

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CANE, ANDY

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 10 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:

Date: 26/10/2017

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

My name is Andrew John Cane I am a Borough Commander at Richmond Borough I live at an address known to police. This statement I give voluntarily.

On Friday the 20th October 2017 I was interviewed on audio disc. The interview took place at Twickenham Fire Station and was conducted by DC Rozario and DC Preou.

In this statement I will talk about the day I was due to commence work at 08.00am, Wednesday the 14th June 2017, but as I had been made aware earlier that morning about the Grenfell Tower fire I attended the scene earlier.

The people I shall mention within my statement are Group Manager John Simpson of the Operational Review Team, who was the second ORT officer along with myself who took over that morning from Station Manager Mick Mulholland and Group Manager Matt Cook. Also DAC Lee Drawbridge and AC Andrew Roe along with Group Manager Pat Goulbourne and Commissioner Dani Cotton. Station Manager Jason Frisby, Group Manager Dave O'Neal, Operations Commander DAC Andy O'Loughlin, Group Manager Tim Frost, Group Manager Greg Ashman, AC Dom Ellis, Operations Commander DAC Richard Ogden, DR Barbara Lane, GM Julian Spooner, SM Wayne Johnson and SM Jackie McConnachie.

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Within the statement I will mention the external faces of the tower which were split into sectors 1-4, one sector for each face of the tower. I will also mention the Bridge Head initially located on the ground floor but which moved to the fourth floor at a later stage. The fourth to the eighth floor lobby areas and stairwell and the adjacent block of flats where I attended to see if this would be a better place to tackle the fire with the water hoses. I will also mention Testerton Walk where two members of the public stated there was a dead body near them. Finally I will mention CU8, the main command unit which was parked in a nearby street and from where the incident was controlled.

I have served nearly twenty eight years in the fire service and am currently the Borough Commander of Richmond and have been in post since there January 2013. I am also a part of the Brigades Operational Review Team and my call sign is Golf 105.

On Wednesday the 14th June 2017, I was at my home [REDACTED] which is my call out base location. I was due to commence my shift at 08.00am in the morning as the duty ORT (Operational Review Team) Officer. As is standard practice I normally check to see there are any ongoing incidents in London I need to be aware of prior to commencing my duty. On this particular day I checked my pager at about 06.25 in the morning and then logged onto the LFB Citrix portal having noted that there was a forty pump fire in progress. Forty pumps meaning that forty fire engines had been dispatched to deal with this particular incident which in this case was the Grenfell Tower fire.

Although I was on the Blue Watch based at Hammersmith Fire Station for a number of years, where I worked on a number of tower block fires, I have never dealt with Grenfell Tower itself or the immediate surrounding area. Upon gaining information from our mobilising system (Vision) I spoke to my colleague John Simpson who is also an ORT Officer. We agreed to go directly the fire to meet the other two ORT officers already in attendance, called Station Manager Mick Muiholland and Group Manager Matt Cook, with the intention of relieving them. I booked on the incident at 06.30 hrs and drove my LFB lease hire car which is a BMW 5 Series index LDI7ZVG to Grenfell Tower. This vehicle has no mobile data terminal.

I approached the venue from the South via Shepherds Bush Green and Holland Park. I had spoken to DAC Lee Drawbridge who was in attendance at the incident to identify the RVP and arranged to park up

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my vehicle at Bramley Road junction with Whitchurch Road. As I drove to the venue I reflected that a forty pump fire was a significant incident and that as a result there was likely to be a lot of congestion in the area. I can only remember a handful of incidents of this size in my entire twenty eight year career. I managed to park my car in Bramley Road, arriving at approximately 07.21 hours. I met my colleague John Simpson who had also just arrived and we quickly rigged into our PPE (personal protective equipment). Our PPE is always carried in the rear of our vehicles as when we are on call we are then able to go directly to any incident as needed. We both walked towards Bomore Road where we ascertained the main Command Unit was located. Whilst walking there we encountered lots of people standing in the roads and numerous fire engines parked up in the side roads. I would just like to mention at this stage that I never attended flat 16 the origin of where the fire began at any point.

