

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CARDY, ALEXANDER

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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: ALEXANDER CARDY

Date: 13/01/2018

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

I provide this statement in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire that I attended in the early hours of Wednesday 14th June 2017.

On Saturday 18th November 2017 I provided an account to DC Amin KOHZADBAYAT and DC Peta JAMES. This statement has been compiled using that account that was audio recorded.

I have been a Firefighter for over fourteen years, coming up to fifteen in January, and am currently a Watch Manager on the Red Watch, at Willesden Fire Station with Call sign G281. This was the role I had on Tuesday 13th June 2017, into Wednesday 14th June, as I had been promoted to this rank since May 2017.

On Wednesday 14th June 2017, at just after 01:00 hours, I was on duty and resting at my Station, along with my crew, Firefighter Katie FOSTER, Firefighter Gregory LAWSON, Firefighter Tom WELCH and Crew Manager Craig EDEN. The lights at the Fire Station were illuminated, along with a synthetic trumpet call and a voice of a female on the tannoy speaker which called out our one and only call sign. This indicated that there was an incident that we, the only engine at Willesden, were required to attend.

The details of the call were received in the Watch room, via the tele-printer which was torn off the machine and the basic details were comprehended. The details of the call were to a High Rise Fire, on a

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ten pump attendance, meaning that we were one of the ten fire engines/machines that had been deployed.

I got dressed and went down the pole, got rigged and went on board the machine along with my team. We booked on, via the on board computer on the Machine to show that we were on our way. Even before setting off, my first question to my crew was where the location was. This is due to me being new to the ground and so rely on them for that side of experience. FF Foster, too, was new to the Station as she had just joined the Fire & Rescue Service, therefore she did not know the location either. The week before, on a previous tour, we had had a call to an Automatic Fire Alarm, which was in the estate that is next to Grenfell. I do not recall the name of that estate.

We had taken the same journey and had parked about two hundred yards away from Grenfell. Due to the size of the estate and the high rise buildings that were about four to five stories high, I did not see Grenfell at that time, hence I did not have knowledge of the tower. It just happened that some of the crew that I was on board with, had previously attended incidents in and around the North Kensington area. Although none of the crew had been to Grenfell Tower itself, nor inside of it, they still had slight knowledge of the surroundings. This facilitated reaching the location as the driver, FF Lawson knew exactly where to go.

By the time we were about to leave the bay, the count of the pumps had risen to twenty-five. This was a clear indication that we were about to be faced with a very large scale incident. A standard high rise fire usually requires six to eight pumps hence I knew that this incident was going to be something different and that it was going to be big. Even on a ten pump fire, a FF knows that they will be required to do something and that it would not be an easy task. But when I saw that it was a twenty-five pump call, before leaving the Station, I could not even envisage what I was going to meet. I have never been in such a situation. Whilst on the machine, driving to the location, my team and I were sitting and waiting, but engaged in conversation whilst trying listen to the main radio set that is on board the vehicle. I do not recall the radio being very busy, but I remember an informative call coming out over the Radio which was the details of the Fire. Amongst us, in the vehicle, there were a lot of swearing throughout as we could not believe what was going on. Although the Police have asked me to repeat the expletives used, I do not wish to do so as it is something I normally do not use. Having used swear words on the night, just means that it was not a normal situation.

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The MDT on the vehicle would also hold information that was on the torn slip from the tele printer. But the MDT would also hold information in regards to the actual building itself, such as how many floors there are, dimensions, any fixed insulations such as risers or sprinklers. I did not get a chance to look at these details as by the time we got there, we could see what was happening.

As it was a hot summer night, during the few minutes of journey, we had all the windows of the vehicle wound down. As we were traveling and getting closer to our destination, I could hear multiple sirens. I could also smell burning in the air. Experience has taught me that different smells are associated with specific types of fire. On that occasion, the smell was one that of plastic burning and it could be smelt way before we got to the vicinity. This in itself meant that we were going to something unusual and of a large scale.

