leisure centre. We did not use the main entry I don't know why. I entered the building via what looked like a very small window of some sort full length. CM Paul GRAY said that if this was going to be the way in and out we needed to open a doorway.

We then went to the Entry Control Officer (ECO) in the main lobby area near the foot of the stairs there were two (2) of three (3) senior officers there, a lot going on, a lot of water running down the stairs, I was standing in about six (6) eight (8) inches of water, the Entry Control seemed very well organised Station Manager Pat GOLDBURN who was one of the ECO's in charge and said to us that there were a lot of things going on and casualties coming down and that an EDBA team were coming down and we were next up to the search 9th 10th 11th floor and that we were massively outside of policy as there were water pressure issues and/or no water. He also warned us to expect deceased people in the stairwell. He asked us to find who we could as there were still FSG calls being taken.

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

Once the casualties came down we put our kit on our facemasks on gave our tallies to entry control and made our way up. The first floor the mezzanine floor there was lots of water. On 5th 6th and 7th floors and it got a bit warmer. On 8th it changed to quite smoky. We got to the 9th floor we went in on a left hand wall search first flat completely empty with no smoke. I do not recall much about the stairwell on the lower floors as I was concentrating on getting up.

I recall searching 9th floor then moving to 10th floor and encountering a deceased person on the stairwell when heading to 10th floor. The 9th floor was actually quite clear we searched all the flats only a couple of the later flats were smoky as some other colleagues tried entry into the 3rd flat which was locked but then we got a call about a Fire Survival Call on 11th floor so we abandoned our attempts at trying to enter this flat and we made our way up. A colleague of mine had a thermal image camera, which was used on 11th floor. There was a lot of water coming down the stairwell and it got really smoky we were trying to see what floor number we were on as there were not any clear markings on the wall to indicate what floor we were on. We passed the deceased person on 10th and got to 11th floor tried opening the fire door on 11th but it was too hot you could feel the heat and the thermal camera went white. We couldn't get into 11th floor so went back to 10th. Communication was very difficult and became worst. I remember the deceased person was chest down very large hanging downwards it was a black person couldn't tell you if it was a female or male. We got into the 10th floor it was very hot with zero visibility lots of thick black smoke we were on the left hand wall on our hands and knees I was at the back of our cue. Firefighter Dan PEGRAM and I were in the lobby area and we could hear crying and talking I shouted for us all to be quite and we headed towards these sounds and found four (4) people with towels wrapped around their heads and we were able to get these four adults out towards the stairwell. I have exhibited the floor plan indicating the flat we found these four survivors as Exhibit AJH/6. I think they were over 50 years of age two males and two females' possibility from South America hard to say. They had a lot of clothes on and towels on their heads. Crew Manager Paul GRAY was by the stairwell and had a torch on to help guide them and we told them to head towards the torch light. Communications were a problem we could have stayed and search for longer on our EDBA sets but we were unable to call for help, say from SDBA wearers, to escort these four (4) people down so we had to escort them ourselves between us so a firefighter led the way down with one of the four survivors sandwiched in between us with a firefighter at the rear that way we could unsure they all got down safely. We brought them down from the 10th floor

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

OFFICIAL

encountering a number of crews coming up but we didn't have any issues with getting these four (4) survivors down. Whilst we were in the tower, we did not see any fire just smoke and heat nor did we have any hose but I do recall lots of water running down the stairwell. We got back to the Entry Control and these four (4) casualties got taken away from us. I don't recall how we got out but we passed the ALP (Aerial Ladder Platform) and someone warned us not to look into the garages as there was a deceased person in there. We got out sat on the grass and quite not knowing how we managed to get out of the tower. We sat there drinking water and getting a rest we serviced our sets and replaced our cylinders someone came past and took our yellow cylinder covers and batteries for the communication sets as they were short of batteries for other crews to use. We were waiting to be redeployed Firefighter WILLIAMS from another crew was there he looked very hot and it turned out he'd been to 20th floor.

We were ready to go and were waiting for our batteries and yellow cylinder covers. We were rested and ready to go back in. Crew Manager GRAY spoke to a senior manager and told them we were ready to go again we moved from the main control area to the tower under the covered walkway into the holding area initially from the SDBA then to EDBA area both were close to each other. We waited at the EDBA area for a long time. The fire seemed to be dying out there was lots of smoke. 0250 hours was the first time we went in the second time we went in was at around 1030 hours and we had to wait from 5am a long time. We were aware that there was a guy on 11th floor at a window I could see him from main control and I could see the ALP (Aerial Ladder Platform) moving around to douse his area with water.