Upon locating CU8 (Command Unit) The incident commander AC Roe was chairing a TCGM (tactical coordination group meeting). As a result John Simpson and I decided to commence a tour of the fire ground to gain situational awareness, after handing our NRB (nominal role board) into the command unit. This is a metal board containing information including ones rank, call sign, operational tags (Skills), vehicle registration and mobile telephone number. This allows the command unit to have knowledge of who is physically at the scene. Touring the fire ground would include examining both the interior and exterior area of the fire where possible. It was immediately striking how much of the tower block was still on fire which highlighted the magnitude of the incident.

At around 07.40 hrs I had my first proper view of GT as I walked along Grenfell Road. I noticed large volumes of white/grey smoke issuing from the tower block with numerous flats still alight. Initially I could only see two of the faces of the tower but it became immediately apparent that both were heavily involved in fire. The fire ground around the base of the tower was very cluttered I also noticed a large amount of debris on the ground some of which was still srnouldering. I noted that an ALP (Aerial Ladder Platform) was operating with a hose reel which seemed odd to me, in what I established was in Sector 4.

There was also a ground monitor operating from what appeared to be a mezzanine floor in Sector 1. As we toured the fire ground it became clear that all 4 sides of the tower block were involved and that the upper floors were severely affected from about the third of the way up.

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During this initial look round I was informed that the fire lifts were damaged and that they were not in use. I cannot confirm whether this was prior to the fire starting or not. I was also aware that a dry rising main was in use and that hose lines had also been run up the stairs. I was not aware of any smoke management systems but I did notice positive pressure fans on the ground floor which had been brought in by the LFB and utilised to keep the ground floor area clear of any smoke. I was aware that thermal imaging cameras would have been used by Fire Fighters, the memory cards within the cameras can be downloaded and interrogated if need be at a later stage. The FE's did not wear Body Cameras which are totally different to Thermal cameras.

As I was about to enter the tower for the first time, in Sector 1 I noticed Fire Fighters carrying A Tests on their BA Equipment. I then entered the tower via sector 2 with the assistance of police officers with riot shields above my head at approximately 08.00 hrs. I noticed the Bridgehead was located on the ground floor and the scene inside was very congested with lots of BA (breathing apparatus) wearers waiting to be deployed. As I proceeded through the ground floor I noticed a lobby area at the bottom of the stairs and recognised one of my colleagues GM Pat Goulbourne. There was a large amount of BA crews and entry control boards. I cant recall any alarms sounding and the ground floor was clear of smoke. There were no members of the public to be seen. Probably the most striking thing I initially noticed was the large volume of water cascading down the stairs into the ground floor. This was concerning to me as I remember thinking that there must have been either a burst hose or that the riser had possibly failed as the water looked fairly clean and therefore wasn't fire run off.

I spoke to GM Pat Goulbourne and asked him how he was coping. He told me that he was ready for a break and could do with some support. Having noticed the fire fighters A/Testing BA sets outside I assumed that we were recommitting wearers. I asked GM Gouldbourne if he had any safety officers at the Bridgehead. He told me that there weren't any safety officers inside the tower, which again I found concerning under the circumstances. We also briefly discussed the volume of water coming down the stairs and he indicated that this was down to burst hose lines on the floors above. He mentioned that the plan was to withdraw the crews and sort out the burst lengths. I told him that I would arrange some support and left the scene. On exiting the tower with the assistance of the police again, I located GM Simpson and we then met up with GM Cook and SM Mulholland at about 08.10 hrs approximately. They then both showed us around the remainder of the fire ground. It was mutually agreed that I would oversee

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the Operational side and GM Simpson would oversee the Command & Control side of things. This is the normal way of dividing an incident when there are two ORT officers in attendance.

On returning to the CU (at approximately at 08:20 hrs) I initially spoke with the incident commander (AC Roe) and voiced my concern about the lack of safety within the tower. The IC stated that we were operating outside of policy to save life and confirmed that we had depleted all the EDBA (extended duration breathing apparatus) wearers in the LFB and were therefore re-committing EDBA as well as SDBA (Standard duration Breathing Apparatus). Whilst I fully understood that under the exceptional circumstances this needed to happen I re-iterated that I felt we should implement a safety structure inside the tower to primarily assure the fitness of our BA crews being re-committed.

