

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: WELDEN, ANTONY

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 12 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: A WELDEN

Date: 02/03/2018

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

This statement is in relation to my experience whilst being deployed at the Grenfell Tower Fire on 14th June 2017. At that time I was based at Bethnal Green Fire Station, attached to the Red Watch.

During this statement I will refer to my original notes I made at Paddington Fire Station on the 14th June 2017, I exhibit these notes at ABW/1. I have also marked on two maps given to me by DC Amin KOHZADBAYAT to show various reference points whilst I was deployed, I exhibit this maps as ABW/2, which is the street map view of Grenfell Tower and its surroundings, and ABW/3 which is a diagram of the sides of the Grenfell Tower.

Within this statement I will refer to various colleagues who were with me at some point whilst at Grenfell Tower. I will mention Crew Manager Sean MURPHY, FireFighter Craig EDWARDS, and FireFighter Ian MOORE who were from Bethnal Green Fire Station Fire Investigation Unit and who I rode with to the Tower. I will mention FireFighter Pav SINGH, FireFighter Paul HOWARD and FireFighter EDWARDS who I worked alongside with whilst in the Tower itself. I will mention Pat GOULBOURNE and Officer Richard WELCH who were senior Officers on the incident who gave instruction and took debriefs from me and my Crew. I will also mention Danni COTTON who is the Commissioner of London Fire Brigade and who spoke to me and my colleagues whilst at Grenfell Tower on the 14th June 2017. I have served in the London Fire Brigade for almost 22years, I am currently based at Bethnal Green, Red Watch which has a pump ladder and FRU (Fire Rescue Unit) It was the FRU I was assigned to and deployed on the night of the fire. Bethnal Green call sign is F26.

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I started my shift as usual on the 13th June 2017 at 2000hours, and was scheduled to finish at 0930hours on the 14th June 2017. At about 0245hours we got the shout to go to Grenfell, I went down to the Watchroom which is where we receive call slips for the incidents. The call slip said it was a 40 pump fire and the address, which I remember as 'Grenfell Tower industrial estate' or something like that. I don't remember there being a road name on the call slip, but in hindsight that's because the Tower isn't really on a specific road, it's in the middle of where lots of roads meet. I know London quite well, and I knew roughly where the area of the incident was, I'm a black cab driver so have a good understanding of the road networks but didn't know exactly, which is why a road name would have been good. When we do the knowledge for being a black cab driver we use a technique called 'pointing' which is remembering and linking up landmarks. For instance, once we arrived at an incident and we were sat down and waiting, I recorded the leisure centre as it had been pointed whilst doing the knowledge.

Me and my Crew got into F266 and set out the station. Crew Manager Sean MURPHY was at the front, next to FF Craig EDWARDS who was the driver. I was sat at the back of the appliance with FF Ian MOORE. Sean MURPHY was on standby from Islington. Crew Manager MURPHY was using Google maps on his phone and I was giving initial direction to Firefighter EDWARDS from my general London knowledge. The appliances have MDT's but are sometimes not very reliable. It was CM MURPHY who got the route in the end.

When we were on our way one of the things going through my head was the information on the call slip must have been a mistake, 40 pump fires are unheard of, they just don't happen. I've been to 20 pump fires, but not 40.

From what I remember, the route we took was down Roman Road, Bethnal Green Road, left onto Shoreditch High Street, right onto Great Eastern Street, Old Street all the way to New Oxford Street and Oxford Street, right onto Regent Street, left onto Marylebone, over the flyover then West Cross Route, Shepherds Bush Roundabout Holland Park, Royal Crescent, St Annes Villas, then a road I can't recall, then onto Sirdar Road. I remember the journey being clear of traffic, but I couldn't really tell you what time we got there. In the last bit of the journey, we followed a Command Unit to park up, we ended up parking outside a School just off Sirdar Road.

On the journey there we could hear messages over the radio, there were messages for FSG calls, Fire Survivor Guidance calls. This basically means that people are stuck in a fire and a member of staff from the LFB are on the phones to them giving them guidance. It was then that we all realised that there wasn't a mistake on the call slip and that it was a serious job we were going to.

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The first time we saw the Tower was as we went past Paddington Station, as we got closer from there we could see more and more. The Tower looked like a big ball of flame, I couldn't see the bottom of the Tower at this point but would say that from the 4th floor upwards it was on fire, and it seemed that the further up the fire was the more it spread around the Tower. I was shocked at the sight of it, and thought that I might not be getting home that day. As we drove closer, onto Western Avenue, I could see the whole building was alight, my first words were 'WHAT THE FUCK', I could see more now, and the further the fire went up, the further it wrapped around the building. I've marked on exhibit ABW/3 'East Elevation' the direction the fire took up the Tower.

