

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: HARRIS, ANDREW

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 15 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.HARRIS

Date: 27/11/2017

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

I am the above named person and my details are known to Police. This statement is in relation to the Grenfell Tower Fire that occurred on Wednesday 14 June 2017.

My name is Andrew HARRIS and I am a Firefighter. I have been a Firefighter for 27 years, my Pay No is [REDACTED] 2k. I am currently based at Paddington Fire Station. The night of the fire at Grenfell Tower I was on night duty at Paddington Fire Station. I was posted to the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU). This is a fire engine that carries specialist equipment and front line appliance that carries Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA). I was on Red Watch and my call sign was A216.

I went to training school in 1990 to become a Firefighter. I have completed various training courses throughout my career for different qualifications as a Firefighter. This training includes motor driver, Fire Rescue Unit, and Line Ops qualifications. Fire Rescue Unit includes training on specialist rescue equipment. Line Ops training includes line capabilities. This is rescuing using lines, harnesses, setting up a safe system of work near an edge. In addition to the specialist qualifications training I have completed, we have regular training at Fire Stations. This is Watch Lead. We complete drills in the yard, in outside venues, other station yards. We do real fire training. We have training for Breathing Apparatus (BA) yearly. When I went to training school in 1990 this included dry rise training. We have drills at our training site at Paddington for this, it is something we use here on site and we have current training on. Dry rise provides an outlet of water which hoses can be attached to.

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I have completed additional training for Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) sets. This is part of Five (5) week course fire rescue course I completed in 2009. A Two (2) day training is incorporated in the Five (5) week course, and we are trained on this regularly. I qualified for EDBA in 2009. How long EDBA lasts when in use depends on how hard you are working. The advanced kit (EDBA) lasts around 46 minutes, but can last less than that or up to an hour and half if you are sitting doing nothing. If you are working hard then it lasts less time due to your breath rate. On the night of the fire at Grenfell Tower it lasted long enough for what we were tasked with doing. The Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) lasts around 26-30 minutes. Again this depends on how hard you are working. The bars of the EDBA is around 290-300 bars for the starting point. If the bars go below the minimum 270 on a set then you have to change the cylinder. It's the same minimum requirement on a standard set. The kit I was using the night of the fire at Grenfell Tower was EDBA.

I have completed High Rise Block Training. There are set things you take to a high rise building fire, within high rise packs. These provide tactics for high rise block fires. We trialled these and are up to speed on this. We have also had quite a few lectures on this. There are a couple of other stations which have training on their ground for high rise blocks. The training for high rise blocks includes what building it could be, how many floors, site of appliances, who is detailed to charge the dry rise main, who is detailed to wear BA, who carries the bags, we will have our own set job to do. When tackling high rise fires, the first thing is charge the dry rise main and have it ready, so that water is available. Another section takes up the high rise bags. These kit bags contain a number of things including hoses with handles to carry them, branches, lift keys, crow bars, and wire cutters. We would roll out the hose and the bags; and water should be available for use very quickly. In terms of training I am competent, I have had a number of year's experience as a Firefighter and am regularly training on the job.

The High Rise Fire Fighting Policy has changed recently. I don't know what the Policy is and what the policy number is, I know there is a policy. This changed before the fire at Grenfell Tower. This came when the high rise kit came out. The office staff would read the policy and we have a lecture on this policy. Once we have the lecture we then go out into the yard and put things into practice. I cannot really explain the policy to you. Specific training for high rise is station based training and dealing with high rise fires in the past. We know here, at Paddington, what needs to be done. I have dealt with high rise fires before during my 27 year career but not to the extent of Grenfell Tower.

I had never heard of Grenfell Tower before the night of the fire, and did not know where it was.