Standard practice would not be to re-commit BA wearers especially EDBA wearers due to the potential effects of prolonged exposure to heat and physical stress. I also asked the incident Commander that as it was now over seven hours after we first arrived, should we now be considering a move back towards Policy or to at least to have that as an aspiration. At this point the Commissioner had joined us and it was agreed between the three of us that it should now be an aspiration to move back towards Policy. I personally felt that we needed to do more at this stage of the incident to look at the safety and welfare of our fire-fighters being committed, especially as we were working outside of our standard operating procedures. I was very conscious that by now crews had been in attendance for about seven hours operating in exceptional and stressful circumstances. The IC agreed to a safety officer being put in place, I also recommended that the IC consider relieving the Officers operating at the Bridgehead as they were looking fatigued.

At this point SM Jason Frisby reported to the CU (time now approx 08:30 hrs), I immediately grabbed him and stated that I would be using him as a safety officer in the tower. I had also established that GM Dave O'Neil was IC of safety. En-route to the tower I briefed SM Frisby about the areas I wanted him to QA including ensuring that crews had communications and were rigged correctly. Also to ensure that they had understood their brief and appeared fit and well enough to wear the Breathing Apparatus. Whilst en-route to the tower entrance we bumped into GM Dave O'Neil in sector 1, we had an exchange where I highlighted the lack of safety inside and stated that I had grabbed SM Frisby to undertake the safety officer role at the Bridgehead. I also suggested to GM O'Neil that one of our priorities should now be to

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look at fire-fighter safety. We then entered tower where I briefed the Officers at the Bridgehead regarding the role SM Jason Frisby would be undertaking.

I left the tower block again to look at the external sectors and tried to contact the Operations Commander (DAC O'Loughlin) by handheld radio but couldn't get hold of him. As debris was still falling from the Tower I initially checked that Safety Officers were in place to ensure no persons could venture into the immediate hazard zone. I then briefly met up with my ORT colleague and we agreed the demarcation between the areas we were looking at and that we would swap roles at some point during the day. During this look around I noted that BA main control was operating in sector 4 on a grass area. I was aware that relief officers had been ordered and were now arriving in the sectors and were swapping roles so decided to re-enter the Tower again to QA this. On entering the tower again (now approx 09:00 hrs) I noticed that GM Tim Frost was now working at the Bridgehead. I spoke to Tim to establish if he was OK and had settled into the role. He stated that they were considering moving the Bridgehead up to the 4th floor. I asked Tim if he wanted me to QA this for him and he said yes.

I then proceeded up the tower for the first time and was immediately struck by how much water was still coming down the stairs. I arrived at the fourth floor and entered the lobby area which was clear of smoke. It was quite small but would work as a bridgehead, I felt the reduction in travel be beneficial, I then continued up the stairs to check the floors above the proposed BH. The 5th floor was clear, however on opening the door to the 6th floor lobby (after checking it for heat) there was slight smoke logging present so I shut the door and continued upward. I met some fire fighters trying to sort out some hose between the 6th and 7th floors, at this point there was water spraying everywhere and as a result I was now soaking wet. This was obviously the point BA crews were getting wet as they were proceeding upward. I continued to the 7th floor lobby and on opening the lobby door was confronted by fairly heavy smoke conditions. I shut the door and continued upward as the stair well itself was still fairly clear at this point. On checking the 8th floor lobby I discovered very heavy smoke conditions inside, however there were also signs that an active fire was present as there was a notable pressure on the door when I opened it. I immediately shut the lobby door tight again. As the stair well from this point was smoke logged I headed back down to the ground floor.

I met with GM Frost again and stated that moving the BH to the 4th floor was OK and let him know

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which floors I had checked and my findings. Due to the layout of the building the move would effectively increase the working duration of the BA crews on the upper floors quite significantly which I felt would be beneficial under the circumstances. I mentioned again to GM Frost about the amount of water present and concerns that crews were being soaked through before proceeding upward.