As there were a couple of roads closed off, FF LAWSON drove down Scrubs Lane, turned left by the traffic lights, North Pole Road, Latimer Road, Oxford Gardens, Bramley Road, under the West Way, under Latimer Tube Station and that was the first time I saw the burning Tower was on the left. Imagining a rectangle, from one corner, from the fourth or fifth floor, the fire had travelled in a forty-five degree angle, upwards and across to the other side, covering the entire face of that side of the building. I would not describe the fire as fully involved, but it was superficial and it was on the outside. It was unnatural.

One of our annual trainings is fires in High Rise buildings. This includes lectures as well as practices, which can be done as exercises at a station where we take off equipment and set up as if it was a real fire. We would set up six or eight pump drills. Although I do not recall the last time I completed one of these trainings, I know that it was in the past year, and a lecture since May as FF Foster had joined at that time and I would have had to go through certain things with her, including this training.

My expectations were that it should have been just one flat, just one pocket from the entire building. But clearly it was not and it was something very different to anything else I have ever seen before. This was clearly down to building construction. Under normal circumstances, if we had been there in five minutes, taken a few more minutes to set up and even if we had not tackled the fire within the first fifteen minutes,

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we should have had about forty-five minutes to extinguish the fire that was held in one flat. But this fire had spread in a way that we did not have time to fight it.

Given that the fire was contained in a compartment, it would have provided us with sufficient time to get our gear ready, get sets on, sort out the BAs, assess the situation...etc. That period of time would be calm and the opportunity to get sorted out in regards to what is needed to be done. But this was not the case as the fire had spread so fast and compartments could not be determined.

The structure should be for the bridgehead to be set, usually two floors below where the fire is. At the very most, one FF may go up to visually inspect from a closer range, but the compartment would protect the spread of fire. This approach could take about fifteen minutes to set up. However, clearly this was not the case on this occasion. None of us were used to this situation. As time went on, during the incident, I came to realise that normal protocol was not implemented as this was something we had not encountered before and that it was not normal.

We parked on Grenfell road and recall specifically the spot where we parked the machine, by some old Victorian houses on the right and an estate on the left. There were three or four machines already parked up in front of us and as we stopped. I saw a few machines down the side roads and others pulling up parking behind us. There were lots of machines everywhere.

When we got off our machine and saw the Tower in front of us, we all stood there momentarily with our mouths open, trying to comprehend what was going on. Once again, there was a lot of swearing. It was at that point when I realised that what we were about to face, was going to be big, something that none of us had ever been to before. We are all taken back by this.

I keep stressing this, that what I expected was a compartment of that building to be alight, regardless of the type of High Rise building that it may have been. But this was not the case as I saw the side of the building, pretty much in its entirety, in flames. This is the reason we have a 'stay put' policy as the fire would be contained and controlled. In my experience, this method works as people do not compromise the lifts that the FFs need to use, they do not use the stairs that the FFs need to use, they do not delay the FFs' jobs, and they do not inhale smoke as they would be protected in their flats.

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On that night, it was an exceptional night, but I think the advice was still right for people to 'stay put'. I do not know whose decision it was to implement it on the night, but it would have been standard procedure. I also do not know whose decision it was to withdraw that advice and tell people to get out. All these decisions would be recorded in a 'key decision log' but I do not know who has made those calls or where the logs were. Later on I found out that the Incident Commander had seen the spread of the fire himself. Of course the chain of command does change depending how many machines attend and what goes on. I am not sure but I think the chain of command had changed to the DAC being in charge.

I have been to High Rise fires in my career, as a Crew Manager and as a FF, but I have never seen anything like it.

I did not give a detailed briefing to my crew as we could all see what was going on, hence we made our way to the bottom of the Tower where there was a concrete concourse. None of us knew what to do or who the Incident Commander was, but there were two officers, Watch Manager COLLINS and Station Manager Loft from Paddington, who were very calm and collected. They were sorting out absolutely everything and this was a relief as we needed people like them to take control due to everybody else not knowing what to do. They stated that they needed as many Breathing Apparatus, Hoses and Branches as possible. Branches are the jets at the end of hoses where water is sprayed out from.

I assigned them to get BAs, hose and branches. We had set off with only four BAs as our fifth one had been taken off the run. This means that although we only had four BAs, we could have still gone out to calls, but one person would have had to remain outside and give up the wearing of a BA. This person is usually the one that under normal circumstances does not enter the building and in most occasions, it is the supervisor. Due to this reason, I did not have a BA set.

