

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: DIANA, ALDO

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 12 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 DIANA

Date: 13/07/2018

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

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I am making this statement regarding my involvement as a firefighter at the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017. I have been able to refer to my original contemporaneous notes which I had written on the day of the fire whilst making this statement.

I have now retired from the fire service. I joined the fire service in September 1991, passed out of training having completed the 20 week training course and was posted to H43 fire station in Twickenham. It was a relatively quiet station and I was there for about a year while on probation. Probation takes longer than a year but it was about a year until I was signed off as competent. I dealt with a major road traffic accident whilst off duty in Greenford where three people were killed and 3 people injured and I was congratulated by the duty officer on how I had handled it and asked what I wanted to do in the fire service and I said that I wanted to go to a busier station, so he arranged it for me to move to Tooting fire station. I served here for about 4 years. I then moved to Southwark training Centre as a physical training instructor. I left there a little later and went to Southall for a number of years where I got promoted to Crew Manager. I then went to Heston to work with the fire rescue unit where I did my USAR urban search and rescue qualifications. Through a small discrepancy with my watch manager I decided it would be best if I left there and make myself happier at a different station. I moved to Southwark fire station where I worked for about 9 months until it closed. I was asked to go to Dockhead as a watch manager but I was never interested in going up the ranks as I liked to be hands-on and I would have to give up my skills of urban search and rescue stuff so I didn't want to do that. A friend suggested that I would enjoy working at

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Battersea fire station so I went there. Many would say that it would be difficult for me [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I joined red watch at H27 Battersea and stayed there until the end of my career. Although my rank was crew manager after about a week I was put in charge of the station whilst watch manager Simon JENKINS was on leave. I explained to everyone the issue about [REDACTED] and that whilst we were working we would be professional but if there were things that they did not feel comfortable discussing with me [REDACTED] then that is fine. That was the same on all four watches. Nobody had any issues with this. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Battersea, it was maybe the happiest time of my career.

I have dealt with many different incidents, I was first on scene to the lady that jumped in front of the train at Southall, not very nice but part of the job. I have had a few people under trains, many fires and road traffic collisions (RTC) and I just deal with them as I see fit and try to help the public as best I can. I have never worked as part of a fire safety department.

USAR is urban search and rescue, the officers wear orange gear and are trained in search and rescue things like earthquakes, gas explosions, line ops, dangling out of windows and tower blocks rescues off cliff tops etc. I know its not called for too much in London. You go away to Lincoln or Wales to do exercise in major scenarios with casualties. USAR was brilliant and it's a shame not more fire fighters do it but the reason they don't is because you don't get paid any extra for it. You do have a pager and can get called out on you two middle days off. We helped with Alice GROSS the girl that was murdered.

Anybody that is new to the job and wants a lot more out of the job I suggest they do the urban search and rescue stuff. The fire rescue unit is different to a fire appliance it doesn't carry any water and doesn't put any fires out, but it does go along to fire calls and helps out with specialist equipment like extended duration breathing apparatus which is with two cylinders not just the one. Obviously if only just a house fire you only really need one cylinder but anything more protracted you need two. A lot more equipment to learn but it depends what you want, some people are quite happy to sit behind a desk but its nice to have all the extra skills and to use them. Standard duration breathing apparatus is having one cylinder on your back, I cant tell you the weight or technical spec as its been a while since I have used one. Extended duration breathing apparatus is two cylinders. It has a different connector on the bottom of it which allows you virtually twice the amount of time but this is only as good as your fitness level and how hard you are working. You need to rotate your crew a bit more if people are working hard so that you can have a breather and slow your rate down so that those cylinders last a bit longer.

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I have not done a great deal of high rise training in 26 years in the fire service, maybe about 40 times I have dealt with high rise stuff. We do get training, we know about the bridgehead being two floors below and what equipment to take with us, and that has possibly changed since I have left the job, where we used to have to take up a dividing bridge to part the water, take up so many lengths of hose, take up the entry control board. The understanding of what to carry would be brought up maybe once a month. There are so many other different policies and training to take on board it is not always number one and you would not do it every day. You have road traffic accidents (RTAs) water drills ladder drills, first aid, with USAR you have tools skills, timber and metal shoring, hot cutting, chain saw, then you have leave so if you are not on duty at the time of the training taking place you have to do catch up.