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Paddington borough has a mix of high rise buildings, affordable homes and multimillionaires homes. A section 7(2)d is when you get to know layout of building, the fixed installations. So if you were called to the building you would be prearranged with the layout of the building. You would know things like where the fire lifts are, dry rise and a number of other things. This assists in fighting fires. You do a S7(2)d for your own ground. I have done this before on my own ground, for example St Georges Wharf in Vauxhall. It is a new state of the art new build. I have had no dealings for a S7(2)d for Grenfell Tower.

The night of the fire was Wednesday 14 June 2017 I was at Paddington Fire Station on a night shift. I was call sign A261. I cannot remember what I was doing prior to the call coming out. The bells had gone down and we got a call slip. The call slip stated that eight (8) pump was requested and fire rescue unit (FRU) requested.

The call slip goes through to a person who is designated in the Watch Room. The log book is held there and the call slips come through. This slip gets torn off and information given to the driver of the engine. This information includes what it is, and what we going to. The driver reads it first. I cannot remember exactly what the slip said, I did not read it myself. I remember the call slip being shouted out and I heard it was an Eight (8) pump fire and FRU was requested. That this fire was on North Kensington's ground, which is not our ground. I do not know who it was that shouted out what was on the slip.

We jumped into the unit and left the same time as the Pump Ladder, this engine was just ahead of us. The Pump Ladder is an engine with a ladder. In the FRU engine was Russell GONZALEZ (Firefighter), Martin GILLAM (Firefighter), Phil WIGLEY (Crew Manager), and Dean ROBERTS (Firefighter and Driver). I was sat off-side rear of the engine.

The calls also get displayed on the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) which is in the engine. As well as on the MDT details also go on pagers. The MDT screen in our engine wiped away, it was blank, and so we stopped the engine. I was thought that maybe we were not required anymore. The Crew Manager, Phil, then confirmed that we were and we carried on the journey to Grenfell Tower. The radio traffic we could hear whilst travelling to the fire showed that it was going from an Eight (8) pump call to Twelve (12), to Twenty (20), it had gone up and up. I knew something was happening.

The Crew Manager, Phil, reads out the slip and gives information whilst in the engine. Phil said what was on the call slip that had been shouted out earlier. I do not remember what else Phil may have said whilst in the engine. I did not look or see the MDT so cannot tell you what was on that.

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I can remember driving along Harrow Road, in the direction towards Ladbroke Grove when we left Paddington Fire Station. I cannot see much from the back of the engine. I remember the conversation in the engine being about this being something quite big, that we must have got something here. I cannot remember what else was discussed. I am not familiar with the area so do not know the road names around Grenfell Tower.

I do not know what road we were on, I remember we turned and when we turned I could see the tower alight. I could see the light of the fire from the corner of the tower. We probably were around Three hundred (300) yards away when I first saw Grenfell Tower.

There was a vehicle on the road in the way when we got close to the tower. We got out of the engine to move this car out of the way, but one of the Firefighter's was able to push the car away and out of the way by himself. He bounced the car out of the way. The handbrake must have been off on the car as he was able to just roll it away. I don't know the road name where this car was obstructing the road. I have drawn a diagram on our route to the tower and nearby area, I exhibit this as: AJH/1 – One (1) drawing of route to Grenfell Tower.

When we arrived as close as we could to Grenfell Tower we got out the engine. I have shown on this diagram where the green is and where the FRU was parked. Again, I do not know the road we were on. We parked up the engine behind a green. By the time we got to the incident there were fire engines everywhere. It was around 01:30am when we got there. There was a turntable ladder under the part of the tower where the mezzanine is. A turntable ladder is an engine with a ladder and it has a platform. My diagram, AJH/1 shows this turntable ladder. We were behind this near a green area. This green area has a sports centre, or maybe it is a community centre, nearby. It was packed where we were, and this is around Three Hundred (300) yards from the building.

Our Officer In Charge (OIC) who is also the Crew Manager, Phil, has gone to see what was needed. Whilst Phil went to speak to someone we got our sets on. I do not know who Phil spoke to and what was said, he was near the entrance of Grenfell Tower.

