

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: FOLIVI, ALBERT

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 FOLIVI

Date: 22/01/2018

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

This statement refers to my attendance at the Grenfell Tower Fire on the 14th June 2017.

On Sunday 26th November 2017 at 11:29 am, I was interviewed by DC Ade AKINKUNLE and DC Tony BEACH in relation to this incident. The interview took place at Trafford Fire Station and also present was Jon LAMB from the Fire Brigade union.

The interview was audio recorded and this full statement has been produced from the recording. I have been allowed to review my statement and make any necessary changes prior to signing it.

I am Albert FOLIVI, pay No. [REDACTED]8V, I am based at Holloway fire station on the Red watch, we were A31, that was Holloway pump and I was a fire fighter on that machine.

I have been a fire fighter for about 13 years, I was at Kingsland for 9 years and I moved to Holloway in 2014.

In this statement I will mention several of my LFB colleagues that I worked with during the incident at Grenfell Tower, on the machine were Crew Manager Paul COTHER who I have known for 3-3 ½ years, he was sat in the middle, Tammy WILSON who was the other Breathing Apparatus (BA) wearer who I have known for about 4 years and have been on the same watch since I came to Holloway, the officer in charge was Watch Manager Chris COOPER and driving was Luke GODDARD who I have known since 2008.

I have never been to any incidents at the Grenfell Tower before.

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On the 13th June 201, my role was to wear Breathing Apparatus (BA). I honestly can't remember what time I left my station, I properly got it written down but I can't remember off head, it was after 11'oclock, I was on the red watch and was riding pump ladder A311, which was a fire engine and there were 5 of us riding that machine and had a 135 ladder at the back, we had another gentleman who was on light duties who was still at the station, but we normally ride with 5 anyways which is minimum.

We had a roll call as usual when we detail who's riding where on the machine, I was detailed to wear BA, I can't remember obviously anything that happened after that. I remember getting the call and we were told to standby at Soho fire station, we didn't put our gear on and we got on the machine and got ready, we didn't actually get to Soho from Holloway we probably got to Caledonian Road and they said to us that we were going onto Grenfell so we just made our way there, it took us about 15-20 mins and on route there we were listening to the radio. We heard that there was obviously a fire going on at Grenfell, I didn't know where that was, I think it was a 20 pump fire then it went to 40 pump and that's when we got the message through that we were going to go, so basically we didn't go to Soho and we were now on this 40 pump fire. So we made our way there, I don't know the route they took as I wasn't paying any attention, in terms of the radio traffic I could only hear bits and pieces, we could obviously hear that there was a big job going on, we didn't really know what it was until we got onto the flyover which was leading to West London, so when we got onto the flyover, we could obviously see the tower block, basically the whole tower block was virtually alight, so we obviously knew we had a big job, a big job is something major basically, you could be sent to fires where it could be like a 40 pump fire and don't really do much, like this one you knew you would be doing something,

The information we had was listening to the radio, the Watch Manager didn't really know anything about it, it was by listening to the radio on the fire engine, we knew there was fire survivals going on which meant that there was someone stuck in a flat somewhere, so we knew it was a serious job.

We arrived at Grenfell Tower between 11 and 12 o'clock I suspect and it was night, I am not 100% sure, I could see most of the building alight everyone was in shock, I had never seen anything like it, I don't think anyone on our watch had seen anything like it before maybe in a film or something but not actually in reality.

We didn't really know the area very well, we parked quite a distance away as all the roads were congested leading towards the tower block as the police and other appliances were there as well as loads of people in the streets, we basically stuck our fire engine at the end of some road and just walked all the way down. Tammy and I had our BA sets on our backs, we made our way towards the tower which took

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us 4-5 minutes from where we parked, I can't remember the street / road where we parked, I don't know that area, we might have looked it up on a map where we parked, 5 of us went to the tower and we all had BA sets on, I don't think the Watch Manager did, I can't remember what the entrance of the tower was like, we went to a holding area where there was quite a few other fire fighters there, I was obviously mostly looking at the building that's what most people were doing because we couldn't believe what was going on.

We made our way down to the rendezvous point. When we arrived I think they asked us to go and collect some BA cylinders, because they didn't have enough, so I think me and Luke went to look for some BA cylinder, I think Tammy and Paul disappeared and my Watch Manager also disappeared they went off to do other things. So basically it was me and Luke together the whole time.