When I first started the job we used to do quite a few familiarisation visits not just tower blocks but places of interest, when I was at Twickenham we did Hampton Court Palace, get to go about the bits that the public don't get to see, because if there is a fire then its always good that there are parts that we remember, I remember a pharmaceutical place where there was a fire and because of our familiarisation visit I remembers the height of the lock and type of lock inside making access easier. Its good to have an understanding of the ground that you cover. You have a central risk register, an emergency folder, so that you know where certain bits are. These folders are left in the watch room so that if you are out and about and other stations come on standby they are there for them to access and have an understanding. But later on these got less and less and the only time we would really do familiarisation visits now would be when we are fitting smoke alarms. So you would go to fit a smoke alarm and you would then understand either the tower block or the residential area that you are going to or the streets, that's about the only time you would get for familiarisation of that building. If there was a fire in a block you would do what was called a hot strike, go around handing out leaflets saying that there had been a fire and checking that they have a working smoke alarm. Quite a few fire fighters retain this information and you know where the dry riser is and pick up on this information, working with 8 other guys theres always someone that picks up on dry risers, need for a key fob, drop key, routes in, parts where you can turn around, hydrants, and the good thing is if you are at a station for a long time you get a better understanding. I can understand why some people stay at one station their whole career although that is not right for everyone.

I have dealt with a few high rise fires, taken the correct equipment, had the bridgehead below, extinguished the fire, and a lot of residents hadn't even known that we have been there because it has been contained, we got there in time and sent crew in put it out mopped up and sometimes even do a hot strike straight away. All done and dealt with in a couple of hours, the fire out within a few minutes then

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knocking on doors, tidying up, hose checking, working smoke alarms, waiting for fire investigation teams, all that information is passed back and put on a record. This record is called an incident management system (IMS). I have also dealt with floodings due to something in a flat or stealing parts of dry riser equipment because it is brass and expensive so you plug in to a dry riser at the bottom and it soaks the area, some of it vandalism some just a fault within the system.

Stay put policy since I have been in the job has always worked with any high rise fire that I have been involved with. It is literally that the residents stay put until the fire has been put out, every high rise job that I can remember the fire had been contained within that flat. The only time that it has gone to a different flat is when it has either gone out through a window or a balcony where people store stuff, the fire comes out of the window and it catches something above. Stay put works for us. At least it has since I have been in the job as the fire is contained within the flat. I have never seen a fire go sideways through walls, it may affect a flat to the left or right or above or below through debris falling or flames rising but that would only be through other combustible materials on balconies. I have never seen it like Grenfell. Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017 I came on duty for the first night shift of two, I due to start at 8pm but I think I came in about 18:30 to let the crew manager of white watch go. I like to get my breathing apparatus set checked early and make sure my fire gear is ready for that shift and to sort out the shift handover knowing what equipment is missing, whats broken and what shouts they have had incase we will be going back there to do a follow up. Come 8pm you do roll call so that everyone is given their task and know what machine they are riding. After dismissal the crew check the appliance equipment and do their breathing apparatus set checks. Inventories are done on equipment at every change of watch to list things that are missing or broken. If things are found to be missing or broken at the start of the watch it would be the responsibility of the previous watch to complete the paperwork. The only time that you complete another check would be at the end of an incident or by the next watch coming on. On the computer I would check who is riding where and change positions if needed to match skill sets. You then do the figures for the next day and deal with any emails. Paperwork or changes in policy would be dealt with by having a meeting round the mess table. Then there would be whatever training is on for that shift but not a lot of training was done on a night shift because by the time you have done all checks it is 9 or 10 o'clock, then by the time we have had something to eat as it's a residential area we can't start throwing up ladders so we would read or watch tv or a film. I was in my room by 12 that night and as a firefighter you are allowed to put your head down from 12 until 0640 in the morning but at Battersea you don't sleep that well with Clapham junction station is right next to you. I've never had a problem getting dressed and getting down

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**OFFICIAL**



first, its all to do with the public, doesn't matter what it was you had to respond straight away. I remember the lights coming on, cant tell you what time it was. We have two call signs at Battersea H271 which is the pump ladder and H276 which is the fire rescue unit (FRU). The tannoy message was for H271 and I remember feeling disappointed because we hadn't had a shout that night and I hated it when we have been on duty and not had a call. I wish sometimes we could free ride so that whoever was downstairs first could jump on. The lights went out, I put my head down and then I remember the lights coming back on, I thought well they haven't returned so that's definitely us. H276. Because we are a technical search and rescue station we carry our USAR bags with us with a minimum number of three USAR qualified riders, the fourth person needs to be FRU trained. USAR crews tend to deal with collapsed ceilings, someone wanting to jump in the thames, someone collapsed on a crane, glass in precarious positions that sort of stuff.

As far as I am aware none of the crew had any idea that Grenfell was on fire, nobody was looking at the news, the call slip came through and we got down to the watch room to see that it was a 40 pump fire and gave the address on the tip sheet. Although it was a 40 pump fire it can still be boring as you could be sat in a corner and not used as they often exaggerate the number of appliances needed. We often think couldn't someone have made a decision earlier to not waste resources.