There was an incredible amount of noise. Debris was coming down from the tower. The noise was lots of shouting and screaming, and the debris falling. There was noise from the tower area, including behind and around the tower area. I believe the debris I could see falling was part of the cladding from the tower coming down.

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From our engine, we walked through a covered area and walked to the green area near the tower. I have marked the covered parking area and green area on my diagram, AJH/1. I could see the tower and still see the flames on the one corner of the tower. My visibility was good but it was night time, early hours of the morning. It was not pitch black but dark outside. I could see flats in Grenfell Tower alight. I was standing looking at the building and could see some flats fully alight. I could see on the 6th floor, I think, that One (1) flat was okay, Two (2) were completely alight, One (1) other flat I could see a silhouette of a person. I cannot describe the person, it was just a silhouette. I could not see a helmet on the silhouette so I knew it was not one of our own. Within minutes that flat was alight. That person was no more. The majority of the flames were outside the building. Sheets of building were coming down. This was the cladding of the tower. I thought to myself we've got something here. I did not expect the extent of this fire and how quickly it had looked to have set alight. Maybe around ½ the flats had fire in them, I could see the flames through the windows of the flat. The fire was not all the way up the tower at this stage.

I can remember seeing North Kensington's OIC at the front. He was Watch Manager 'B'. Kensington's was Watch Manager 'A'. I cannot remember how many other Watch Mangers were there or the number of Firefighters.

Our Crew Manager, Phil, came back and told us the brief: don on our BA sets, line gear of the union, and hose / branch gain access to the roof of the tower, get a safe system on the roof, and to get some water from the roof onto the tower. That the water be directed from the roof over the side of the building to try and suppress the flames. The hose would be plugged into the dry riser near the roof, this would provide the water. I do not know if we had enough hose, we would have figured it out when we got to the roof.

We went into the mezzanine of the tower, this entrance is marked on my diagram AJH/1. There are stairs that go up to the mezzanine and there is a doorway. This doorway goes to the main staircase. You have the stairway to the flats here. I remember everything in the mezzanine being green. I think the mezzanine was painted green. The BA entry point was in this area.

We could not yet go inside past this mezzanine area as we were waiting for the branches, we had the hose but no branch. The branch is what is put at the end of the hose and used for the control of the water.

There were some other Firefighters there. I remember some from North Kensington, Hammersmith, I cannot remember who else. I did not speak to anyone else prior to committing. I can only remember fire

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brigade crew being in this mezzanine area, there were no members of the public or other emergency services in this area.

There is a lift area too, this entrance was on the other side. I have marked this up on my diagram, AJH/1. I remember thinking or saying why are we walking Twenty (20) floors when we could get a lift. We were told the Firefighter's lift was not available to us, I cannot remember who said this. I remember someone saying that they tried to secure a lift but a load of smoke came out. That the lift shaft was full of smoke. So this meant the lifts were not suitable to be used. We knew this when we were setting up. Usually there is one lift which will be designated for Firefighters. We have a drop key which means we would have control of the lift. This lift then can only be controlled by the button on the inside of the lift, it cannot be controlled by the outside.

I believe the Entry Control Officer (BAECO) was in the mezzanine area, which is where the door to the main stairway is. The role of the Entry Control Officer includes recall and monitor of the BA wearers who have entered the incident. This information is recorded via tallies. The Entry Control Officer will have a board, Entry Control Board (ECO). This is an electronic board which has a chart. This shows how many bars of air each person has. The Entry Control Officer will know what time you have gone in and when you should be coming out. The board can work out how much air each person is using so that is how it can tell when you are running short of air. When you tally in at the Entry Control Board the system identifies you and the set. It will show that, say, Harris is wearing BA. The Entry Control Officer this night was a Firefighter from North Kensington. I could not tell you what his name was. We all wear the same colours.

