

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: PARKIN, ANTHONY

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 9 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 PARKIN

Date: 19/01/2018

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

This statement is in relation to the time I attended Grenfell Tower fire on WEDNESDAY 14th JUNE 2017.

This statement is an account of an audio recorded interview I gave to PC Nicholas BUNCE and DC Luke BACON on FRIDAY 5th JANUARY 2017 at LAMBTH FIRE STATION. Also present during the interview was Nathan MCLEAN from the Fire Brigade Union (FBU). During this interview I referred to my contemporaneous notes that I made on 14/06/2017 and exhibit as AP/1. I also referred to a map which I have marked with various details relating to the incident and also used for directions that I exhibit as AP/2.

I have been a firefighter for 27 years and am a Watch B Manager. My career as a Firefighter began when I joined the Ministry of Defence (MOD) fire service in 1990. I came out of the MOD fire service in 2003 and came into London. Alongside my MOD fire service, I did retained work for Essex fire service, up until 2006. In 2003 I came into London, came out of Southwark and my first posting was F43 Barking. I worked there on various watches. I got promoted within F43 Barking onto another watch where I worked for 5 or 6 years. Prior to coming to the Chemical Biological Radiological & Nuclear defence (CBRN) team, I was the temporary watch manager but at the time was a substantive crew manager plus. The crew manager goes out and is in charge of other stations. Following this, I temporarily worked as a watch manager at Wellington, Hainault, Dagenham and then returned back to Barking. From Barking I came onto this team (CBRN) two year ago as watch manager A. I got promoted and subsequently within that time I have been promoted again as Watch Manager B, which is based at CBRN [REDACTED]

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

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I am trained in the use of Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) which is a twin cylinder set that gives extra time and air depending on the working conditions. I am trained on CBRN which is a specialist role.

I will be referring to a number of people in my statement who are: Watch Manager Mark NIBBLET, Watch Manager Paul (surname unknown), Firefighter Pav SINGH from Bethnal Green Fire Station he is now retired. Firefighter Richie from 3DBA. The station manager from the main control, although I do not know his name. Watch Manager, Paul (I cannot recall his surname). Group Manager Rich WELSH and Group Manager, Pat GOLDBURN. When I joined the MOD, I did a basic fire fighter course, which included air craft firefighting as well. Very military based but pretty much the same as civilian firefighting. That was a 16-week course, then you got posted back out to a unit. I worked for atomic weapons establishments. I have worked at research and development establishments throughout the country. I then did continuation training, a lot of that was biological stuff, nuclear and aircraft firefighting, ammunition, explosives the list goes on. I then came out to London, I couldn't get a transfer at that time. Transfers weren't possible, so I had to reapply and I subsequently did the basic firefighting course again which was I think, 11 weeks. From that you get pushed out to stations and you do your competency book, 18 months I had that signed off. In the MOD I had to do a 4-year competency but none of my qualifications counted, they didn't take that on board. I took promotion and had to sit on a promotion board like everyone else and got my crew managers. I went on subsequent command control courses. Alongside this I was still doing retained firefighter role for Essex County fire service. In my capacity there I was a leading firefighter which is a crew manager nowadays. I did two command and control courses with London to keep my ticket as crew manager. Now I have been promoted to this team which is now defined as "Non Ops". This is a specialised role. You don't get the command and control courses although my ticket only ran out in December. Just because my ticket has run out it doesn't mean I am de skilled. This is classed as Non Ops so they class me as not needing that skill. The role that do we here is any chemical, any biological, MCR (mass casualty recovery treatment, MTFA. We go down to [REDACTED] with the Met Police, LAS identify mass casualties, we do bandaging. The rest of this role is any chemical, any biological and radiological, any nuclear, any explosive, anything not your normal firefighting; this team tends to go on.

As a crew manager on the incident ground, as a crew manager plus or watch manager, they are similar types of roles. I would be in charge of a 4 pump fire and that could be a house fire, industrial unit, nothing that needed more than 4 appliances attending. Which is 15-20 people. Then if that was going to be a more

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

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protracted job then I would escalate it and somebody else would come along and take it off me. This is because my span of control is not, I'm not trained to that level and then they come along and take that off me. But the courses that you do will gear you up to that point and recognising that point and passing it over.