There was 4 of us on the H276 appliance, myself in the officers seat the front passenger seat, FF Marcus LUNDQUIST who I believe was our driver that day, then behind would be Dean NELSON and FF Robert CHART. It used to be a minimum of 5 on the appliance but they have taken one rider position away so it is now a minimum of 4. From the call, the bay doors opened and we turned right out of the station and then at the end of the road turned right onto Falcon Road, we went to the end and at the lights took a right onto York Road then left over Battersea bridge, on the other side round Cheney walk and then up over Gunter Grove, Finsborough Road up past Earls Court, past Cromwell Road coming up Warwick road straight on to Holland Road to Holland Park roundabout, left down Royal Crescent and onto St Annes Road and for some reason the road was closed, we spotted an ambulance and it must have been going there and so followed the ambulance into Silchester Road, we turned left into Silchester so it must have been Bramley Road that we came down. We parked up at Silchester Road.

On the appliance there is a cab radio and then each firefighter has their own personal radio. I was taught a long time ago that it is good practice that as soon as you get on your appliance you turn your personal radio on and have it on channel 1. Channel 4 is for north of the river. Channel 2 is for south of the river. Channel 6 on your personal radio is for breathing apparatus (BA) crews. It is good to hear what is

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happening on the channel and also to hear if we are cancelled in which case we would turn off the blue lights and sirens and go to status 6 which is on call but we would continue listening to the radio incase we were needed again. We were on channel 4. This would allow us to hear rendezvous points, other callsigns that are on route and whats happening. I roughly knew the area as I used to live in Hammersmith when I was younger. One of the other guys in the back knew the area as well so he gave directions to our driver Dean. We could hear the traffic on the radio but still didn't know in what capacity we were going to get used and might not get used at all. I thought the radio was quite quiet, no specific messages about what was happening. I don't remember hearing about any RVP and don't even think that was on the tip sheet but that might be a failing on my part. I remember getting closer to the incident about 3 streets away, seeing the tower and I just thought wow that's not just alight is it... that's fully engulfed. I didn't know the building was clad in anything I thought its just a concrete building, how can a concrete building be engulfed in flames? You know its real, you know you are not dreaming but you just cant believe it because it's a concrete building and nothing can catch fire that way. I think this was near Holland Park roundabout and you could see the smoke and a glow. My personal thoughts were that I just hope we get to go in. I just wanted to be part of it and to help put the fire out, its what Im trained to do and why I joined the fire service. I had no knowledge of how many residents might be in the block and from the scene in front of me I thought we would probably need to go into the building to rescue people.

I remember one of the roads was closed and we had to follow an ambulance down and we parked at Silchester Road. There were vehicles parked on both sides of the road I don't think we could get any closer from the route that we took. We weren't blocking anybody off we just got as close as we could. That was the best we could do that night.

My governor from Battersea riding H271 that went earlier has a very distinctive Scottish accent and I remember hearing him over the radio say that we need more BA. We already had all our gear on so it was just a matter of grabbing our helmets making sure we have got our smoke hoods so I instructed crew to get their BA sets on straight away so we didn't have to waste time coming back to get them. I realised that we might actually be doing something, its our job and its what we are trained for.

We grabbed our extended duration breathing apparatus (EDBA) which is quite heavy, heavier than the standard set and they are kept in lockers at the side of the appliance, we were wearing them ready instead of carrying them and I made sure all our guys had full PPE so we didn't have to go back for gloves or anything, We had a thermal imaging camera with us. We closed up the lockers and I instructed that we lock the appliance because we have had equipment go missing before some people will do that. I directed

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Marcus to drop our nominal role board off at the incident command post so that they have a record of the four of us being there. I made sure he had his radio on so that he could meet up with us afterwards. We walked along Silchester Road and along the road that I have marked on the map (AWD/1) there were lots of people about, I don't remember shouting or swearing or anybody approaching me telling me things but I may have blocked this out as I was looking for the most direct route to the bottom of the building. It was the right route because we were there within a minute. We walked round the back of the academy, through a bit between the academy and the leisure centre and then we were at Grenfell Tower. I was hoping that I was going to get to go inside and be of some use. I remember a lot of activity by this bank and seeing firefighters moving quickly to get equipment, I also remember shouting from members of public but I don't know what they were saying. I could also see bits of the building falling off alight. I also remember seeing a guy from our watch Mike SMITH and he was putting out with a hose anything falling off the building that was alight and falling to the ground. I remember thinking that he wouldn't want that task because although its important it should be given to someone less qualified because he is FRU trained. I remember seeing black smoke and a lot of flames coming through it. I saw the turntable ladder and water being put onto the building from the turntable ladder. (TL on map)

I remember seeing Stewart BROWN in charge of H271. We were held for a short period of time and we were told that we were going to be committed. I remember seeing someone I think a police officer or paramedic carrying a leg. I thought someone must have jumped off and realised that is sheer desperation if someone has jumped. I don't know how many people jumped that night but that's the last thing you want people having to jump to try to survive.

I recall there being a demand for 10 BA crews or 10 EDBA crews to make their way to the main entrance to the ground floor.

I spoke to the bridgehead manager who I knew, and a few months later after Grenfell he told me that he was hoping that crews from his station would be given another task to do outside the building as he feared for our lives, that's how bad it was. I do think we were fortunate that night that no firefighters lost their lives. It would have been very easy for a firefighter to have walked the wrong way and fallen out of the building as most of it was so open. I think we had one injury and that was I think a shoulder injury from some debris or something.