Whilst my crew went to retrieve the items, there was a period that I was stood, not knowing what to do. This was when I saw and spoke to FF MOOR, who is based at Park Royal. He was setting up a Main Control Board. As I could see that he already had a role, which was unlikely to change, and meant that he was not required to enter the building, I asked if I could borrow his BA set, which he agreed to. Although this is not normal procedure, I made my way to where the machines were parked and found the one from Park Royal as all vehicles have their call sign and Station name written on the side. I checked the BA set on the back of the machine, made sure the cylinders had air and gave it a once over.

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The FFs with BAs were being collected under a concrete walkway and by the time I got there, I could not re-join my crew as they had already lined up and entered the building. To me, this was disconcerting, simply because I was in charge of them and felt responsible. The fact that FF Foster had only been with us for only three weeks, made me even more concern and a bit of my heart was in my mouth. But I knew she was in accompany with the best person, FF LAWSON, who has been in the service for about twenty years.

Due to the circumstances and the number of FFs around, I saw and met my old Watch Manager from Wembley, WM Peter CLARK and FF Enrico BELTRAMI. As we spoke, we stacked up and were ready to be deployed as BA, behind a line of FFs waiting to enter the building. As we were reaching the front of the queue, there were a number of people, in various states, being brought out by FFs. Some of the people were burnt and some dead. It was very difficult watching this as I could not leave where I was to go and help.

Eventually I reached the front of the queue, but couldn't just walk up to the building as I had to await the directions of a senior officer who was instructing us as to when to run to the building, from where we were, under the concrete walkway, which was protection us from the falling debris. The building was about ten feet away from the concrete walkway and debris falling from the building was coming down. The senior officer was simply looking up and when there were not as much debris falling down, he would give us the go ahead. The debris coming down were various in sizes, and ranged from six inches, to about two feet, burning pieces of plastic. They were plastic and looking back, now I have come to learn that it was in fact the cladding that had burned and fallen off the face of the building.

I could see that the FF on the Arial Ladder Platform was getting hit with the debris hence he had to come down.

When It was our turn at the front of the queue, we got the go ahead and ran to the building, missing and dodging the debris that was falling down. The fallen debris were laying on the ground, along with black ash, hence we had to look where we were placing our feet when running through.

FF BELTRAMI, WM CLARK and I stayed together as we made it to the building. As we entered the

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mezzanine area, there were still people being brought out, in various states. This coupled with the fact that there were parts of the building falling down, made me worried. As I was going inside, I saw FF Welch coming out, red and worn out. He was holding in his hand deman valve which connects the BA set to the mask. He was not wearing his mask, nor helmet. Later on I discovered that he had ran out of air when he was up inside the building, trying to rescue a casualty. FF BELTRAMI, WM CLARK and I made it to third floor, where the bridgehead was situated, at that point. This was where the BA crews were mustering, awaiting a briefing from a senior officer before being tasked.

As we remained a team of three, we were briefed to go up to the 9th floor, go through the doors, start a systematic search and rescue from the left hand side. I do not know as to why we were in a group of three as this is unusual, but it may have had something to do with the fact that we had a new recruit with us, but I am not sure. As all three of us were happy with the brief, we returned it to the senior officer, confirming that we knew and understood our task. All three of us went under air, confirmed that we were all together and made our way up, carrying two links of hose, a Thermal Image Camera, also known as TIC, a halligan bar as well as an enforcer. At that point the hallway was clear and I could see the floor numbers that previous FFs had written on the walls with Chinagraph/grease pens. This was very useful for us as did not see any other signs.

WM CLARK was in front of me as I was in the middle with FF Baltrami behind as we went up in a single file. As we were carrying equipment, we were not able to go up side by side, with ease, due to the narrowness of the stairwell. Once we reached the 9th floor, we left the equipment that we were carrying in the hallway area where there were lights. I saw WM CILARK try the lobby door and instantly I could see that it was full of pitch black smoke. Our training teaches us that we are not to enter a compartment that is filled with smoke, if we do not have water. Even if we could not see the flames, we knew that there are unburnt gases and that it was dangerous. We had a very brief conversation about this as well as checking on one another to make sure that we were ok. But this conversation did not last long as we knew we were going to enter this lobby, anyway.