ADSU is a gauge that tells you how much air you have go in your cylinder. If you were to collapse this would not move. There is distress button on the kit. This signals to all Firefighters, it is a priority if one of our own is in distress. 'Under Air' is a term we use when our face masks are on, the cylinders are turned on, and helmet goes back on.

When we first went into the tower we did not speak to the Entry Control Officer. We went past as we were not going under air. We were told that sets were not needed at that point and that we should be able to make our way to the top of the tower without BA. I am not sure where this information came from. It was Phil, Russell, Martin, Dean and myself that were tasked together. We went in via the mezzanine entrance. I remember it being a little bit smoky but not too bad here. We had all the equipment with us that we were meant to take up to the roof with us. We were wearing our PPE kit. This includes fire gear,

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helmet, gloves, and flash hood. The flash hood was not pulled up and we did not have our BA/masks on. Our faces were showing. This is the only skin that was on show.

From the mezzanine we went up the stairs and through the doors which lead you onto the stairwell. I remember the stairwell being very small, narrow stairwell. You could fit two people side by side, but that would be a struggle. The stairwell was approximately 4 foot wide. In my opinion for the size of the building it was a small stairwell. All the floors on the stairwell looked the same. There is a door on the right hand side which leads to the flats. There were Two (2) flights of stairs per floor and about Ten (10) to Fifteen (15) stairs between floors. There is a handrail on one side. Some of the floors were numbered on the stairwell walls, and in some places these had been numbered by our guys. That is how I know what the floors were and also someone would have been counting as we were going up.

As we were going up it was getting more and more smoky. We decided amongst us that it was too smoky and we would be risking it going further up. So we decided we should go back down. You could breathe in the stairway but as you went up the smoke was getting worse. We went up to around the 4th or 5th floor before we decided to go back down. The heat was not that noticeable, it was comfortable. Sometimes heat can steam up a mask. At this point we did not have masks on. Near the lower floors I would describe the smoke as hazy, you could see the next flight of stairs up. The smoke was getting thicker as you went up the stairs. We thought we better get our BA kits on and start back up again. I would not say we were struggling for breath but all Five (5) of us had a conversation about going back down. It would have been the Crew Manager's decision to go back down. We all had a say and input in the decision and I agreed with it.

Whilst back in the mezzanine area we got our masks on, gear all on. We had a quick chat between us about the plan. It was as per brief we had earlier, take the line gear, hose and up to the roof. I do not remember who the Crew Manager spoke to at Entry Control. We have to tell them our brief before we enter. The Entry Control Officer would then write in the location of where we are briefed to go. I did not speak to the Entry Control Officer. At this stage we are now going back in, our sets were on and we were under air. Our face masks were on and all PPE kit I mentioned before was back on. We have to tally in with Entry Control, and check the kits. We had a large bag for the line, and 2 smaller bags. The kits included 2 sets of 45mm hose, the method of fighting fire using dry rise. It's a smaller, lighter and easier to move than larger hose.

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We were back in the stairwell ascending the staircase. The big line bag is quite heavy, plus all the other equipment for set up. We had 2 people carrying the big bag, and we were switching it up between us when carrying the bags up the stairs. So we were in different order whilst walking up the stairs, rotating, as we were changing over between us what gear we were carrying. It would have been hard enough walking up those stairs without all our kit on, but with our kit and the bags we were huffing and puffing going up the stairs.

I would describe the stairway at this point as being hazy due to the smoke. The heat was not a great factor at this stage. It was the smoke. It was smokey in the stairwell from around the 4th and 5th floor, and stayed smoky all the way up, it was the same all the way up. I could probably still see up to the next flight of stairs, so visibility was good. From what I understood of the fire it was something alight on the 4th floor. Maybe the smoke got through the 4th floor whilst they were firefighting and the hose being used. The hose would have run threw the door which means the door would have breached as would not be closed, resulting in smoke getting through. I cannot remember seeing anything on the 4th floor stairwell. We did not go into the 4th floor flat lobby area at all.