For example, you turn up to a run of the mill house fire. I would look at the incident, the type of incident and the type of resources that it required. Implement a plan and look at it to see if I can objectively close that incident down with the people and the resources that I've got. Committing life, risk and any subsequent buildings that would be effected. Then I'd look at that and commit 2 fire fighters, look at that and think have I got enough people here to safely bring this incident to a closure. If I can't then I'd make that up and get extra resources on and extra officers on to take that command and control off of me. So if I was at the front of a building and I had concerns at the back, I would have someone running that. I would be standing at the front of building and I would have a crew manager, committing Breathing Apparatus (BA) crews. So he takes that off me, I tell him, he then delegates that information through. So I've not got several commands of control, I've got 2 or 3. If you were sectoring it, I'd be sector one and he'd be sector three. I would have overall command and if in any doubt there would be a message out on the fire ground that Watch Manager Tony PARKIN is in charge of this incident. I would declare that as well, I'd declare that this is a 4 pump fire. I'd formulate a message back to control to paint a picture for monitoring officers who will be thinking will this escalate and go to a 6. I'd come on, my first informative message that I give out, end terrace house, 2 floors, 10 metres by 5 metres, 25% off ground floor alight, jet BA. Once I've put these foundations in place, if I don't get that right somebody could be monitoring it and think that I'm not coping very well or he is. A Station manager, next rank up could be monitoring that. A station manager would monitor a 4 pump fire at that time. If an incident had multiple causes, they would take that incident away from me and say that you've got 2 extra machines coming on and a command unit. When a command unit comes on, although I'm still ultimately in charge a 4 pump fire. If they escalate it, a command come on and then that would get taken off me. It takes the message sending, the command and control organising away from the officer in charge who has a lot on his plate dynamically initially.

Three watch managers start off the command unit initially, a watch manager would be the officer in charge as well. The officer in charge would either be the first watch manager on scene or an officer of a high rank for example, watch manager B. That would cascade upwards depending on how many pumps required.

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

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Barking has a lot of high rise buildings, so that was our main risk. When I first went to Barking, I had a very good watch manager who made recruits know procedure. What vehicle would be doing what. So for example, pump and pump ladder have different roles when we tip out to a high rise. So the pump ladder, when they got there would put their breathing apparatus on and they'd get certain bits of equipment. The pump would secure a water source and everyone knew what role they did. There was an aide memoire on the back of vehicles, a laminated sheet to say on here this is what we take. So we with that a lot. We also did a lot of 72D, familiarisation visits on our high rise. It had to be done anyway as a risk visit on our database. That was to check whether high rise dry rise was working, fire lifts were working, the integrity of the core of the building to make sure that was no breaches in fire safety. If there was we would send it up accordingly. Training wise we would normally do high rise drill in the yard, go to bridgehead and then go to the fire floor above, subsequently by dry riser. That became very monotonous and boring because it was one of our main risks. We would do 6 hours DAMOP development and maintenance of operational professionalism so that's 2 hours of drills on days and an 1 hours theory on nights. That's all on the diaries and you would do a theory on your last night, for your first day practical where you would go out in the yard and do your drill. So whether it would be 135 ladders to the third floor, BA jet loft, border loft subsequently from the dry rise. That would all be detailed on the day normally.

The last time I undertook any high rise training was probably two years ago, before I came to this department. Just before I came onto this department is when I last did my practical drills, if not training then my last high rise job. I have dealt with a lot of high rise fires, as Barking had a lot of high rise but they are redeveloping it now so hopefully that risk is going and they are going to low rise, better accommodation. We had quite a busy area for high rise. When I first joined we had a place called The Lintons which was a nightmare for us as each flat was a maisonette, it was over 4 floors so it was classed as a high rise. It had maisonettes that where at the front door you didn't know if the stairwell went up or down. You only found out by having really good procedures with your BA shuffle or not so good procedures and falling down the stairwell. It made you learn quickly because we would be in there on a decent job probably 3 times a year which is a lot. In Barking, high rise was our bread and butter jobs. When we go to high rise, we look for the dry risers whether they are functioning correctly, the lifts do the lift keys work? the integrity of the fire safety of the core are the doors shutting? Is there any broken glass? The main means of escape is in place, general housekeeping, the main stairwells are free? On our MDT we'll upload an operational database whereas before it was all done on a bit of paper in a file in the office. You would go, pull the file go out and look and for instance, Blake House is a high rise. Normal 14