We remained as a crew, the five (5) of us, whilst we were waiting Crew Manager GRAY had spoken to another manager about setting up a ground monitor on top of a nearby small block of flats as this would give us a higher reach with the water jet it was agreed and we went to rig up a ground monitor which is basically a big jet that can pump a lot of water via a 75mm hose from the back of a pump engine because of the pressure from this jet it is placed on a surface and not hand held but can be directed. We went to a high point to rig up this system to get water up as high as possible. The small block of flats near the tower. I have indicated where this happened on my map and exhibited the map as AJH/4. It took about 45 minutes to rig this up it shouldn't have taken this long but plans kept changing and once it was rigged up we were told that we were going back into the tower. I don't even know if this ground monitor was used at all. I remember seeing a lot of debris coming down some large chunks all on fire some as big and wide as a metre or more and I recall a side of the building bowing out it was the cladding. We were then told

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

by the sector commander to put our EDBA sets on and were told we were going back into the building I think the time was around 0800 hours and we waited in the holding area outside the building there were a lot of SDBA and EDBA users waiting with other crews coming out of the tower. We sat and waited and waited and by the time we were committed we were told the Entry Control (Bridgehead) had been moved to 4th floor and we waited some more. We were then moved to the lift lobby due to congestion and waiting by a light weight portable pump and after a while, about an hour I think, the fumes and conditions there meant we had to be moved and eventually we were sent up to the bridgehead on 4th floor and Fire Fighter DUNCAN and I were paired up as a team of two and waited in a room for a briefing I noted a lot of water damage but no fire damage in the room we were waiting on 4th floor.

Our brief was to check the floors, 13th floor conditions, a crew before us had taken up as far as possible a "leaky feeder" which is just a long cable that acts like an extended aerial and allows better communications. We were told that there was a lot of spare hose rolled up and branches which had been taken up by previous crews and we could use the dry riser to fire fight. At 1030 in the morning we made our way up to 13th floor again between 12th and 13th there was another large black deceased person and we passed them. There was a hose there but not long enough so I went back to 11th and found another piece of hose a 45mm hose we connected it to the dry riser but there was no pressure I went back down to 11th and checked that there were no kinks in the hose in case that was causing an issue. We went round the corner on 13th floor and every flat was completely burnt out no windows no doors no internal walls nothing it was like a prefinished building nothing left! I've never ever seen anything like this before. We must have turned into the windward side of the building and immediately felt the heat it was too hot even with our gear on I could feel the heat on my ears it was really, really, hot. Fire Fighter Steve DUNCAN and I agreed it was too hot so we returned to the stairwell area. The dry riser on 13th floor wasn't in use when we got there we had to run to the dry riser as it was so hot I couldn't see flames just ashes and blue sky there wasn't much smoke as it was being blown out by the wind. We decided to return to the bridgehead and updated to the officer in charge think we were up there for about 20 minutes under air. We left the building and serviced our sets although we didn't think we'd be going back in as it had been our second wear and we felt disappointed we hadn't actually done much on this second entry. In eleven (11) years of service I do not know anyone who has been in twice on EDBA. Fresh crews had arrived and it was clear we wouldn't be going back in but I would have if I had been asked. We were tired and had been there for quite a long time. We grabbed some drink and food and we were then released and made

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

our way to Paddington and made our notes. I can't recall the time but I know we'd been on duty for a very long time. We then made our way back to Heston Fire Station and in time for our next night shift.

Thinking about what could have helped on the day I guess better communications would have helped but as usual communications are usually a problem. I have never ever experienced such a fire in my life and do not expect to attend another like it. I am not sure any training could have prepared you for this kind of incident. I was also aware from comments made by the crew at the front of our appliance that the MDT (Mobile Data Terminal) wasn't working.

The MDT is a windows based system it has a screen and holds information including maps hazards locations of hydrants and any information which has been recorded from previous inspections at a location. I knew Shepherd's Bush so we didn't have much trouble getting there and once there I was hoping we could see the fire and point our truck into the general direction.

I now exhibit the following items as my exhibits;

AJH/1 — my notes made at Paddington Fire Station and used to refresh my memory for this statement. Police reference MPSZ13110915.

AJH/2 — Route in to Grenfell Tower on FRU from Shepherd's Bush to parking location on Bramley Road. Police reference MPSZ13110913.

AJH/3 — Route in on foot from Bramley Road to muster point on grass in front of leisure centre. Police reference MPSZ13110914.

AJH/4- Map showing locations of Main Control and pre 1st wear holding area, SDBA holding area and 2nd wear, EDBA holding area and location of Ground Monitor we setup between both entries into the tower. Police reference MPSZ13110962.

AJH/5- Map showing route into Grenfell tower past the trees and to the Entry Control Officers. Police reference MPSZ13110961.

AJH/6- floor plan of 10th floor showing location where we found our four survivors. Police reference MPSZ13110963

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

Statement of: HUDSON, ALAN

OFFICIAL

Form MG11(T)

Page 9 of 9

Signature: Alan HUDSON
2018

Signature witnessed by:

OFFICIAL