My own personal view of Grenfell was that it wasn't going to collapse. Our buildings aren't like that.

9/11 was different, plane damages the structure and down it comes, this is just a fire albeit on a massive

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scale, emergency fire escapes with BA are ok and firefighters can get to wherever they need to be sent, obviously people without BA will be quickly overcome by smoke.

We were waiting no more than about 10 minutes in the lobby area, I saw the station manager Nick MYATT on the mezzanine floor above looking down and we acknowledged each other. The watch manager from Fulham, first name Glynn but I can't remember his last name, was writing stuff on the wall in chinagraph which is the only thing you can do. Chinagraph is a black crayon pencil which is used to write on plastic or walls. Forward information boards (FIB) usually contain all information required however something on this scale needed a much larger area so the whole wall on the ground floor was used and this detailed where crews were going and relevant information but I was more interested in what floor we would be going to and what we would be doing. It is good practice to listen to what other people are doing so that you can help people out if things go wrong. I think there were 3 or 4 entry control boards for us to put our BA tallies in. BA tallies are yellow and ED BA are red. These have a small microchip that once inserted into the entry control board (ECB) shows the crew is committed and gives valuable information about air duration and any lack of movement. This works by telemetry. The new entry control boards can log how much oxygen we have left, or if we are in distress or if we are standing still for a period of time. There was a group manager and at least two station managers in the lobby area. There were two watch managers writing stuff on the walls and ensuring teams going in were correctly dressed and rigged. I remember those present were Nick MYATT one of the station managers, Pat GOLDBOURNE a group manager, and Glynn the watch manager from Fulham, I don't remember the entry control officers. The floor was covered in water a good 8-10 inches deep. I remember one of the group managers, Pat GOLDBOURNE, coming in through the door not seeing the frame and tripping over and falling into the water. Then Danni COTTON the Commissioner came in. She actually said hello to me and then was saying to all of us that this is a fire never seen before and asking us all to please be careful and vigilant. Her voice was calm but with an urgency. I've had three commissioners during my LFB service and in all my years this is the only time I have seen the commissioner turn up to say something. Usually senior officers don't get that close so it was quite a morale boost that she had turned up. She was inspirational. She was even handing out bottles of water to guys that had already been in. You don't even get that from some station managers it seems to be a task below them. Andy ROWE came in I think he is a deputy assistant chief, he also said a few words about being safe. I believe we were about second in the queue waiting for commitments. We were tasked with going to floor 16 flat 133 to do a search of the flat. We had already checked each other off and handed in our BA tallies.

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We put our masks on, did the straps up, put the hood over, and I then led Dean and I up. Water was coming down the stairs, I believe this was from a burst hose that had burnt though and not been turned off. Even though the water coming down could be a hindrance it also could be a saver for other things as well, it didn't make things harder for us. It was quite light from the mezzanine floor, round one set of steps and then it got a bit darker. By the time we reached the third floor it was completely dark. Between the fourth and fifth floor we came across a man who I think was completely naked, he was about 15-18 stone quite a big bloke. I think he was a white bloke and I believed him to be unconscious. I don't remember any clothes on him whatsoever. Difficult to say but I would say he was 40 plus in age maybe up to 55. He was in the way so needed to be moved, I also thought that if he had got this far then he might still be alive so he had to be moved. I couldn't check for signs of life because our gloves are too thick to be able to feel anything. If we take our gloves off they are extremely difficult to get back on because of them being wet. He was more of a hindrance left where he was so we had to get him out. Dean and I went to pick him up, he was quite heavy and we struggled to get him down the stairs. Two more firefighters came up the stairs and I told the guys to help us to get him out. I know that would have delayed whatever task they had but getting this guy out of the way will make things easier for people coming up or down. Residents coming out would see him and that will stay with them too and you don't want people to see that. Dean and I went to the head end as he was facing feet first down the stairs. We picked him up from the shoulders and the other two firefighters pulled him out of our hands, we tried to get a better grip and they pulled him out of our hands again, I don't know who they were but I shouted and swore at them to take care of this and if he is alive they are causing him more pain by bashing his head. We picked him up, got him down to fresh air and he was taken over by a couple of firefighters without BA on to carry him out. I have been told that everybody that was brought out survived so I am hoping that that was the case with this man. If he was dead then I could understand why any firefighter before us would have left him but nobody told us that the first guy you come to is dead and to leave him there. Maybe the crews had gone in and had seen this guy coming down the stairs and then he collapsed afterwards so I decided that he needed to come out as I assumed that nobody had seen him.