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

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floors, its got 2 lifts, Its serviced by 2 hydrants one dry rise. This information would be on a piece of paper at 4am, if you haven't done your 72D you probably won't be very familiar with it. So we uploaded all of this onto the operational database, it comes up on our screens and it will show where the hydrant is and where the dry riser is in relation to that. The building and where your entrance is, how many floors. It gives you a lot of information so that dynamically and quickly you can deploy your teams. 9 times out of ten this would be familiar anyway by crews doing familiarisation visits. On the back of that they've brought in a EPIP (electronic premises information plate). It will be bolted to the front of a building and it will show how many floors, where the lifts are, where the dry risers are and it will just be a plate. It's also on our MDT.

I'm now a CBRN officer, any chemical incident is our main core so any chemical suicide, any untoward so if someone says I can't put a finger on that, that smells a bit funny. We are very similar to the Met DCU we are not forensically trained but we are forensically aware. We treat things in a forensic way. If there is any chemicals or a biological threat we would go out to that. Our full protection is a gas type suit, extended duration breathing apparatus. We've got several different pieces of equipment that are not bog standard for firefighting. It's more like detection, identification monitoring and this is done using electronic equipment. We can sample take at a job, ie I'll allude to the acid attacks the initial crew dealing would go down and then we'd get called out to that and do a PH paper test. We could do any test so that we can look at it and say yes, that's ammonia, that's an acid. This supports the Police and the PH paper test can be bagged and used as evidence. Ultimately our role is to say that area is now safe or there's no elevated readings of whatever has been used. We wear EDBA, draeger is the breathing equipment that we wear the extended duration sets is what I wear. They last 45 minutes, working duration some people can make them go on for an hour and 15 if they are younger and fitter.

I had no knowledge of and had never heard of Grenfell Tower prior to the 14th JUNE 2017. On THURSDAY 14th JUNE 2017, I was in bed during the early hours I can't recall the time it was about half 2ish somebody poked their head in the door (I can't remember who it was) and said Tony there's a shout, large fire, 50 pump. We receive this information through pagers. The officer in charge was Dave WATTS, from another watch, he was in charge of red watch at the time. As I walked past the tv room, I could see it on Sky news. I was told that they were short of EDBA, we left and Mark NIBBLET was in charge as this was before I was made up.

As we approached Grenfell Tower, I saw the building as I had done on Sky News this inferno and it was incredible. We drove towards Grenfell Tower but between the traffic and parked cars we couldn't get

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

close enough. I said that we'll go to the command unit and find out what's going on. We went through some back streets to the command unit, I don't know where it was.

We had our IEC pack, first aid pack with defib and oxygen was left with them. We went back into the vehicle to get our sets and went back to where they were mustering us from. At that point I was approached by a young girl and a bloke and she slapped a phone on the side of my face and she said "MY SISTERS INSIDE THE FLAT AT 114.", so I said right and she said to me "YOU'VE GOT TO TALK TO HER." I started talking to her and she was screaming and her kid was screaming, I told her it was fine. I grabbed the girls ran with her through a Police barrier, took her to the fire survival command unit where I told the hysterical girl "EXPLAIN TO HIM WHAT YOU'VE JUST TOLD ME." So we processed flat 114, with her Sister, baby trapped inside and can't get out. I made that then made up fire survival guidance with the command unit and processed that. She then stuck the phone in my face and I could hear them, I said "YOU'VE GOT TO GET THAT OFF MY FACE." I couldn't do 2 things at once you know. I left her and told her "DON'T WORRY WE WILL GET HER." I still had to go back, get my SET and go off. I then had another guy come up to me and he said that he had somebody trapped on a floor. At that point, it was a bit of white noise. I was still computing her. I grabbed him and took him to FSG and then said to the man "TELL HIM WHAT HE NEEDS TO KNOW." I the left him with fire survival guidance. I then left and went up to where our lot were getting their BA sets off the truck. We only carry 3 but were riding 4 that night. The other 3 had the sets so I said I'd go and grab a set from the compound. I walked up to the station manager, I can't recall who it was he was a young guy and he said what do you want? I asked for a BA set. I let him know that 3 of us were out of ticket carbinous so I declared that. I started putting a set together and the battery went down, I got another set and he told me to go round the back. At this point, I was on the grass bit by the leisure centre. Points at map to Grenfell road where he says he approached from. Possible that way, we put sets together outside the leisure centre and from the east we walked through under the walk way which is where the main entrance was but you couldn't walk through because it was all closed off. We went round the back to where people were mustering from. I had three in EDBA and myself. I met up with watch manager Paul (can't remember his surname). He told me that we were committing to the bridgeheads, to the lobby. I said Ok what are we doing? He told me he wasn't quite sure as things were all over the place at the moment. It was just Paul and I, I decided that all of the personnel that were sitting on the wet grass and for us to go into the fire was a big no, no. I detailed a firefighter and said can you get 2 big salvage sheets and stick them out on the grass and get people to sit on it. A lot of people were standing up as well, so I thought lets sit them