Other than the FSG calls I could hear over the radio when we were on route and arriving at the scene, I don't remember hearing else when we first arrived. This is probably because we were quite a long way from the job when we parked up. We weren't close, I remember we parked on the South side of the Tower and walked up Grenfell Road towards the Tower. There were cars parked up on the sides of the street so trucks had to park in the middle of the road. Trucks got as close as the Leisure Centre as they could, but there was a lot of traffic, I'd guess that trucks that arrived earlier in the incident would have managed to park closer. We were one of the later appliances to arrive which is why we weren't as close. As we got off the truck we put our BA (Breathing Apparatus) sets on our backs, we decided as a crew to do this as we hadn't been tasked but from looking at the Tower we knew we would be going up, CM MURPHY agreed we should be putting our sets on. The BA sets we wear on the FRU are EDDBA's, (Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus) these give us a little more air than the SDBA's (Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus) although they are a bit heavier. As we were walking to the Tower I could see members of the public outside their doors looking up trying to make sense of what was going on. As we were walking closer to the Tower we could hear cracking of the flames and the fire inside. I'm not too sure what else I might have heard, I'm having counselling at the moment because of what I have experienced throughout the incident and I know that some of my recall is blurry. If you asked me if people were screaming, I wouldn't be able to tell you. I'm a very visual person I remember what I saw more than what I could smell and hear, but I do remember smelling the smoke as we got closer but smells and sounds aside, it was quite clear what kind of fire we were going to, we could see it right in front of us. The flames were wrapping around the Tower from quite low, maybe two floors in, then nearly all the way up.

We had our nominal roll board with us, which the Officer in charge normally gives to the Watch Manager on the Command Unit, this is to check us in at the incident so the command Unit knows who is on the

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incident at any given time. We walked to the concourse area by the entrance of the Tower and CM MURPHY gave the roll board to a Command Unit there. We waited there for a bit, waiting to be tasked by Senior Staff and after a while were told to go and wait on the grass outside the Leisure Centre. I couldn't tell you how long we waited until we went to the Leisure Centre, my recall of time is a bit hazy. There were Emergency Service people everywhere outside the grassed area at the Leisure Centre. The FireFighters who hadn't worn yet were kept in a particular area so people knew who had worn once and who hadn't worn.

I was then asked by a Watch Manager to sort out the alarm system in the Leisure Centre as the alarm was going off, from what I could see it had no reason to be going off so he wanted me to check it out, and silence it. Another FireFighter came with me, we went into the Centre, had a look around, there was no fire. The Centre was being used for a casualty holding area so the alarm needed to be silenced really. I think it was going off because of the smoke from the Tower. We looked around the Leisure Centre, there was no sign of fire so silenced and reset the alarm. It went off again, we realised it would keep going off because the smoke from the Tower was still there so we silenced the alarm system in the Centre. I told the Watch Manager who initially tasked me that this is what we did, and that if there was a fire in the Leisure Centre the alarm wouldn't be going off. I didn't know the name of the Watch Manager who tasked me with this job.

I was then asked to go and help the Police to get some water for the casualties, we went into the Leisure Centre and got water from two vending machines that were in there. We had to break the vending machines to do this but the Police Officers did the breaking. We got tables set up from inside the Centre and laid the water out on the tables for the casualties. After I had done this I went back the grassed outside the Leisure Centre and re-joined the EDBA FireFighters. I have marked on exhibit ABW/2 where we were waiting. There were FireFighters waiting there, both EDBA wearers and SDBA wearers, but we were separated out, the SDBA wearers were sat behind us. There was loads of us. Then I remember seeing the riot police, and thinking what on earth were they there for!, but I later found out the riot police were helping the FireFighters by protecting us from the falling debris whilst going into the building. There were lots of LAS staff and Police Staff on and around that area too, there was a lot of activity around that Leisure Centre. While we were waiting there I could see someone up high in the building, through the window, I could also see through one window someone had tied what seemed like sheets together and lowered the sheets out of the window. I couldn't tell you what floor I saw this on. As I was

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looking at the Tower I could hear big booms, like things exploding, I realised this must have been gas boilers.