I then left GM Frost and exited the tower again to look at Fire fighting operations outside which I felt could be improved. In Sector 1 I had noticed that there were some adjacent flats that may give us a higher vantage point to apply water. I therefore entered the block and made my way up to a balcony at about 4th floor level. From here I could see the entrance to Testerton Walk to my right and noticed two members of public standing outside on the 3rd floor mezzanine area. One had a camera and appeared to be some sort of reporter. As they were right in the hazard zone, surrounded by debris on the floor, I immediately shouted for them to move. They refused and then somewhat oddly asked if I wanted a cup of tea. I restated they were to immediately move inside and away from the area for their own safety and that I would come down and speak to them. As I started to move away one shouted "you do know there is a body in here". Obviously I didn't but I remember feeling annoyed that the cordons obviously were not effective in that area.

When I arrived at the location they had left, I moved through the doors into Testerton Walk and immediately noticed a body on the floor, this was located outside flat 312. It had been covered and tagged but was unattended. To the right I found another member of public with a bike, in his hand was a phone. I immediately challenged him and stated that he was to leave the area and that he had better not photographed the body. He stated he had not and quickly left but I wasn't convinced. It was apparent that the cordons needed to be improved.

I then examined if a higher vantage point could be gained (appeared that it could) so I found and liaised with the sector commander recommending that he access the roof area of the flats which would enable him to get water to a far higher point in sector 1, which he agreed to action. I then left the area and moved to sector 4 where I noticed that a Surrey Fire Brigade ALP had now arrived and was being set up. At this point I returned to the CU and briefed the IC regarding the Bridgehead move, the body located in sector 1 and the cordon issues. The IC asked me to brief GM Greg Ashman regarding the body as he was collating information regarding casualties.

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After briefing GM Ashman I decided to re-enter the tower to see how the move to the 4th floor had gone. At approximately 10.30 hrs on arrival at the Bridgehead I noticed that plans of the floors had been drawn on the walls and although it was quite hot (due to the number of people) the BH seemed to now be fully established and operating. I made contact with GM Frost to establish how operations were going; we discussed that maybe the time was approaching for our tactics to change. To move back in line with Policy by starting at the bottom and working our way up extinguishing each floor as we go, (I was concerned that crews were still being committed above fully developed fires without water). I considered that this also fitted with the aspiration to return to policy as discussed with the Commissioner and Incident Commander. It was my personal opinion that there were no more saveable lives at this time.

GM Frost then asked me to contact the operations commander, DAC O'Loughlin. It was about that point that my mobile phone rang and my colleague, GM Simpson, informed me that the IC had requested we swap roles. I made my way outside and met with GM Simpson and DAC O'Loughlin in sector 4. The DAC stated that the IC wanted me to swap with GM Simpson, I therefore made my back to the Command Unit and reported to the incident commander, the time was now about 11:00 hrs.

I was now tasked with looking at Command and Control. I Initially examined the current command structure and spoke to the CU TL (Command Unit Team Leader) who agreed that we could re-organised the Command units to better support the incident. I therefore drew out a new recommend structure, at about this point AC Dom Ellis arrived to take over from AC Roe as incident commander. I have know AC Ellis for many years and we have a very good working relationship.

Once the hand over of Incident Commander was completed I asked AC Ellis if he wanted me to implement the new structure which he agreed. With the assistance of the CU crew this was actioned. This involved moving the functional CU and also the booking in /out duties from the command CU. I then assisted AC Ellis by updating all the information on the Command CU including re-mapping the incident, updating the headline board and making sure the link with GM Ashman was effective and that casualty information was kept current. I then continued to support the IC throughout my remaining time at the incident which included me "holding the fort" when the IC was conducting tactical co-ordination group meetings which were now taking place in the leisure centre.