As we were going to enter, WM CILARK saw a 45ml hose, tangled on the floor. He said that he would untangle the hose and that he needed a few moments. FF BALTRAMI and I came out of the lobby and back into the hallway, as WM CLARK untangled the hose. I did not want to shut the door on WM CLARK hence I left it open to keep him in sight. Despite him kneeling in front of me, I could barely see

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him. The implications of keeping the door open could be the filling up of the stairwell with smoke and depending on what type of fire there is, the risk of backdraft could be faced. Depending on the smoke, usually it can be determined what type of situation we face. If it had been a violent aggressive brown smoke, then I would have known that the risk of backdraft was high. If it had been a black smoke, I would have known that it was plastic smoke. If it had been a grey smoke, then I would have known that it is steamy and very hot. But regardless of what smoke there was, keeping the door open meant that the compartment was not contained. However, from experience I know that backdraft does not take place immediately and that it does take a while for it to build up. But despite of this fact, I did not want to leave my colleague out of my sight.

About thirty seconds later, WM CLARK came out and said that he was successful in unravelling the hose and that we now had water. We had a little natter about it and decided to go in from the left hand side, on our knees, led by WM CLARK who had the jet, followed by me with the TIC and FF BALTRAMI holding the enforcer. As we entered on our knees and made our way in, straight away, I felt heat on the back of my neck and ears. This is never a good sign as there was no gradual build of heat.

There were no lighting and so it was difficult to get around. FF BELTRAMI had a hold of me as we are taught to maintain body contact with our crew in such situations. But in those circumstances, where visibility was only about a foot, it was very difficult to follow. On the TIC, I could see a rough visual outline of the lobby, the back of WM CLARK'S head and smoke as the device was reading temperature. There were no specific locations in the lobby where the TIC was picking as being hotter than the rest of the area.

As we went in, we searched by the door area, where people tend to congregate in such circumstances. We stayed together but had to go back on ourselves in order to find the left hand wall, which we did. Eventually, WM CLARK who had the jet, managed to find the door to the first flat on the left hand side. He tried the handle but could not gain entry. As FF BALTRAMI had the enforcer, hence we brought him to the front and had a little chat with him. As we backed up, he began to hammer the door and it seemed like a lifetime as he was trying to gain entry. Despite his size, being well built, and the length of time he was going at the door, which was about a minute, he was unsuccessful in breaking down the door. During the whole time, we were all screaming at the door in the hope that if somebody was behind it, would open. At that point I decided to implement a different plan. I told WM CLARK and FF BALTRAMI to

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stay put as I went out, with the intention of getting the Halligan bar which we had left in the hallway.

I must have been about six feet from the door so I backed up and as I came out into the main stairway, immediately I noticed that it was full of smoke. It had gone from a clear area, to one where it was full of grey smoke, signs of firefighting and having fire extinguished. I had a bit of steam on my visor, which as a FF I know never to be a good sign. This means that the smoke is carrying heat and that it is that hot, that it is turning water into steam. At that point I came to realise that this is our only way out and that our exit had been compromised. My knees were aching from having been on them for the past couple of minutes, hence I stood up in a crouched position, in the grey smoke. As visibility was so bad, I bent down and was scratching on the ground, searching for the Halligan bar. I was searching when I saw the legs of a child, who was standing, just in his pants and pyjamas. He had dark hair but I cannot recall any more than that. He literally grabbed hold of me and did not let go.

A lot of emotions were going through me as [REDACTED] I could not see how this child was able to survive in such conditions, hence I knew I had to get him out as soon as possible. I could not see properly, due to the smoke, hence I felt around and found another child of similar age and appearance, with dark hair. There were also two adult females, who I later discovered to be the children's mothers.

[REDACTED] They were almost like zombies, just standing in the smoke. I did not know how long they had been there nor where they had travelled from. But regardless, even if they had come only one flight of stairs, they would have had to breathe in that smoke and that in itself was enough punishment to put anybody out.