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

down so that they can rest. So everyone ended up sat down on the salvage sheets in one are. I told Paul that I needed EDBA there and SDBA there so that I had a clear definition of where I was pulling from. Mark was the station manager running BA control. I was working in conjunction with him. We didn't use radios, we used our own personal phones, so he phoned me and asked about resources. I explained that I had 25 - 30 EDBA and 10 SDBA. Mark said to let him know if I need people filtering in.

There was a watch manager standing outside the lobby area, I don't know his name. There is a kids play area at the back, west side and we were committing from the west side. We had TSG with us as they were committing crews in. So I had a watch manager feeding back to me, who said that he needed another 10 EDBA. I then sent 10 EDBA fresh wearers. Within the fire brigade we have a 2 wear policy which is the maximum we would like people to wear. That started off fine, in the end people were saying that they'd had one wear but were lying because they wanted to get in the job. I can't knock them for that.

The first time I sent 10 EDBA stood them up, carolled them forward it was difficult because everyone wanted to move forward. Between Paul and I, we had to take a lot of command and control. For example, if I asked for 10 I'd get 12 and I would have to send 2 back. Then you'd filter these 10 up they were held just outside and then they were taken into the lobby sector and bridgehead and deployed. They would be taken in with TSG shielding them as there was debris everywhere. So we committed 10 at first then bulks of 16. I can't remember third or fourth time how many I'd committed but I recall talking to the station manager and saying to him. I need to replenish, I've just committed 15 and 20. He told me that he would start sending people round. So as they were going in, people were coming back from the main control and people were sitting down on salvage sheets.

At that point debris was coming down and so I moved all of the people from that area and I put them down by the garages, it's not a road but it's like a service road. So we moved 20 personnel from here off of the salvage sheets to avoid the debris coming through off the trees and it was falling onto us. I kept 1 pump operator and said just keep looking up. I'm going to get you a spotter.

I heard on the radio about a person who I thought was still alive so I said to Heart, although Heart can't go into a fire compartment. Heart being LAS. I said to them if I can get it to the lobby area and I spoke to the watch manager on the front Rich WELCH, he was with Pat GOLDBERG. I explained that I couldn't speak over the radio and I asked if he could speak in the lobby. I got carolled in and said to Richards and explained that I had height out there if he wanted to get this person out but he told me that the person was dead. I came out and stood LAS down. That wen on pretty much, the whole time I was there.

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

About 10 - 10:30am, relief crews came in and started relieving people of their posts. It had calmed down a bit by then, we weren't deploying crews of 10. The SDBA were going in and supporting the EDBA on the floors above. It had sort of slowed down I had spoken to a station manager on my sector and had implemented a welfare officer male, I can't remember his name. I asked the watch manager to monitor the crews coming out for fatigue, the state of their PPE, mental wellbeing and get them to leave this area and get replenished from BA main control. I didn't want crews leaving chewing the fat about how bad it is with fresh crews coming in.

Two firefighters came out on their knees. One received treatment from LAS who administered oxygen - Pav SINGH is retired now, he was at Bethnal Green. The BA main control phoned and said to me that they were not getting people back out and they weren't sure where they were going but they were not coming back to BA to service their SETs. I then rang back to the welfare Watch Manager and said that he's got to make this happen. He said that it was happening but I empathised that it clearly wasn't. I was quite abrupt with him but at that point we couldn't have people wandering into nowhere and not being carolled back, looked after and fed back into the system. After that things did improve.