Once we got the BA cylinders we went to the rendezvous point which was by the community centre / sports centre I'm not too sure, it was a grass verge in front of the building we basically sat there for a good few hours waiting to be told what to do as we were told to sit and wait there, we were there for quite a while and then people were coming down and briefing us about what was happening after that we were told to put our sets on and make our way to another holding area which I think was at the front of the building where there was an appliance, I don't know which machine it was, I can't remember, there was a queue of other BA wearers waiting there as well, we were there for over an hour before going into the building, it could have been longer, it was a long time. I was pretty tired as I had been there for a few hours standing with a set on my back for a few hours and I just wanted to go in and do something.

I think the police escorted us into the building with their shields because there was debris coming down as well.

Whilst in the lobby area, we waited for quite a while, when Luke and I got to the front of queue, our Borough Manager at the time Pat GOULBOURNE directed us to go the 6th floor, as they said that there was a fire breaking out on that floor and obviously there were people above that, so we told to go there and put it out.

We went to the 6th floor on air, I went up the stairs to the 6th floor which was quite tight and quite small, congested with hose as there were lot of hose which was on the stairs, so it wasn't easy to manoeuvre up and down the stairs it took a bit of effort to get up there, there were other firefighters on the stairs as well that weren't part of my crew, they were just doing hose managing, it was quite smoky but you could still see, my visibility was pretty good when I was going up the stairs it wasn't like you couldn't see, higher up would have been worse, on a level of 1-10, 1 being less smoky, 10 being very smoky, it would be a 4,

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there was a lot of water. When I got to the 6th floor, I was sure there were self-closing doors, but I didn't pay any attention to any of that we went into where the flats were like the little lobby outside, i think we opened a few doors and I know a few of the doors on that floor were already opened and this flat happened to be shut, I think it was Luke that actually opened the door on the 6th floor I can't remember how exactly how he did but I know a few of the doors on that floor were already opened and this one happen to be shut, so I think, if it was opened already or he booted it open, we didn't really enter the flat we more or less stayed by the front door because it was quite smoky in there so we obviously knew that there was a fire in there, whilst we were fighting the fire on the 6th floor, Luke had the hose and I was backing him up, I was behind and just made sure that he got enough hose and made sure it didn't get stuck behind a door or anything, so I made sure I kept feeding the hose through, making sure that he had enough hose as when you are in BA you are never by yourself, you are always with a minimum of 2 people anyway, by the time we got there the hose was already connected but I don't know what it was connected to, so we sprayed water in there and then shut the door we didn't want all the smoke to come back into the lobby, he did that a few times, in the end we left the hose in situ and went to the 7th floor, we were not directed to the 7th floor we just went up there, the 7th floor was a bit smoky, we couldn't really see much up there to be honest with you because the lobby was smoked filled on the 7th and we ended up just coming back down because it was too smoky plus we were running out of air, I was up there for not more than 15 minutes. I can't remember how I knew I was on the 6th or 7th floor and couldn't tell you what flat I attended on the 6th and 7th floor I'm sure it might have said 6th floor somewhere, sure we read it somewhere, we knew we were definitely on the right floor. I didn't experience any pressure problems with the water whilst fighting the fire on the 6th floor. With regards to my radio, I think my radio might have been dead by that time and obviously Luke didn't have comms and we had 1 comm set on the machine, Tammy had the other comm set I think, when I went into the building I didn't have a radio on me. Before we got into the building I didn't see any civilians come out whilst we were in the building. I can't remember I'm sure we might have had a debrief when we got back downstairs speaking to the officer in charge at the Bridgehead (BH). There was a big glass frontage which I'm sure was smashed in the set up area on the ground floor lobby, there were debris outside, the water was quite deep in the lobby as well, there was a lot of water down there, there was another room which was next to that lobby that we were standing in, there were loads of people standing there just waiting. The water was about 7" - 8" of water deep. I can't remember, I know there was a lot of glass in the lobby, quite a lot of it was smashed I

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can't remember what the door was like, I know some people came through that door, I can't actually remember.