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The stability of the tower was a constant concern to the command team; I met with the building control Officer from Kensington & Chelsea (DSE) to discuss this and to also ascertain if there was an asbestos report available. (Which was en-route but he believed very little was present) At about this juncture a female (Dr Barbara Lane I believe) who was an alleged expert in construction and tower blocks arrived. Ms Lane indicated to me that she was very concerned about the stability of the tower and initially even stated that she was uncomfortable being on the CU. She talked about a collapse sequence that may have been initiated already and how the tower may physically collapse (Pancake or full or partial fall to one side) As a result I quickly convened a meeting with the DSE, Ms Lane and GM Spooner who was now the sector safety commander. The outcome of this initial meeting was that GM Spooner was going to show Ms Lane the tower and that we would re-convene once we had some drone footage which was currently being taken. (Drone from Kent FRS)

The meeting was re-convened but the high quality drone footage did not allay Ms Lane's fears, she repeated that the collapse sequence may have started. I asked her to provide a rough time line of when this may happen but she was very reluctant to do so. (Could be hours or days) We therefore continued to monitor the building closely moving forward but the decision was taken to continue with internal operations. I suggested to the IC that we should consider recording key decisions on the CSS and to get a safety statement recorded. Both incident commanders had loggists but I was concerned that when they left the scene key decisions may be lost.

I examined the status of the utilities and was informed that there was an electrical substation in the basement which was still live. The electrical Authority indicated that in addition to the tower it supplied some of the local area and they would like it left on if possible. This was handed to the operations commander (Now DAC Ogden) to investigate. The gas Authority informed me that they needed to dig up the road to isolate the supply to the tower and that a fire appliance was parked on the specific area they wanted to do this (Was also in the hazard zone) Arrangements were made to get the appliance moved so they could isolate the supply. (It was believed that a number of the fires in the block were now gas pipes alight) The water Authority informed me that they could not supply any further water from the local hydrant system, that should we require any more it would have to be brought in from further afield. They also offered us pallets of bottled water for the locals; the IC asked them to feed this offer into the next TCGM.

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SM Johnson arrived (as Senior Accident Investigator) and had been tasked with investigating some safety events, he mentioned that a number had been reported so I asked if he could start listing them on the CU which he did. I was aware of one fire fighter that they could not locate and that had possibly been removed to hospital but after a while he was located.

At approx 16:30hrs DAC Ogden arrived at the CU and informed us that they had just undertaken a tactical withdrawal from the tower. That they had reportedly heard some loud bangs and felt the tower vibrate and had immediately pulled out. As a result I recommended to the IC that we undertake a role call which was agreed and initiated. (It was later confirmed that all Brigade personnel were accounted for)

A question was asked about the roof and if this had been checked, I liaised with the Kent Drone operators and asked if they could sweep across the roof to check, this was done and nothing was found. Also at about this stage a question was asked about the lifts and whether they were definitely empty. To make sure a small team was dispatched back into the tower to check the lifts which were found to be clear. (now about 17:00hrs) I continued to support the incident commander until about 19:30 hrs when GM Matt Cook and SM Mick Mulholland returned back at the scene to take over the ORT roles again from myself and GM Simpson.

In relation to training that I have undertaken I can confirm that as an ORT Officer I regularly review operational policies including the high rise policy. As a group ORT meet weekly and regularly discuss operational incidents including high rise incidents. I have also delivered a training package (Called back to basics) to fire fighters specifically concerning high rise fires about sixteen months prior to the Grenfell Tower fire. I am competent in delivering training packages involving fighting fires in high rise blocks of flats or buildings. I have also had plenty of previous experiences in fighting fires in high rise buildings.

In relation to any pre-prepared fire fighting plans specific to Grenfell Tower I was not made aware of any. I am aware that the LFB have prepared procedures for dealing with High Rise fires. I have been trained to deal with fires that have spread outside of compartments which the IC should consider as part of their tactical plan. The IC must also consider potential for fire and smoke spread when establishing and co-ordinating search and rescue. I would also like to add that there was only one means of escape from the building which was the main stairwell.