I am not sure how long I was waiting for on the grass, then one of the Senior Staff said they wanted 20 EDBA wearers to go to the Tower. We worked in our teams, so there were 5 teams of 4 FireFighters, we were told we would be going in. From being outside the Leisure Centre we moved into one mezzanine cover at the front of the Tower, and then moved across to a second covered area at the back/side of the building, I have marked the second covered area as 'S' on exhibit ABW/2.

The 20 EDBA wearers split in half to do these transitions, 2 groups of 10. I went in the second group of 10, and was alongside my Crew, which at this point was still CM MURPHY, FireFighter EDWARDS and FireFighter MOORE. As we were making this staged transition to the second covered area of the building I could see bits of the building falling down, I wasn't too sure at the time because I was busy thinking about going in and up the Tower but I now know it was bits of cladding. It was coming down quite heavy, and mostly big panels, maybe 3ft by 3ft but smaller bits were falling too. Some of the bits that were falling were alight. There was so much debris on the floor as we went across, we had to be mindful where we were putting our feet.

I could see that there was a turntable ladder under the second covered area, it was just surreal to see that. I guess it has been moved there because there was so much debris falling on it that it needed to be covered itself to save from damage.

From there a Senior Officers explained to us what we were going to do, exactly what they said is hazy. There were Police Officers there with riot shields that were taking Fire-Fighters from the second covered area to the side entrance into Grenfell Tower. It was my turn and I started walking across, I must have been half way across and I remember hearing a massive thump sound, I looked behind to see what it was and saw that my CM, CM MURPHY was on the floor on his back, he had been hit by a body. Straight away I could see Fire-Fighter MOORE was pulling MURPHY back towards the covered area he had just come from, he was pulling him from under his shoulders. There was another Officer there protecting both MURPHY and MOORE with a riot shield as they were going back. Someone else was pulling the fallen body off MURPHY, I remember seeing the body and that it only had one leg, and that their innards had spilled out. I couldn't tell you if the body had clothing on, but can remember that it looked very grey in colour. I would say the body was of slim build, but I couldn't say whether it was a male or female, or the skin colour, other than grey. I was only 4-5 steps in front of CM MURPHY. After I saw this and got my thoughts together I also went back under the second covered area along with the rest of my Crew. They

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were making sure CM MURPHY was OK before going back to the side entrance into the Tower. I think it was Andy ROE who was in charge of this section under the second concrete covered area.

The entrance into the Tower at the side looked like two separate entrances, like two long floor to ceiling windows broken through. When it was safe, for the second time we headed over from the concrete cover to the side entrance, again protected by a riot police holding a shield above us. I went across with FireFighter EDWARDS and FireFighter MOORE.

When we got into the Tower it seemed calm compared to the outside. It was like a room we walked into, with lots of FireFighters in there. There were casualties being brought out of this entrance as well. There were Firefighters waiting to leave through this entrance and people coming in, it was like organised chaos. We walked through this small room which opened up into the main lobby area, which I now know to be the inside of the front entrance of Grenfell Tower. There was lots of glass in this front lobby section. In the lobby area the FireFighters were queuing quite orderly, every now and again someone would shout "CASUALTY CASUALTY" and people would step back and move out of the way as a casualty was brought out of the stairwell.

There were two floors in that front area, the ground/lobby area, and the mezzanine area, there were glass walls partitioning them out from each other. We shuffled along in a queue waiting to be committed to the Tower. The queue started at the lobby area, then up to the mezzanine level, and through a door which led to the stairs. It was just through this door that there were two BA (Breathing Apparatus) Boards and Officers running these. It was at this point when we got there, I first noticed the floor was wet, not a lot of water though, but it was definitely there. I don't remember there being any smoke or heat at this point, it still felt calm to me.

I remember 9/11 going through my mind and that 300 FireFighters died that day. I had spoken to my wife that night before she went to sleep, as I always do when I am on a night shift and I was thinking about that, but the moment I went into the Tower I was focussed on getting the job done.

My first task was to take two lengths of hose to the second floor and come back down. I did that. I don't remember who it was that tasked me though. I think FireFighter EDWARDS was with me at that time.