I think we took our sets round to the holding area again, I'm sure by this time it was like proper daylight now about 6 / 7 in the morning , I can't be certain what time it was, I think we might have had to wait there for a little while, Oh God I can't even remember, honestly I can't even remember what I did, to be honest I wasn't paying much notice to the time, when we actually came down we then took our sets off I'm sure we left them in the holding area on the grass verge for a little while, I think we were there resting for a little while I'm honestly not sure what we did after that to be honest. between the time I took off my BA set and leaving, I couldn't tell you what time it was, but there was one point when we all told to go downstairs into the sports hall, someone wanted to speak to us or something, from there they asked for volunteers to go and pump from Kentish Town's machine as they were leaving the incident and they needed someone to take over their crew, so me and Luke said we would do it, so basically they were pumping water, I don't even know where they were pumping the water to but we were instructed to go to their machine and just make sure the pump was working and they were constantly getting water which is connected to the hydrants and we never had any problem with water, the Kentish Town pump was near a train station entrance but I couldn't tell you 100% where it was, maybe if I saw it on a map, I might be able to describe it, I'm sure Kentish Town would know where it was, because they know probably that area better, probably around Latimer Road train station, this was round the back of the holding area where there were quite a few casualties on the ground it was like an alleyway sort of thing, I can't remember on what road it was and I did this for quite a while till we left. The fire was basically wrapped round the whole building which I have never seen before. We must have left Grenfell Tower between 2 and 3 O'clock in the afternoon.

There was a Bridge Head on the ground floor, it was very manic, there were a lot of people, people writing on the walls, it was very busy, there was a lot of stuff happening at the time.

I entered the tower with the police assistance. I could hear people screaming, I could hear debris, smell smoke, see fire as I entered the stairwell, it was a bit smoky, it was wet, loads of water coming down, lots of hose and it was the same conditions on the stairs of the 6th and 7th floor. I also can't remember who I spoke to on arrival, I don't think I knew who it was anyway, I also can't remember what firefighting activities were planned before entering the flat. We stopped the firefighting activity when we came downstairs.

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In terms of fire alarms going off, I honestly can't remember, I don't think so, I can't say for certain to be honest, it was a lot to take in at the time, with reference to interactions with the smoke extraction system, I'm not sure if there was one, I have no idea. The whole incident went beyond my previous experience as a fire fighter. In terms of what I witnessed or heard during this incident, I have never seen anything like it, I don't want to see anything like it again, there were people screaming from windows, it was horrible, I think a lot of the stuff to be fair, I have just blanked it out because I just don't want to think about it, so that's probably why my knowledge of it is so minimal because I don't really think about it or I try my hardest not to.

In regards to the falling debris, this was just stuff coming off the building, I couldn't tell exactly what it was, there were loads and loads of stuff constantly coming down you could hear it crashing, it was just constant, as soon as we got there you could just see stuff falling off, there were piles of debris all around the building.

In terms of casualties whilst I was at the pump, round the back of the building, they were bringing people out. If they needed extra care or whatever, they would basically lie them on the ground, they had like plastic sheets over people so obviously they might have been people who might have passed away, there were lots of people that were alive that still came out from the same place but that was at the bottom of the alleyway where the pump was and where we were basically told to go, this was before we were waiting and being escorted into the building. They brought people out from that side and as they were bringing them out you would have to move out of the way. There were ambulances, firefighters, everyone was there. There were loads of people there as well. I could see people in the windows like, there would be people saying like look there is someone up there in that window, I couldn't tell you what floor, this was constantly all through the night you know what I mean, I couldn't tell you specifically what floor they were. You could see people in windows, people flashing their lights even, it was crazy, to be honest with you, we just wanted to help them but there was nothing much we could do at the time, it was pretty traumatic I would say. In terms of how it has affected me, I have been fine to be honest with you I don't think as I said I don't really think about it that much unless something like this happens, I try not to think about it, I think I'm ok, my Mrs might tell you different but I think I'm alright.

In terms of the gas supply, I was not aware of anyone talking about the gas supply if it was on or off, it wasn't really a job where you were thinking about procedures, it was just a case of what could we do to help the people that was it really.

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I didn't have any thermal imaging cameras with me and did not wear any body cameras [REDACTED] that we extinguished the fire, I have no idea, surely that was burning for a long time

In regards to receiving training for firefighting in a high rise block of flats, I couldn't tell you specific dates, but I know we do it quite regularly, but I don't think that training would have made any difference that day to be honest, maybe a few weeks ago, I couldn't tell you a specific date but we do it quite regularly, it would be in the diary when we did it last, the training involves high rise procedure, but as I say, that training doesn't equate to that job, it was completely different, it is not something that you could train for, that was like a one off. I would say I am competent but we are still always learning new stuff anyways.

We don't really do training in high rise, we do like hot training which is like in a specific purpose built thing but we don't actually do it in a high rise, we do real fire training at a purpose built venue, I usually go to Beckton which is where we do our real fire training but it's not like a high rise block.