I got relieved, I'm not sure who by, I gave them a debrief and the main number for BA control. I walked out back down this concourse, pass the out back out onto this concourse are where there was a hell of a lot of firefighters that weren't originally there.

I could see the pop up tents for the deceased, I could see a lot of BA main control going on with sets. Peg were there (our equipment group), they service all our BA sets. They were immobilised with a lorry load of extra sets and bits and pieces. There was a lot of people in the welfare area having water taken on board. People were being held ready to go in a standby mode. I shook the hand of the BA control station manager. We exchanged a few words, something like cheers mate, thanks for that I'm off.

I left due to my commitment for CBRN, there was nothing in London at that point. There was nothing there for CBRN capability as both machines were there. As we were staging down, I deemed that it wasn't necessary to have my CBRN capability there anymore. I was happy for my EDBA capability to remain but not everything else.

I returned back [REDACTED] we serviced our equipment and went and had a cup of tea. We sat and went through the previous night and chewed the fat with everyone like you do. We then went to the pub and had a shandy. We just sat and spoke about it and funnily enough, we met up downstairs. We discussed what we had all been doing and what a terrible job it was and that's it we were back on duty the following night.

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

We left Grenfell and went to Paddington and provided a statement. It was a pre scripted statement with questions. I was offered welfare and counselling. I declined as didn't need it at the time. I did get a bit upset as I could still hear their voices but I could not quickly do anything about that. Like get up to Flat 114 and it was quite difficult for me because I'd heard their voices it became personal. I have no idea how control do it? I'm alright with a dead body, but that became quite a personal thing as I'd spoken and heard their voices. The route to Grenfell was directed by Mark who is a [REDACTED] Watch Manager MORRISON was there. We approached Grenfell from the South, Bramley Road.

The roads were congested and there were crowds of people. The truck was left by the side of the road. The point I first saw Grenfell and Mark said look at that. I thought "FUCKING HELL." I couldn't believe it, it was really strange I felt excited at one point, then I felt unhappy and I remember having the conversation to the effect of everyone stick together, remember about our carbonatious training has expired. If they're going to want you to wear then make it known. If we all get split up, we'll meet back at the truck. So I took on a parental role as I'm the oldest on the truck.

Within one minute of seeing Grenfell Tower, we had parked up as we couldn't get any further in. We were behind Police cars, and an ambulance so we parked the truck up and went up to the fire command unit, through the back doubles really.

The command unit was around Grenfell Road. There were 2 command units, the first one was where I went when we arrived and stating, we're 3 EDBA where do you want us? The second one was where I processed the fire survival guidance and where I took the woman and the man I met when first in scene. I don't know exactly what the purpose was of the first command unit we went to. When I stated to him that we were 3 EDBA, he went through to BA main control and said that everyone was at the leisure centre which is where they the guided us. I think although a command unit, they might have been scene of operations but not for me. I didn't go in but can say it was my first point of fire brigade and that is when we started getting processed in. At that point, we went back to the truck and got the 3 EDBA sets. Mark and Ritchie grabbed a set. Technically, I should have had a set. Amanda said she'd have a set. We then ran back up to the scenes of operations with the sets. I wasn't carrying anything at that time. From there we went up to our main control by the leisure centre. However, prior to me arriving at the leisure centre, I processed the fire survival guidance and I lost my crew.

A young woman, mixed race, who looked Spanish and had dark hair approached me. She was smaller than me with a taller mixed race guy. She came running up to me and said my Sister's trapped in her flat. Flat 114, she said "YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOEMTHING. YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME. YOU'VE