I don't believe the stairs themselves were any wider than about 3 or 3 and a half feet wide. I felt I had only been in the tower a few minutes, I remember thinking it is hard work with 23 kilos of cylinders on your back the same weight as your flight luggage on your backs. I cant say I was hot but it was awkward as you are soaked through with sweat and not just the water coming down the stairs. There was hose going up or down the staircases and water cascading down as well. I remember there was no lighting and

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there was thick smoke but I didn't see any flames in the stairwell or anything burning. It wasn't claustrophobic for me because I have the set on and can breathe. The staircase was very tight. I don't remember any smells.

Dean and I then went back up the stairs as quickly as we could, climbed two or three floors which were thick with smoke and getting thicker with smoke, we then came across two women I think, they were in a state of shock and panic and a bit of smoke inhalation. They were in the stairwell and they were still in smoke and could quite easily collapse themselves, they would not know how long they have until they collapse and the confusion they are in they might not know how many stairs they have got left to go. I got Dean to go past them so that we could usher them out telling them they were coming with us. Im not sure what they looked like, they were not black or white but had darker skin, I vaguely remember one may have been wearing a headscarf. We got them down to clearer air where they could see where they were going and there were other firefighters just above the mezzanine floor helping people to get out. I remember handing them over to a firefighter with no BA on but I don't know who this was.

We went back up again, reached what I believe was the ninth floor and came across a guy who said that his pregnant wife and his daughter were behind him but he cant find them. I don't know what ethnicity he was but he wasn't white and he had a bald head, maybe 5'7" in height. He might have said two daughters but I don't remember. It must be horrendous trying to get out and loosing the hand grip of your loved ones. I grabbed him by the front of his chest and Dean went past him and I told him there was only one way out and to follow the stairs down while we find his wife and daughter. Moments later I have then seen two women one younger than the other and I remember one of them mentioning being pregnant so assumed that this was his wife and daughter. They were just behind him and he must have not been able to see them because of the dense smoke. They were in a state of shock possible smoke inhalation, I have no idea what floor they came from or what flat, I didn't question them. The more smoke they take in the less they will survive so its just get them out. Questions can be asked later when they are down and out with other firefighters. He went past and was going down the stairs in front of us, I was between him and the two girls and Dean was behind as we led them down the stairs. Once we got to an area that was clear light with firefighters we handed them over. This was above the mezzanine floor maybe two or three floors above it. We took those three out and then went back up again to try to get to the 16<sup>th</sup> floor. We got all the way up to maybe the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> floor, I was leading Dean again, you couldn't see your hand in front of your face and you were getting wet with water cascading down the stairs and hitting the walls. I don't remember any smells and don't remember the heat. I remember feeling tired but I asked

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myself how often we will get to do this job lets just do what we can until we have got no air left. You should exit before your low pressure whistle sounds and not wait until it whistles but for me personally, if you know where your entrance is and you know where you are going to and you know you can do that within a certain space of time then you are ok but I do understand when people say that if there is an obstacle then you are risking your own life. I'm quite good at breathing within a cylinder maybe because I have a paddy diving licence. When your low pressure whistle goes off you know you have about 10 minutes of time left and I should be able to get from the top floor down to the ground in that time unless there was a blockage but I believe I could get myself out. I wasn't focussed on that I was focussed on the residents and the public that need to get out.

I remember going back up the stairs, couldn't see your hand in front of your face, the lamps that we had weren't great, communications were not brilliant, I could hear through my earpiece things going on and muffled sounds from people on the stairs and radio messages, I have always felt that our radio equipment could be better and something that be improved for the future. I remember going up the floors and looking and realising it was the tenth floor and that was not the right floor, the frustrating this was that the lift numbers were labelled wrong. I brought this up a day later when I made a list of all the floors and gave it to Colin PARKER I think a group manager. No wonder there was confusion. We got up to about the 13<sup>th</sup> floor and I stepped on what I thought was hose at that point, and we heard a cough, we both knelt down and looked with our lamps and could see two girls lying on the floor huddled together, it was a girls arm that I had stood on. They were maybe 16-20 in age, I think they were Asian, 8-9 stone in weight and were laid left to right on the stairs rather than down the stairs, but they were heavy when we picked them up, we had been up and down the stairs a couple of times and we were soaked through. We made the decision that because one of them had coughed she was alive and so we are taking them both out. Dean picked up one and I picked up the other and Dean led the way out. I remember trying to get her onto my chest because I couldn't put her onto my back because of the cylinders on my back. I don't know what debris was on the staircase maybe it was bodies or hose or suitcases people had tried to bring out, there was loads of stuff on the staircase and no lighting but I think we got down the stairs quite quickly with them. I remember having to put her down to readjust because she was quite slippery and soaked wet through. I remember she had at least shoulder length hair, maybe 5'6" in height and thin trousers on and a thin stripy top on. I was able to pick her up and not trip up so she was not taller than me. I don't remember looking at her face because I was more concerned about picking her up. Dean managed to get down quicker than me and I brought her down and handed her over at the mezzanine floor. It seemed to

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take forever to get her out because she was just a dead weight and because of the debris in the staircase. It would have been easier if I could have put her over my shoulder but I couldn't do that with the cylinder on and I'm not sure I would have had the strength either. My whistle was already sounding on my BA set. I was gutted because I wasn't going to get up to complete the task that I had been given. I had lost sight of Dean we wouldn't have known if either one of us had got into trouble which is not good practice but we just knew that these two girls needed to be taken out. I have been told that both of those girls survived. I have not met them and they may not have even known that they had collapsed.