As we were going up the stairwell I did not see anyone else on the stairwell, and nothing else was on the stairwell that I noticed. Then on the 11th or 12th floor we saw Two (2) Firefighter's coming down the stairs. They were part of our Watch. I cannot be sure of the exact floor. As I mentioned before, we were trying to count the floors whilst going up and the walls were marked with floor numbers by other crews. They said they were running out of air, I think they had Standard BA on. They told us their brief which they had not yet done. There was a casualty located between the 20th and 21st floor that needed to be rescued. They could not get that far up the tower as they were running out of air.

The Two (2) Firefighter's then went down the stairs and we carried on up the stairs. We were still carrying our bags with equipment at this stage. We thought as we were going to the roof and going past 20th and 21st floor we would take on the other crew's brief. We continued up the stars without bags and around the 15th floor we decided that carrying the line gear was not the best idea. We ditched this in the stairwell to try and rescue the lady on the 20 or 21st floor. We were able to walk up the stairs, it was harder with the bags and we were using the handrail for and extra push during the final floors up. I was breathing heavy, especially with all the gear. We decided that rescuing someone was a priority, so left the lines. It was more important to try and rescue this person than take the lines to the roof, the lines may not

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have done anything to help the situation we were faced with. We discussed this as a group, all of us. We decided that if we dropped the kit we would get up the stairs quicker to rescue this woman.

I do not think we use our radio communication to call through what we were doing. There are Two (2) sets of radio communications. We have sets where we can hear what's going on and there should be a separate BA channel. There was so much radio traffic, I do not think we could get through anyways, and the communication was mixed between the channels. Comms is on channel 6, we had this but I am not sure who was wearing it. The handheld is on channel 2. The radios were extremely busy. I cannot remember who was comms operator for us.

When we got to the 20th floor I think I was 3rd or 4th out of Five (5) of us to the floor. I believe it was the 20th floor as there would have been markings on the walls or because a colleague counting. Between the landings of the 21st floor a female appeared, between the Two (2) flights of stairs. The female was middle aged, maybe younger, Arab appearance. She was in a night dress, or a long t-shirt. This female looked to be semi recumbent, she was in a state of panic and shock. She was down on the floor with her back against the wall. There were Two (2) Firefighters with her. They were asking her if someone else was with her. I could not hear if she replied. The the Crew Manager, Dean, went up to see if anyone else was about.

Russell and I went on the landing on the 20th floor. When you open the door to 20th floor that's where the flats are on that floor. The door on the stairway to the lobby area of the flats on the 20th floor was still intact. I pushed the door open, it was heavily smoked as soon as I opened the door. I shouted out to see if anyone was on the floor. I did not hear a reply. I shouted out, 'Hello, anyone there?' I could not see anything through the smoke on that lobby area. The smoke on the 20th floor was a dark grey smoke. There was poor visibility due to the smoke. There were no lights on that floor. It seemed dark. It felt like smoke was from something burning from afar, not close to where I was standing. We shut the door to the 20th floor, it was a self-closing door. It was shut when we left the floor. I think it was around 02:15am about now.

We then got ready to take the woman down the stairs. We had legs and arms each and carried her down the stairs. We took her down however we could. The conditions had got worse, so we had to take her down with more haste. When we were carrying her she was in a bit of state, she seemed to be going in and out of consciousness at one stage. I could feel the heat through my fire gear, she as in just her night t-shirt so she was bare and she would have felt the heat more. She was screaming in pain and discomfort. I

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do not remember going past any other crews on the way down. She passed out, she went quiet and very limp. It was harder to carry her down. We needed Four (4) of us to carry her down. She was a deadweight. Her condition had deteriorated.