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

GOT TO HELP ME, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME." She then slapped the phone on the side of my face and I could hear a woman crying, she was hysterical. I could hear "I'M TRAPPED IN MY FLAT, I'M TRAPPED IN MY FLAT." I told her to stay in her flat, then I pushed the phone away from me towards the girl. In my head, I was thinking shit, I've got to process these at FSG. The more time I'm standing talking, the less time somebody is getting to you. So I said "COME WITH ME" and grabbed the woman by the collar of her coat and I ran from Grenfell Road from the sample heist to just inside the Police cordon and then there was another cordon where a woman Police Officer was and she was like "NO, NO, NO." I then explained that I was going to take the woman to FSG. We ducked under that and I ran with her and when we stopped and she put the phone to the side of my face and I could hear this hysterical woman and that's when I said "GET A FUCKING GRIP, YOU TELL HIM WHAT YOU'VE JUST TOLD ME. TELL HIM." I turned around and I got very forceful with her and she told him, my Sister's trapped in a flat 114 and he was writing it all down. I have no idea who he was, we were at the booking in window not actually at the command unit. I did establish with him, this is FSG and he said "Yeah." They guy that was with her didn't say anything to me. I then thought, that's done, I've got to get back to my group and I said to her "STAY THERE, ITS ALL GOING TO GET SORTED. DON'T WORRY." The female was quite hysterical as she still had her Sister on the phone. I said "I'VE GOT TO GO" and this guy came up to me and said that someone was trapped, I can't recall if he said male or female. It was like white noise, he was talking at me and I just wasn't processing it. In my mind, I ran him back to the FSG command unit and processed him in and said "TELL HIM EXACTLY WHAT YOU WAS TELLING ME". I'm pretty sure the FSG command was by GRENFELL ROAD. I might be wrong. I saw Grenfell Tower, but didn't get a true grasp of it until I went round to the leisure centre.

I'm pretty sure that the lady in 114 died, that's purely because the crew downstairs and I all had a conversation about what we did and subsequently the crew downstairs searched flat 114 which was empty. A group of people were huddled together in a flat on the floor and they all died.

After leaving the FSG command unit, I walked alone to our main control and I met up with the remainder of my crew. We had a brief discussion with the station manager regarding some of my CBRN crew being in ticket and others were out. I queried if this would be a problem and was told that it wasn't and then I went round to BA control. I then started pitting my set together but the battery was dead. The station manager told me to leave the set and go and meet up with Paul (I can't recall his surname) to help commit. I had to walk under the under pass to get to Paul and I could see debris and hoses everywhere. I was walking through probably 6 inches of water. The main entrance was taped off so we couldn't go in

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

that way. I then walked through the service area through a door. As I walked into the west are, I could see a play area, TSG were there riot shields and they had riot shields out protecting the crews and then I met up with Paul. Paul and I then formulated a work plan. From where I was positioned by the play area on the west, I could see Grenfell Tower that the 5th and 6th floors were damaged but not as much as the floors above. The floors above were pretty much damaged. We had a jet and a guy was sitting underneath a slide for a bit of protection he was hitting the 4th floor and there was a great deal of debris. The smoke was not as ferocious on the west side of the building. I wasn't coughing and spluttering, I wasn't in a smoky environment, in fact the wind was blowing away from us. I couldn't recall any particular smells.

I spent a great deal of time looking away from the building, at the firefighters establishing new wearers from old wearers, Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus from Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus. I'd then ask for 10 wearers to go in and I'd feedback to command and control how many staff I had. I had to get forceful at times as we had to control the situation. The firefighters wanted to go in but I had to ensure their welfare and that is why I decided to put salvage sheets on the ground as I couldn't have firefighters entering a fire wearing wet clothing for safety purposes. They could get scolded.

The old wearers would come out of Grenfell and would walk underneath the concourse where they would go to main control to get welfare — watered and fed before getting fed back in. I saw one guy (don't know his name) who had two wears and I told him to go and have a break. I couldn't recall how many faces that were coming back round, the onus was on the Firefighter.

In our BA policy, you shouldn't have to wear twice. Nobody made themselves known to me that they weren't fit and well as I've said before, the onus is on them. One guy came out on his knees and wanted to go again, I don't know his name but that was it for me I was like no you're not going back in.

I spent most of my time outside the community centre feeding and extracting crews and I was about 10 - 15 metres away from the building. I went from east to west while I was at Grenfell but at no time did I go to the north of the building, I just couldn't get round there as there were railings in the way. The crews were lined up against the wall in pairs of 20. The old crews that came out were debriefed in that sector, they came back to me and went under the concourse and out. I remained on the west side until about 930am. I cannot recall what time I arrived at Grenfell.

We made a plan for casualties to leave and cleared debris so that casualties could leave and receive treatment from LAS.

The fire spread so much that from the 5th floor all the way up and the building was gone from the fifth floor up. As it was a summers evening, people had their windows open and the fire was looping up.

Signature: A PARKIN
2018

Signature witnessed by:

Knowing now what the building is constructed of it was clear the fire was looping up from compartment to compartment.