We went down to the ground floor and picked up our BA tallies and went outside I think through the back of the building where an exit had been created rather than the main entrance, I'm not sure whether this was a door or glass panels that had been pushed through to create an exit. Police officers with riot shields then covered us while we got out. We went to a safe area but I can't remember where this was. I then went to change my cylinder in case there was a chance of going in again. Cylinders weren't readily available, I'm not sure why, more cylinders were asked for, but there was a delay in changing them. We managed to do so but maybe about an hour later. With 40 appliances and four people on each that's easily 150 or 160 people who would have had sets to go in. I changed my cylinder and was told to go to another area to wait. They didn't want to use the same crews all the time I suppose as they were tired. I grabbed some water and a Mars bar and sat in an area waiting to go back in again. I was disappointed that I didn't get to the 16<sup>th</sup> floor to go into flat 133. I didn't even know where flat 133 was on the 16<sup>th</sup> floor as nobody had told us but maybe that's my fault for not asking. I know there was 6 flats but I didn't know which was 133 and I'm disappointed in myself for that.

I remember having a bit of a discussion with another firefighter Ricky NUTTALL who wanted to go back in and I said he can do so behind me and it was like we were pushing each other to try to get in first. A guv'nor stepped in to say we would all get a chance to go back in. I just wanted to go in now as we were standing around for a long time waiting to be committed and it's frustrating. I'm sure silver and gold whoever was making the decisions knew what they were doing and how many firefighters there were in the building, you can only get so many in the building and I think that was why there was the delay. This was along with the delay of cylinders and battery packs and this is where the technology side lets us down, with the old cylinders there was no battery pack, it didn't alert on the control board you just heard it and you work in a pair so if one was in trouble you call for help. A lot of firefighters were frustrated that cylinders were not there quick enough. My set was fine I didn't need another battery just a cylinder that I needed. I grabbed my cylinder from the park area near the Salvation army and then went round

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asking who else needed cylinders, others had lost their gloves or smoke hoods. You put all your gear somewhere and expect it to be there but then it is either borrowed or pinched.

About two hours later, I don't know what the time was but it was after 4, the sun was up and it was daylight, we were committed to search the 13<sup>th</sup> floor and to do a full sweep of the floor to make sure it was all clear. I was tasked with Crew manager Jamie MAYNE on my watch and another crew manager whose name I can't remember who were also itching to get back in as well along with another firefighter I think Robert CHART. I did not work with Dean again that night. The four of us were all tasked with this sweep of the 13<sup>th</sup> floor. I decided that once we had got up to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor we would spread out one doing the left hand side and one doing the right and then we would come back and swap in case there was anything either of us had missed. I led the crew up counting the floors and saw that somebody had rubbed off the smoke to put the floor number on the wall. I remember looking at the lift panel and the numbers were on there but it wasn't until I went back again that I realised there were two seventeens, one of the seventeens was above floor eighteen, it was a complete and utter mess and I can understand how firefighters were so confused. They shouldn't have been, they should have counted floors and gone up but we do make mistakes but none of the floors corresponded right. Whoever had refurbished the flats had not got the right numbers. Apparently these numbers were behind the numbers that had burnt off. Things shouldn't be in plastic they should be in metal or some form that can be seen. Later on somebody had put wall numbers on the outside and I think this was done once the fire was out. We went up to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor and checked it. Myself and the crew manager whose name I did not know searched the left area, the other two searched the right and then we swapped over. It was just like what you are left with after a big bonfire; and big pile of rubble, inside there was areas of burning rubble, it was quite eerie as inside there was all this devastation and yet outside you could actually hear the birds singing and you could see the sun coming up, green trees and cars on the A40 and a beautiful day outside and yet inside was complete devastation. I remember one of the guys saying that we had done our task, and I said no we have enough oxygen so let's go up to the floor above, so we went to the next floor up, hopefully if someone was coming up to do the 14<sup>th</sup> floor maybe they would have done the 14th and the 15th to just have extra sets of eyes to see if anybody else had survived. I have been to a pub fire in north London before and in the middle of that there was a person who had been burnt to the bone but you could still tell there was a person there, so I moved bits of rubble to check for people but found nothing. It took us about half an hour to do. The bin shafts had been virtually untouched maybe someone could have gone in one of them. We found nothing on that floor either and then made our way Out. I don't remember anything specific or strange about any

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windows; just the fact that they were nearly all missing. I was not aware at any time that the stay put policy had been withdrawn.