My whole crew was still together. If we are committed in a number then we stay in that number. We are responsible for each other. It is possible to spilt, but the minimum number would be Two (2) people. Entry Control would have to be informed of any split. To set up a line you need a minimum of Four (4) people in any case. We had a saveable life, which is why we did not go to the top with lines. If we had not found the woman then we would have made our way to the roof. We would, all Five (5) of us, be gone. Looking at it upon reflection we would not have made it out if we went to the roof. Finding that woman probably saved our lives as we saved hers. It crossed my mind, where we were, a way out, the heights we were at. When I opened the door to 20th floor I knew it had creeped up. That something had happened.

The woman was unconscious, we carried on taking her down the stairs. I could feel the heat more through my suit, it was a lot worse than when we started going up the stairs. I could tell the fire was progressing very quickly and the fire was developing a lot than when we started. Dean and Martin then took the woman casualty out to the lobby area at the bottom of the stairs. I am pretty sure they started CPR. LAS would not have come in the tower as it is too dangerous. Dean and Martin carried her outside to where LAS where. I believe the casualty was taken off by an ambulance.

When we got to the bottom I do not remember talking to the Entry Control Officer. It was getting very lively in that area. There was a senior officer near the door to the flats. I know it was a senior officer as he was wearing white hat. I do not know who he is but I have seen him on TV. There was lots of congestion, lots of Firefighters queuing up ready to be committed.

We re-grouped, I do not know the time frame, and we dropped our sets, took them to the floor, drank water and waited for the next instructions. We went to the green area which is about One Hundred (100) yards from the tower. I looked at the tower and could see the fire was progressively worse, it was taking hold. I could see it rolling up. I could see the flats alight. I have never seen a fire take hold like that. When I would look back another flat would be alight. I have never seen anything like this before. Every flat was alight.

It was noisy outside, there was screaming, and panic. I could hear riot Police kicking doors of the nearby flats in case the fire spread from the tower, I could hear the crackling noise of the fire. Also the noise of

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the stuff falling down from the tower, the cladding. The atmosphere was of panic. People running around, screaming. A lot of people filming. It was early in the morning now.

We was asked if we could go in again and we said yes. From the group Two (2) went off to assist with casualty handling, whilst we waited to be recommitted. The Two (2) that went to assist came back. Our sets were handed over to the Heston crew which meant we did not have any more sets to wear. The Protective Equipment Group (PEG) turned up shortly and brought loads of new kits. We collected new sets and tested these, whilst we were in the holding area. We waited to go back inside in the lower ground floor area where the lifts are. From here there are more stairs that go up to the mezzanine. We were waiting and a few times we were put in the back of the queue as new people were coming that had not been inside the tower. We waited what felt like a few hours. I did see some standard BA crews going in but EDBA's were still required. Both types must have been committed.

It was now getting light, it was dawn, probably around 6am. The riot Police were assisting with Firefighters getting into the tower. There was quite a bit of debris falling so the riot Police used their shields to assist with us going in and out of the tower. The access area was left exposed to falling debris. I heard about Two (2) people jumping, One (1) definitely. I had not seen this myself. But there was concerns that we could be injured by people jumping from the tower or debris falling. Two (2) us were together under one shield, we would give a tap on the shoulder and then run in together with the riot Police protecting us with the shields. Nothing landed on us. We were pretty well protected and the Police did a fantastic job of getting us in and out.

Entry Control was now lower down. We were more than ankle deep in water. There was water coming from the upper floors. There were a few plastic chairs where we were waiting around. We then moved to near the stairs that lead you up to the mezzanine. I do not know why we moved. Generally, what we call the Bridgehead is Two (2) floors below the fire. Perhaps the fire came down lower. Sometimes Entry Control has to move, they try and plan it not to but sometimes you have to. We then got a second brief, I think it was from Pat GOLDBURN, he was a Group Manager then. The brief was to assist with a person on the 11th floor, crews had gone up to rescue him. This is a Chinese man I have heard about being on TV whilst waiting to be rescued from his flat. We had to go up and assist the crew rescuing him. It was now Two (2) of us from Paddington and Two (2) from Wimbledon. I was with Russell, I do not know the names of the Wimbledon crew. We did not get to the 11th floor. I do not know what floor we had got to, it

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certainly was not that 11th floor, when I saw a crew had come down with the Chinese man, the casualty we were going up to assist. That was our brief done.