I knew a decision had been made for us and that our priority had changed, in that I had to get these two children and mothers out. As the child was not letting go of me, I had to carry him to the lobby door with me as I opened the door and screamed, trying to get WM CLARK and FF BALTRAMI out. I shouted, "GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE NOW". My colleagues were out within seconds. As WM CLARK came to the door, I gave him the other child and told him to get out. He did not hesitate and took the child and left straight away. He said "I'M OFF" and I replied "YES". I knew that due to the children being so young, their lungs would be less resilient, hence we had to get them out as fast as possible. I knew that if anything was to happen to WM Clark, we would find him on the stairs, on the way down. FF BALTRAMI then came and took one of the mothers. We did not even speak as we knew what was going to happen. As I had one child in one arm, I got the other mother under the shoulder. Because we had now found people, I knew that there may be a possibility that there may be others, hence as FF BALTRAMI

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and I spoke, we had a feel around the stairwell to see if there was in fact anybody else left. But this was not the case as the smoked filled area, was empty of any other person.

As there was nobody else around, I told FF BALTRAMI that we were going to leave at that moment. I had a little chat with the mother that I was carrying as she asked for help. I cannot recall anything from her appearance, apart from the fact that she had dark hair and was wearing glasses. I told her what we were doing and that we were going to get them out.

Her name was Naomi, a name that I will never forget.

This find, meant that we could not do much firefighting and had to leave. We proceeded to go down the stairs as fast as possible. We had managed to go down one or two flights of stairs, either the flight from the 9th to the 8th or it was the 8th to the 7th, am not sure. But it was on those flights of stairs that I treaded on bodies that were laying down. I shouted at WM CLARK that there was somebody else there. It was an awful feeling, thinking that as I was going down the stairs, I was stepping on people and there was nothing I could do. We had nothing left. I had my hands full and so did my colleagues. I had to make a decision there and then, as to what I had to do. If I had left the child and the mother behind, in order to help those laying on the stairs, the child and the mother would not have survived. The dilemma was if I was to leave the people on the stairs where they were, if they had a chance of surviving, the chance would simply be taken away from them. It was a horrible situation that I was faced with, but I knew that the two people that I was carrying were alive and would have a better chance of survival, if I took them out of that burning building which was filled with smoke. I made a decision to take out the two people I was carrying as they were alive and I could have got them out.

After getting to about the 7th floor, the air cleared up and visibility became better. I kept reassuring Naomi and the child as we made progress going down the stairs.

We eventually got to the third floor where the Bridgehead had been, when we had set off to go up. However, upon getting to the third floor, we discovered that there was nobody there. This was a little confusing as we all stood there for a moment, but then continued to make our way down and came to

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realise that the Bridgehead had been moved to the second floor. Later on I discovered that the Bridgehead had in fact moved but we had missed the information on the Radio.

Once at the Bridgehead, other FFs took the children and the two mothers from us. I gave a very quick handover, which took about thirty seconds to a minute. I explained that we had been to the ninth floor, we had found the first flat, were unable to gain access, and how we had come across the people we rescued and the bodies that we had encountered on the way down. I passed on this information to WM DE SILVO who stated that they were going to send somebody up.

At the Bridgehead there were a couple of BA boards which the tallies are recorded on and who is doing what. There were lots of FFs. There were lots of writings on the wall with Chinagraph/grease pen. This was a clear indication that those recording who was where, had ran out of space in writing information.

We signed out of enter-control, got our BA tallies back and put them back in our sets as we made our way down to the ground floor. It was an area underneath the building. We had come into the building from one side, but were now leaving from the other. The area was filled with only FFs and the distinct scent of everybody who had worn BAs could be smelt in the air. Everybody was steaming and very hot. There was a sink in the corner where everybody was getting drinks of water from. I have been on the Red Watch for ten years and so I know most of the crews, therefore it was euphoric to see everybody as I was ticking people off in my head, knowing that they are safe. However I could not see any of my crew members that I had arrived with. This was concerning me. As we had a little chat, WM CLARKE was taking off his clothes and drinking lots of water. We made attempts to leave the building but it was not possible as there was a lot of debris falling. The debris could not be seen as it was coming down and to make matters worse, there was now piles of debris on the ground, making it extremely difficult to walk through. At that point, due to the falling debris, we had to wait for the Police to attend and assist with their riot shields, which were being held up above our heads as we tried to escape.