I changed my cylinder again and waited hoping to be committed again but we were told that we wouldn't be committed again and that was it. This was about half past 5 or 6 in the morning. We were hanging around until about 9 o'clock just helping with other crews doing stuff. Blue watch relief crews were coming in to take over from us. I remember picking up equipment and walking around with cups of coffee for people not just firefighters but paramedics and everybody else. I remember seeing one guy in tears, didn't know what he was crying about but gave him a shoulder to cry on seeing as I'm not doing anything else. I was picking up cylinders and taking them to where they needed to be as some guys were just taking them off and leaving them and that just pisses me off. I still had my radio on to listen in case we were needed. We were told we were leaving and so we picked up our nominal role board and were told to go directly to Paddington station to fill out a statement about what we did that day and to see a counsellor about what we had seen that day. I just remember thinking I just wanted to get in the shower, get back to the station clean up the gear and then go home to get back for the night shift. I did not have any medical attention that day or after the events and did not consider that I needed any.

We had to park outside Paddington station which is one of the slip roads to get back onto the A40 because there was not enough space inside for all the appliances. Two crews were in the same room while we were doing the notes, some only just wrote a few words and I was trying to remember as much as I could. I remember thinking that I had not done enough notes but didn't know how much was needed, I was tired and really didn't want to have to do them. I should have known there would have been an enquiry it's not just a house fire or road traffic accident this is massive and I should have written more notes, I didn't and that's my fault. We were also told to go into another room and see a counsellor, I don't need that and so we just left and went back to Battersea. I grabbed a shower and jumped on the motorbike and drove home. I spoke to my wife about it, I don't think she was upset I think she was just amazed about what had gone on. She didn't know until the morning when I rang her and told her where I was and why, that was at about 6am.

I remember being told that night shift that I don't need to come in until midnight but I wanted to get in early and be on duty. Grenfell for me was over and I wouldn't go back there it was downsized by then. I think it was about 2 years ago when Mentorn media were doing a program called inside the London fire brigade and were filming Battersea blue watch and a couple of other stations around London, they weren't getting enough footage so they put on more camera crews to cover other watches. One they chose

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was red watch, my watch, and I think some of the reason for that was that I was retiring in 5 or 6 months of it being aired and we had a new guy that had just joined and they thought it would be a good storey about how I would pass my knowledge and experience on to him. Knowing that I had retired and it had been a year since Grenfell, I got a phone call from Tate SIMPSON who is the main guy from Mentorn explaining that they were doing a documentary about Grenfell the first 24 hours and I said I would be quite happy to do that as I had quite enjoyed the filming before, I asked if it had been cleared with the brigade and said im happy to do stuff as long as it does not jeopardise the enquiry. He said that they had spoken to the brigade and that they have lawyers and solicitors present and that they cant do anything to jeopardise the enquiry either. I knew they wanted to do a second or third series and they wouldn't do anything stupid or they wouldn't be able to get the next series. I then spoke to Stewart Brown the governor and Nick DAVIES a group manager at union street and they said that they had not aware of any filming being done and if anything was not right they would get back to me. I didn't hear anything so I decided to go ahead and do the filming.

I then get a call from TATE and he asked me to do a piece for Radio Times as the program was coming out that next week, I thought it would just be a few lines in the magazine, they sat in my house and we chatted about Grenfell, and then there was a double page spread in the Radio Times. Then my wife saw on facebook that there was an article in the Daily Mail and I was unhappy with that because they had sold it to the Daily Mail, I spoke to TATE and told him I was not happy but he said the Radio Times was separate to them and it was their decision. I don't think it did jeopardise the enquiry but there are some things in that article which aren't really my words. I then had phone calls from people - radio four were asking me to do an interview, I thought I would and did that in Tunbridge Wells asking me about the night and about stay put. Each time I explained that it works 99 out of 100 times so longs as it has not been coated in flammable material, BBC southeast wanted a piece, six o'clock news wanted piece, the This Morning program with Phillip Schofield and Holly WILLOUGHBY wanted a piece and I said yes, I got to the studios and went in the green room for make up and sat down and they talked about it asking me questions I just answered them as I remember, I wasn't going to tell them floors or who I rescued or what sex they were and already had that in my mind. I was put out there as a hero firefighter, I was just in the right place at the right time for some of these people who were coming down the stairs or who were on the stairs and its not just me, other guys worked harder than I did that night and we would have all done the same in that situation. I did the Victoria Derbyshire show on the day before the Grenfell anniversary. Which had one of the union reps on. I also did RTUK which I think is a Russian program, I

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did a bit for BILD which I think is a German magazine, and also a bit in the Reveal magazine. Some going points have come out of it as I have friends from school that I didn't even know were in the fire service and old friends who have got back in touch after seeing me. The response that I have had from firefighting colleagues has also been good. Saying how articulate I am and mainly that it is nice to have a voice. I hope I have not upset any firefighters or any residents or families. It is not for my fame and fortune I have no interest in that. It was nice doing it but I felt uncomfortable with some of the questions as I was not making the decisions and was just a firefighter. It must be hard for those making the decisions. Apparently there is another one happening I think it is for newnight a BBC program but if the police or anybody tell me that I shouldn't be doing it then I am more than happy to say no. I quite enjoyed being asked to do programs and I think I wanted to do it because I miss doing the job, then what spurred me on is people saying that I came across really well and that they were happy that I could act as a voice for them. If I got slated by the firefighters I would not have done it. I've had positive feedback from my boss, senior managers and union reps but I have been told that some senior managers are not happy with it but I have no idea why. I do not know why the media reported my rescuing nine people but I think the figure may have been eight from my account.