I remember my alarm (ADSU) had gone off as I had not moved. It was so noisy I did not hear the pre-alarm go off. There were alarms going off left right and centre and it was so noisy so I did not hear the pre-alarm. The pre-alarms are programmed to go off when there is no movement. You have to give it a wiggle to re-set it otherwise the full alarm goes off. So we, me and Russell, separated from the Wimbledon Two (2) and explained to them what was going on. We have gone back downstairs, I have got my tally out and re-set this (ADSU). We, Russell and myself, then made our way back up. When I was back up I could see soaking, pouring water everywhere. A hose had burst. It had gone up the entire core of the stairwell and it was wrapped around. The water was coming out vertically. It was so powerful you had to pull the crew members to get through it. It was knocking you to the wall.

There was a body on the stairs. The body was a woman that was tangled up in a hose. It was a very big lady. She was a black lady and appeared to be deceased. She could not be moved. It was still smoky in the stairwell. But now we were also overcome with water. I do not know what floor this was on. This was hampering people going up the stairs.

Because of the hoses on the stairwell and the number of Firefighters, a queue started forming to go up the narrow stairwell. I wanted to join on to see what I could assist with, but we could not get up. We waited and waited, no one ahead was moving forward so we turned around. There was no further brief. We gave our tallies in and came out of the tower, back out via Police assistance using the shield. I think we were told we would not be used again. We rested outside on the grass area, by the community centre. We then went to where our appliance, engine, was parked. More people had turned up by now, the streets around the tower was busier than when we arrived.

There was another aerial level platform (ALP) set up. The majority of the tower was now alight. A control unit was parked up. They told us we could go. But we could not get out from where we had parked, we were blocked in. it was like the whole of the London Fire Brigade had turned up. I remember One (1) vehicle had a flat battery. We were relieved around 10:30 – 11:00am. I was physically tired and wet by this point. A Police Van took us back to Paddington as we could not get our engine out.

A different sector was in charge for Grenfell Tower. I do not know who was in charge. Initially it was North Kensington in charge, Mike DOWDEN. He was spoken to initially. This was when another Entry

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Control Board was set up, I told him we were already tasked. There is one person in charge of different things. I had no involvement with them and am not aware of their orders or who ran what.

We were debriefed back in Paddington. I did not do any notes of the incident when I got back to Paddington. I did not take any photographs of the incident.

One (1) person in our crew had a thermal imaging camera, I do not know who had it but it was not me. We did not have body worn cameras. It is not something that has been issued to us yet, not me specifically.

In my experience of being a Firefighter usually one flat would be affected by a fire. A bridgehead is set up, set your hose out, effect entry into that flat, you put the fire out, and that is it. Maybe a few properties would be effected by the smoke. The fire is usually contained in that one flat. I am not aware of pre-planned plans for firefighting or search and rescue when compartmentation fails in a block of flats. How it spread in Grenfell Tower is something I have never seen or experienced that before. We have regular training, but you cannot train for every scenario. This is something that will never happen again, it is not something you would expect to have ever happened.

I cannot tell you much about the safety measures in Grenfell Tower that night apart from the self-closing doors to the lobby area of the flats. As I did not go into the flat area of Grenfell Tower I cannot tell you anything about the flats or flat doors. I do remember that there were no sprinklers in the tower. I did not go into any flats on the 4th floor.

I am aware of the 'stay put' policy. If there is a fire in a flat people may be better off staying in their flats, call 999 who will tell them how to deal. If the fire does not affect another flat you usually stay put as it is safer to stay there. There may be smoke outside but 99/100 the fire does not spread to another flat. If you leave you can be overcome by smoke.

Signature: A.HARRIS
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