We queued and got to the front of the queue again, I was with FireFighter EDWARDS and two FireFighters from Islington, one of the Islington Crew was a FireFighter from Bethnal Green who was working there on standby Pav SINGH, and the other FireFighter I knew from my days at East Ham Paul HOWARD, so I knew both of them. It became clear that we would work as a Crew of four. There was no Crew Manager between us but out of the four of us I had the least service, at almost 22 years, so we were

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a well experienced Crew. There were two Senior Officers in charge of the front of the queue at that time, Pat GOULBOURNE, and Richard WELCH. I know Pat GOULBOURNE and have known him for years, I have upmost respect for him. His first words to us were something like “GOOD TO SEE SUCH AN EXPEREICED CREW” in that he knew we were all experienced. Pat GOULBOURNE tasked the four of us to go to the 11th floor and to flats 81, 82, 83, and 84 and we were to help rescue and get people out from those flats. GOULBOURNE specifically said that there was a mother and baby in flat 82 and we needed to get them. GOULBOURNE gave us this task verbally, and one of us repeated it to him so he knew we understood what was being asked of us.

He explained that the communications weren't working very well, and that we were short of water, but we needed to do our best. He said we were no longer using the “Stay Put Policy” at this time.

The four of us made our way up the stairs, FireFighters, SINGH, EDWARDS, HOWARD and myself. We went up the stairs. I was carrying a TIC (Thermal Imaging Camera) and someone else had the breaking in tools. When we entered the stairwell I remember thinking it didn't seem very wide. It's probably easy for two people to walk side by side, but not two FireFighters to walk side by side with the equipment on. The stairwell itself was concrete, there was lots of hose on the stairs and Firefighting equipment. I was conscious of water coming down the stairs, there wasn't a lot at this point but if your Firefighter clothing gets wet, then hot, it can turn to steam and cause burns.

We continued together to the 5th floor. It was on the 5th floor that I remember the smoke started to become bad. I'd say I couldn't see a foot in front of me, and the further we went up the thicker it was getting. Our brief was to go to the 11th floor, although it was difficult to know which floor we were on, there were no numbers marked on the walls anywhere that I could see so we relied on counting steps. The further we went up the more water was coming down, and we were getting drenched. We were stopping every two floors to gather and make sure everyone was together and alright.

We then came across two FireFighters who said ‘WE HAVE A BODY HERE’, we had heard about this body so many times before going in. They said “CAN YOU HELP US TAKE THIS CASUALTY DOWN STAIRS, ALTHOUGH WE THINK SHE MIGHT BE DEAD”. If I had to say I think this was between the 8th and 9th floor. We had to make a decision at this point whether to help with the dead body or whether to continue up to go to floor 11, as originally tasked to save life. We made the decision as a team to continue up, this was difficult as we always want to treat bodies with dignity and respect, but while there was still life to save, that was the priority. We stepped over the body and continued. At this time of passing, I couldn't tell whether this body was a male or female, what colour skin the body had, or

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what age that person might have been, but I just knew it was large. To my knowledge the body was left in the stairwell at that time.

I remember as we continued up that the temperature was getting hotter. We continued, when we thought that we were on the 11th floor we felt our way in through a door and into the landing area. In the Fire Service we use a technique called 'landmarking' for when we can't see. We followed the right hand side wall as we went in, and tried to recognise and landmark objects along that wall. As soon as we entered the lobby, the first door on the right was a big white door, I recognised it as an electrical meter cupboard which is similar to many other blocks of flats. I made a mental note of this door given it was closest to the exit from the lobby. The next door I went through with FF HOWARD and we quickly realised this was a chute room and came back out, I tried the next door with Fire-Fighter EDWARDS whilst Fire-fighter HOWARD and Fire-Fighter SINGH went to the next door along from that. I banged loudly on the door and got no response. After making checks to the door, I decided it would be safe enough to open, I opened, looked in and all I could see was a big ball of orange flame and beyond the London skyline. I knew no-one would be alive in that flat, so I stepped back and closed the door. I struggled to close the door, it felt flimsy, the door and the lock. It was when I was struggling to get the door closed that I saw on the door number 96, which wasn't one of the flats we had been tasked to go to. I didn't think that we were on the wrong floor though, I thought it might have just been a big floor. It felt like I couldn't shut that door properly, it's important to shut the doors and keep them closed as they are fire barriers. We had no water with us, if we had water we would have tried to fight the fire in flat number 96.

After we stepped away from door 96 we continued to follow the right hand wall to catch up with FireFighters SINGH and HOWARD, I think they tried to get into the door next to 96, so me and FireFighter EDWARDS carried onto the door after that and tried this one too. We didn't manage to get into that second door we tried, nor could I tell you what door number it was.