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There were no visible sprinklers in the building. Radio communications were reported as being poor amongst the Fire Fighters and we used telemetry repeaters to improve the radio signal between the BA sets and the ECO Boards. When I arrived the dry riser appeared to be charged with water. The dry riser is a fixed pipe that runs from the ground floor to the upper floors in a high rise building. It has an inlet at ground floor level, usually outside, and also usually has outlets on every floor. The initial Fire Engine will set into a fire hydrant and connect to the dry riser inlet and charge the riser with water to about 10 bars of pressure. This allows the crews operating internally to connect to the riser outlets for fire fighting operations. Some buildings in excess of 60 metres in height may have wet risers which are permanently charged with water.

In relation to the "Stay Put" policy, this was basically the default position to be adopted in high rise blocks prior to the Grenfell Fire. It means that when a fire happens generally it should be contained within the compartment of origin so that occupiers elsewhere within the block should be able to safely stay put. In consideration of this when our control receive fire survival guidance calls they will usually encourage the occupants to remain where they are and await rescue unless the fire has entered their flat. In addition the stay put policy is advertised to the public as the recommended thing to do when there is a fire in a tower block. The overall concept being that fire engineering will contain the fire within the flat or compartment of origin until such time that the fire service arrives and extinguishes the fire. This is a national policy and is not unique to London.

From the initial call regarding the fire at Grenfell Tower our control room staff would have applied the Stay Put Policy. This would remain in place unless it was overturned by the on scene commander. I don't know who made the decision and at what time the stay put policy was overturned. This decision should have been recorded, possibly by AC Roe's Loggist if the decision was made when he was IC. This loggist was SM Jackie McConnachie who may have noted and recorded that decision. I was not present when the fire started to spread externally to the Tower. The operational tactics would have been set by the initial incident commanders, then by the Operations Commander once nominated. I cannot comment on the tactical plans implemented at this incident prior to my arrival.

The Command and decision making structure was established by using various LFB Command Units

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(CU's) parked outside the tower as follows.

- 1/ One Command Unit (used by the Incident Commander)
- 2/ One Command Unit (used for fire survival guidance co-ordination and casualty information)
- 3/ One Command Unit (used by the Sector Commander Command Support looking at functional roles)
- 4/ One Command Unit used at the RVP (latterly) for managing resources.

In general terms the first appliance to arrive will have an appliance commander who will assume the incident commander role. If several appliances arrive together it is usually the first local Watch Manager that assumes the Incident Commander role. If the incident escalates in size in excess of 4 pumps a Station Manager assumes the IC role. As it continues to escalate in pump numbers more senior officers will take over the IC role until you reach AC level. In this case the Commissioner attended as monitoring Officer.

Whilst I was in the Tower I never noticed the fire precautions apart from the lobby fire doors. It is my opinion that that something failed significantly at this incident. It was apparent that all the upper floors had been severely affected by fire across the whole floor area involving all the flats which is really unusual to see. The upper floor windows were non existent and had obviously burnt away.

When I initially arrived I noticed an ALP operating in Section 4 using a Hose reel Jet which had been hauled up to the cage. One ground monitor operating in Section 1 from the Mezzanine level and I believe there was another hand held jet working in Sector 3. I was also aware that 4 Arial Appliances had been requested to the incident and had expected to see more water being applied externally. I was also aware that there was a turntable ladder from Paddington located in Sector 1 that had been utilised initially but subsequently could not be used due to its proximity to the fire. Later I was informed it had become defective.

I absolutely agree that it was necessary for our crews to operate outside of our standard operating procedures to save life at this tragic incident. However it is my personal opinion that in consideration of

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the risks that were present we should have moved back towards our standard operating procedures sooner. I was very conscious that a number of “red flags” were present which is why I was keen to improve firefighter safety and encourage a move back to Policy.

I personally did not receive any injuries or witness any injuries to any of my colleagues. I heard through the grape vine and from SM Johnson that that there were numerous near misses which fuelled my concerns of risks being taken.

I have been a Fire Fighter for 28 years. I have never witnessed a fire of this severity in my time in my career. I left the scene at GT at approximately at 20.30hrs returning home and booked off the incident at approximately 20.55hrs.

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