The building to me seemed like a bog standard high rise. At that time the way the building was constructed in terms of panels didn't even register to me. The fire however, was not a typical high rise fire. There was talk that the gas valve had exploded and had got into the cavity. When I left they were digging the road off.

With regards to safety measures/procedures, there was cordon tape up, safety officer TSG were used for safe entry and exit from the building. From a building, safety, construction point Grenfell looked like a typical high rise building. It looked like a typical estate. There was nothing obvious to me. I felt like you could go anywhere in London and see a similar high rise building.

Initially, I wasn't sure who was in charge overall of the incident. Then the Commissioner came on. The Commissioner is the Commissioner. Tom GEORGE was a senior leader. I had direct contact with Group Managers Rich WELSH and Pat GOLDBURN so they were my main focus. I couldn't tell you who ultimately was in charge.

My understanding of the stay put policy is everything we do when we carry out home fire safety visits, you are aware of them particularly in vulnerable areas. We particularly targeted high rise in Barking as that was our biggest risk. Poor people, living in poor conditions that maybe need educating to say lets not have incense or candles burning. When I'd do home safety visits I'd ask residents safety questions relating to what they would do if they had a fire and I'd listen to what they say and give advice. I'd advise, if you can get out then stay out don't come back in. Or stay in and call 999, put the bedding against the door, stay in one room, if you can't get them all in one room then get them to stay in their rooms. I tell them that they will get a phone call from control where they will keep you on the line, talk to you to keep you calm. A fire crew will arrive in about 5 to 7 minutes. I would endorse stay put policy but morally I can't tell somebody to leave their flat and equally I can't tell them to stay in it. I can only give them advice that I know works on normal high rise incident it works. It worked at Grenfell at points. Prior to Grenfell, I wasn't aware of the withdrawal policy and I wasn't aware that they had changed their advice from staying put. Communication between me and BA control was via our mobile phones as we were aware of radio traffic and were equally mindful that people could be listening in. If I didn't have signal we would have reverted back to radio. Decision logs would have been used on the command unit but this didn't cross my mind at the time. I wasn't privy to operational tactics and there wouldn't have been a need. However, I briefly recall standing next to the borough surveyor and a senior officer (I can't

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remember his name) about whether the building was structurally sound which at that time it was but he was not very convincing in his words but he was under a lot of pressure. I do not know who the building surveyor was. I didn't notice anything about the structure of the windows.

Regarding tactics deployed to put out the fire on the external part of the building were by the use of covering jets. There was a gangway between south and west. A ground monitor was put on there to get a greater reach. I know this happened on my sector, I'm not sure about other sectors.

My thoughts at the time were that this was a typical high rise but not a typical high rise fire. I thought how can everything be a blaze. When there was talk of the gas main being in the cavity, I did think that probably helped it. At the time, it didn't even occur to me that the cause of the fire would be the panels. However, I have had training on composite panels as they are usually in warehouses not on high rise. Debris falling from a fire on a high rise is very common.

Six months after Grenfell, I have self-analysed my performance and I do this after every job. I do not believe that I could have contributed any more. From a Fire brigade role we had the super out from Surrey their aerial machines are 72 or 80 metres and ours are 60 metres, so you got a few more floors. The offset against that is that they are a bit wider and longer. On the streets of London you can't get the vehicle in but they used it. I have done a bit of a blog on Facebook, why didn't we have at least 2 of these in London? Or one of these in London not only for Grenfell but for any type of high rise incident. Somebody from our transport responded by saying that we couldn't do it as they are too big and that they are not practical for us. However, subsequently I'm now aware that they are talking about getting or trialling them. EDBA the counties don't have and I think it should be rolled out as standard there are pros and cons to it as its heavier, there's more training and cost. For me, it's a breathing apparatus set you just do a 1 day conversion as the procedures are the same it's just a longer set. Some people argue if you're just going to a normal house fire then there's no need for it but I'd rather have too much than not enough. I personally think out of this, these things should be looked and people should be asked. As we're all going to have a different take on it.

I think that London has got quite good kit, the volume of water that we can deploy on a fire is better than we've ever had in the past. Our pumps, where we used to have 4 deliveries, we only have 3 deliveries now because they can pump such a high volume of water at low revs. They are very efficient at what they do. My crew and I did not need any medical treatment afterwards.

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Page 14 of 14



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