I saw an old Crew Manager of mine, CM YEOMAN who I spoke with and waited in line with in order to get out. I saw that there were tables in that waiting area, hence I picked one up and used it as protection as I had CM YEOMAN in front of me. We ran across the path, whilst pieces of debris was hitting the table. There were piles and piles of debris formed on the ground, which made it difficult to get to the other side. When I got to the other side of the path, there was a concrete wall with a grass section where there were many FFs trying to recover. I do not know the name of the road nor the area, but it was an open area

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where there were about twenty to thirty FFs, in various states, trying to catch their breath. Everybody was hot and were trying to cool down. By the concrete wall, I re-joined with WM CLARK and FF BELTRAMI. There were a lot of emotions going through everybody. We hugged as it was a relief to have made it out of that burning building. I was very hot and out of breath. I did not realise how exhausted I was until I got out of the building, it seems that I had been running on adrenaline. I was drenched in sweat, felt faint and very thirsty.

We were some distance away from the building and had to cool down, hence we took off our firefighting gear, including our tunics, our BA sets, our helmets as well as most of our clothing, apart from the leggings. WM CLARK was almost vomiting hence we took his clothes off and cooled him down. For the next twenty minutes to half an hour, we just sat down on the ground in an attempt to catch our breath and release the heat. Somebody was throwing plastic bottles of water at us which we drank. We just spoke to one another and made sure that we were all alright. We then found more BAs, and despite how we were feeling, our job was to service the found BAs and make sure that the cylinders had air, so that we could go back inside the burning building.

By that time, a second pool of BAs had formed, one under the concert walk way and another slightly further out. We went to join the BA crew in order to go back inside the building but a senior officer said that there were sufficient BAs and that we were not required to be recommitted. We stood there for another twenty minutes, just in case that we were needed. At that point I started to really think about my crew and was worried, as I did not know if they were still inside of the building. I was worried hence I said to WM CLARK and FF BELTRAMI that I was going to go back to my machine and search for my crew. The senior officer at the scene, confirmed that they were not going to commit any more BAs as they had a lot of fresh ones.

I walked through a slabbed walkway where there were more FFs, in various states, some breathing in oxygen, some being treated by LAS some with hands submerged in buckets filled with cold water as this is one of the quickest way of cooling down a human body due to the radial nerves the wrist.

I also witnessed other casualties being treated as I walked through. They looked to be the residence of the Tower as they did not have much clothing on. I then had to walk through a cordon which was holding back a lot of people, in order to get to where my machine was. One man asked me about his cat whilst

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others were asking questions such as what had caused this and what was happening. I was not in the mood to speak with anybody as I wanted to know what was going on and did not have enough information. I do not recall any of the people who were asking me questions as I did not stop and walked on. Part of this is due to the fact that I did not want to get stuck there when I had to do something else. I was carrying my BA set as I got to the side where the Leisure centre was. At that point, I saw FF LAWSON who was pumping water from a fire engine, which I believe to have been Soho's. The water from the engine was being supplied to an Arial Ladder Platform. Once again, there were a lot of emotions and so I hugged FF LAWSON. Soon after, we were joined by the rest of the crew, FF FOSTER, CM EDEN, FF WELCH. This was a relief as I had my team back with me and everybody was safe.

Whilst carrying out this task, which was an instruction by senior officers, whose name I do not recall, I saw a bald [REDACTED] male resident from the Tower coming to view at a 9th or 10th floor window. Even though I was stood very far and did not have a great visual of him, I could see smoke getting to him and for about an hour, he kept coming to the window waving. I cannot say exactly how, but I came to know that his location was known to my colleagues and eventually he was rescued. But throughout that time when I was stood there, it was a strange feeling to see him in need of assistance and I was not able to help. For the remainder of the night, between running to the Salvation Army to get tea and refreshments, we stood there, supplying the ALP with water, making sure that the feed was not broken as the water was being squirted against the outside of the building. It did not seem to have a lot of effect but we continued to do so. Whilst going to the Salvation Army, I could see exhausted FFs. This continued until about 11:00 hours.