I was not aware of any pre-prepared firefighting plan for Grenfell Tower, I'm sure their local station would have, but it's not my local ground so we don't. I couldn't tell you with regards to pre-prepared plan for firefighting and or search and rescue when compartmentation failure in a high rise block of flats.

With reference to if there was a fire lift for firefighter's use, I don't know, I didn't see the lift, I didn't see any sprinklers in the building, didn't look for them though, didn't see any. I have no idea of how many means of escapes there were, I couldn't tell you or had no idea with regards to the means of escape from the fire. My radio died so I have no idea, it didn't last very long, I couldn't tell you specifically when but there was so much radio traffic it didn't last very long that was before I went as it was already dead.

I don't know if the dry riser was charged with water when I arrived. I can't remember any fire alarms, did not see any sprinklers. We did have difficulties getting into the building because of the debris that were coming down, the police assisted us with their riot shields.

I had no idea as to the awareness of the risk about cladding panels. In relation to the rising main, we plugged into the rising main and we then put water through, we used our hose on our appliance which was plugged into the riser main and then we put pressure and then we send the water up.

I had no idea of where the incident commander was. With regards to the understanding of the stay put policy, if there is a fire in the block and it doesn't involve your flat, you should stay put until the brigade come to get you or you are told to leave your property, to my knowledge this normally works fine. I have no idea of who made the decision about the application of the stay put policy that night and the decisions regarding the withdrawal of the stay put policy.

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With regards to decisions being recorded on decisions log and incident logs, I'm way down the chain pecking order, I wouldn't have no idea about that, I'm way down the food chain and have no idea of how the commanders first became aware that the fire had started to spread, I also couldn't tell you and had no idea on the decision making process, I had no idea on how the operational tactics / approach was determined. I had no idea on how the command and decision making structure was established as well as the role. I couldn't tell you on what the chain of command did.

I would have to say, I'm sure the fire fighters would have kept a look out for the spread of fire on any of the 4 external walls of the building, everyone was, we were staring at the building,

I can't answer that question in regards to what resources and or training would have been required. With reference to the windows I have no idea, all I could remember was a lot of debris coming down and some of the windows were broken and I couldn't tell you if it was because of the fire or the person in the property had done it, I had no idea on how the fire encroached on the windows. I didn't notice anything specific regarding the construction of the windows. I have no idea, I know there was Turntable Ladder, I think, I don't know what was there in regards to the firefighting measures in tackling the external fire, I remember seeing something but I couldn't tell you what it was. I can't even remember where the Turntable Ladder was situated or deployed unless I was actually at the building maybe I could describe it, off head I couldn't do it. The Turntable Ladder is basically there to go up higher up than a normal ladder, I'm not too sure how high and can't even remember how many floors it goes up to.

In terms of what I observed in relation to spread of the fire spreading laterally or vertically, by the time we got there, the building was more or less alight, I don't know about the fire spreading and how quick it did, I presume it was quite quick, from what I could see on my way there, it looked like the whole building was engulfed in flames, but I couldn't tell you if that was the case, but that's what it looked like to me. I could only see two sides from where we were coming from, the way the fire behaved did not prompt any decision making from my experience.

In regards to what should have been in place to help firefighters deal with the situation they were confronted, I can't answer the question, I have no idea.

I did not suffer a near miss nor did I witness one to another member of the brigade, I also did not receive any first aid or medical assistance from LAS or LFB at the scene or subsequently from NHS or my GP. The whole things I saw as in civilians, the amount of devastation, I have never seen anything like it before, all what I had witnessed went beyond my previous experience as a firefighter. I had people asking me questions and stuff which I couldn't answer, asking for members of their family which were still in

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the building but obviously there was not really much I could relay to them, I didn't speak to any occupiers.

After leaving Grenfell Tower, we went to Paddington fire station arriving there about half 2 / 3 O'clock I'm not too sure, when I arrived at Paddington fire station, we had to fill out some form, I can't even remember what the form was now, I was really tired at the time, that's what we did basically and we went back to our station. I was on duty for probably about 18 / 19 hours.

When I got back to my station, I had a shower and went home and came back on duty that night at 8 o'clock, I was feeling tired and drained.

There is nothing further I want to tell you or say about the incident that has not been covered
I Exhibit a copy of my Proforma notes - (Appendix A) as ALF/1.

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