The BBC have asked me about the poem that has been written by Ricky NUTTALL on my watch. I have taken up making stained glass windows as a hobby and my way of relaxing, they want to film me making a stained glass window of the poem and presenting it to the LFB headquarters to be unveiled.

If anybody from that night wants to meet me then I'm more than happy to do that once everything is settled and done but only if they want to, I was just doing my job that night. I hope they are all well and they didn't lose anybody else.

14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 we were nights, I had the 16<sup>th</sup> off and was then back on duty 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of June. The crew were tasked with going into the building and retrieving bodies. USAR were tasked to go from the ground floor into every room on the block including the rubbish chutes and onto the roof to check everywhere for anything untoward and make sure we hadn't missed anybody. We found nothing and nobody anywhere. I think there was a gym area where we had to break into some of the cupboards to make sure nobody was hiding in there. The second day was a waste of time and as there was a monitor on the building it was deemed to be moving so it was everybody in and then everybody out because of the risk. I have been back to Grenfell tower since then on 28<sup>th</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017. This was to help the disaster victim identification (DVI'S) removing debris from the rooms. I think we covered the top floor. They had finished the digs and bagging and sifting and all rubble was put into a bag and put into

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another bag tagged with what flat number it came out of or room it came out of. We were picking the bags up and putting them into the lift and they were being taken down to be stored.

I was pleased that I was on duty that night and pleased that I got to work. I'm very sad of the loss of life. I'm unaware why I am not affected by the events. I sometimes get a bit choked up and have a tear in my eye when I hear about families that I may have rescued or dealt with on the night especially if I hear that they survived. It's a nice feeling actually. I hope it doesn't go on as long as Hillsborough. I know there will always be an anniversary for it because of the massive loss of life. Its very sad for anybody to lose anybody and I'm not sure how I would feel if my family was lost and I was the only one to survive, or how they would feel, I know people need to grieve but I get frustrated over it. I've been pleased with the remarks and responses that I've had with doing the media coverage afterwards and pleased with the fact that the guys who are still serving have said positive stuff. I've been hurt by some of the remarks that have gone on about the idea that we would choose who to save, I don't think any firefighter that went in that night picked and chose who to save. To be honest with some of the people that I brought out, especially the last two girls, it would be hard to distinguish whether they were white or black or mixed race or anything else. I knew what sex they were but nothing else. That bit hurts me more than anything else. I don't care about the fact that the police are investigating us because we need to be investigated and I understand that side of it and I don't hold anything against the police for having to interview us. The public need to have the answers. I know who the blame lies with, could we have done anything different? I don't know.. could we have removed stay put earlier? I don't know.. My personal belief about the stay put is that if it was removed sooner I believe that more lives would have been lost. I think it would have been more difficult for us to have gone anywhere into the job, I think people would have collapsed sooner on the stairs and made it far more difficult for us to get people out of the building. For me, it was right, but its also wrong because we as firefighters don't know what the building is, we just know it is a tower block, we didn't know what it is coated in, I know there will be a different outlook on it now, because so many buildings around London and the UK are being changed and cladding taken off, but that bit for me is frustrating and we as firefighters don't have that say. I'm sure it will turn that firefighters do a lot more familiarisation of the buildings now to have a better understanding of them. We spend far more time ticking boxes and seeing how many smoke alarms we have put up when everybody should have a smoke alarm anyway and these things should be done by light duty teams. Firefighters don't cover a lot of the training that we should be doing because we have to go out and make sure that we have fitted 9 smoke alarms this week. The biggest hurt for me is this thing about us choosing who to rescue and who to save.

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When you saw that building itself the way it was alight, that is a difficult building for anybody to go up. We are going in. We get told we cant go in some buildings and you look at it and think, really? This was totally engulfed in flames and we were asked to do something that night. And we did. Maybe some things were wrong, and some decisions could have been chosen a bit more wisely, but never ever have we had a fire like that. I don't think any firefighter, police officer or paramedic would pick who to treat or who to deal with. All the public know that the job we did that night was hard and that goes for all the emergency services not just the fire service, even though we are the ones that go in, we have protective equipment to go in, the police and the ambulance service don't, they help outside, and both those services helped greatly. That's the one thing that hurts the most; the accusation that we pick and choose. Throughout this statement I referred to a map with positions of where we parked and where firefighters were waiting and where we entered. This is a printed A3 map which I now exhibit as AWD/1.

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