The problem that we faced when pumping the ALP, was that we did not have sufficient water. We require two thousand litres for the ALP to operate and on that night, we were unable to get them to work. Due to this, we utilised a hose reel jet that is used to fight small fires. This was what we had latched to the jet. This meant that we could have put out a maximum of fifteen hundred litres of water. This was not effective as we were essentially using a garden hose to squirt water onto the tower. On our machines, we can see how much water is coming in and on that night, we were getting two to three hundred litres per minute. The water supply was awful.

Compared to the beginning, at that point, the fire had wrapped around the building and covered the other

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side too. It was like a turbine effect where there were no windows on either side and the wind was going through, with force, feeding the fire. As the wind was going from us, I could see every floor and every flat filled with fire whilst the building stood as a concrete shell. From the fourth or fifth floor, there were fire spread, but from the twelfth floor upwards, it was all involved and full of fire.

Directly in front of us was a glass lobby to the building where FFs were going in and out. To our left there was a pool of FFs with extended Breathing Apparatus. But I did not see any casualties/residents being brought but as the exit point was on the other side of the building. Occasionally debris was falling down, but not as much as earlier. However, there were piles of debris, up to about six feet high in places, making it difficult to get to the building. Whilst there, we received a briefing from a couple of senior officers, explaining what they were doing with the crews and that they were rotating fresh crews.

It had got to the point where we were looking for a release, in that another machine and crew to come and take over from us. My crew looked to me to see if we could be relieved, hence I went to one of the Command Units and made enquiries. They said that they will facilitate this and after about twenty minutes or so, we were dismissed and instructed to go to Paddington to provide our statements. Whilst we were there, they had not stopped committing FFs into the building and I do not know when this decision was made.

Looking back, there was nothing we could have done as it was the building that let the residents and the FFs down. We did not have a fire lift which would have ferried up equipment to the Bridgehead. If money had been spent on sprinklers, this incident would not have happened in the way it did.

The Cladding was utterly responsible for this incident, for the fire spread, for absolutely everything. It was completely unique in that I have not experienced anything like this, compared to the ten or twelve other high rise building fires that I have been to in the past. I am of the mind that the experience of my colleagues would reflect the same conclusion. The access was another issue where the residents were coming out of the only single way that the FFs were trying to get in. A firefighter's lift is a huge factor in such incidents and of course, we did not have one. This made our lives very difficult and had there been a firefighter's lift, we could have been a lot more efficient and the end results may have been very different. Had the building done its job, in that kept the fire in compartments, we would have been standing looking at a different situation, in that we would have been faced with a fire on the fourth floor, only. That could

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have easily been dealt with by six machines. I did not know where the raisers were but the local crew, would have probably known. But later, when I discovered where the raisers had been situated, I knew that they were not very easily accessible as FFs had to go through the building and to the other side of the lobby to get to it. There should be a pressurised stairwell and lobby. In the lobby there should be a firefighter's lift and a raiser. Had these been in place, we would have had time to systematically work our way and fight the fire. But as mentioned already, this was not the case. I can make an assumption and say that stairwell was pressurised as when we were going up, it was clear. However, a few minutes later, when we were coming down the stairs, it was full of smoke. Of course, this could have been due to us compromising the stairwell by opening the doors, but still, a pressurised stairwell should not have been so full of smoke. But once again, had the raisers been in the correct location, we would not have had to go inside a lobby without water, into thick black smoke and unburned gases.

Had the building done its job, we would have been looking at a completely different incident in that it would have been a fire in one or possibly two flats at the very most.

I have been to many other high rise buildings and the one on Adelaide Road in West Hampstead, has cladding, which has been checked and would not have behaved in such manner.

There were other factors that contributed to the problem, such as the radio communications. We have hand held radios and when inside of a building, or in distance, or even when under air, the communications are difficult. This added more to the problem as traffic on the radio was heavy. Post seven-seven, the radios should have been improved to eliminate these issues. I exhibit the notes that I made at Paddington, as AJC/1.

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