It was at this point that Fire-Fighter EDWARDS started hearing crackling. He was got 25 years experience and I trust his concerns. He said that the particles were getting thicker, and blacker, the conditions were getting worse and he suggested it was time to get out. When the particles get thicker it means that a spark could ignite the whole lot and there could be a flash over. I could hear voices though and thought that we would carry on just a little bit more. I later found out those voices were from an Islington Crew near to us. We tried one or two more doors but couldn't get in, again Fire-Fighter EDWARDS said conditions were getting worse. I said to Fire-Fighters HOWARD and SINGH, "ITS TIME OT GET OUT", if we don't go now we are not getting out. I landmarked back round to the first

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white door, the electrical room, then into the stairwell. I led us all out onto the stairwell and as a Crew of four we started descending down the stairs, Fire-Fighter HOWARD and Fire-Fighter SINGH attempted to enter the lobby of floor 11 as they had realised we had gone to floor 12. The heat barrier was too intense and they couldn't even enter into the lobby area of floor 11.

After that we came back down the stairwell again, past the dead body who was still in the stairwell.

Again, as on the way up, on the way down we would stop every two floors to make sure everyone was alright. We got to the 5th or 6th floor, and the smoke started to clear, did a gage check, everyone was fine for air and to continue so we decided we needed to start fighting the fire, there was a lot of hose around already on the floor, some rolled, some unrolled, we decided we would make an internal riser with the hoses by linking them up, there was a gap in the stairs so you could drop the hose down. As a team of four, myself HOWARD, SINGH and EDWARDS we spread up, from the 5th, and think up to about the 11th floor and linked the hose together, this was draining. I was at the lowest level, FireFighter HOWARD was at the top, then FireFighter SINGH, and FireFighter EDWARDS. We tried to get someone to go down the Bridgehead to tell them we were running hose to the 11th floor, whether this message got relayed or not I am not sure. I think at this point we were about 3 hours into the job.

The next thing, someone tapped me on my shoulder and said "ARE YOU FROM BETHNAL GREEN". To which I responded "YES". That FireFighter told me that me and my team had been in too long and we needed to get out. We made our way back down together, as a four.

I was wearing a communication set that evening during the incident known as a barri set. I was hearing a squeak from the 2nd to maybe the 4th or 5th floor, and nothing for the rest of the time I was inside the Tower. I remember trying at one point, in case they could hear us and we couldn't hear them, I said "ALPHA CONTROL THIS IS F26, JUST TO SAY WE HAVE FOUND A BODY" or something to that affect. I don't know if anyone received this.

When we got to the Bridgehead FireFighter HOWARD gave a de-brief about what we had done , and what we had seen. I'm not too sure who the Senior Fire Officer was who FireFighter HOWARD gave the de-brief to, but Pat GOULBOURNE was there, and listening in to the debrief as well.

The moment we got down to the bottom of the stairs I noticed there was so much water on the floor, I'd say about 4-5 inches on the floor. I remember that I was exhausted, I struggled to get my set off and someone helped me to do this. I was spent. I even struggled to pick my set back up again, someone else did this for me, I had just expended so much energy. I looked around before I exited the Bridgehead and

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noticed that things had been written on the walls. Other than that, everything seemed much the same as when we went up.

We exited the Tower the same way we went in, through the side entrance by the playground. We all exited as a four. FireFighter SINGH and EDWARDS sat down outside, close to the playground area. FireFighter SINGH was exhausted, as we all were, he is only a few weeks away from retirement.

Me and FireFighter HOWARD moved round a bit further to the right, and sat down on some grass, I felt like it was next to an ice-cream van that had parked up for the night, but not sure. I remember there was still some debris coming down, but not as much as when we went in.

My adrenaline was dropping and I was getting tired. Someone came over and asked us who had worn, I think they wanted to keep us separate from non-wearers and for that to be clear, we were told to move, so we moved somewhere close by and leaned up against a wall. This was me and FireFighter HOWARD. SINGH and EDWARDS had disappeared somewhere by this point, not too sure where they went. Then FireFighter HOWARD said to me, "YOU MIGHT WANT TO MOVE". I looked right and there was a body bag next to me, the first thought I had was that it was the body that fell on CM MURPHY. That was a horrible moment for me.

This next bit is a bit of a blur really but I do remember there being hose everyone on the floor. FireFighter EDWARDS then came over to explain where they had been and where FireFighter SINGH was, he said to me that he had been taken to the pub for first aid treatment. Pav is [REDACTED] guy but he has a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which means that his [REDACTED] The LAS staff asked Pav his surname and he said SINGH, they assumed he should have [REDACTED] and because he was [REDACTED] they insisted on treating him. I think Pav tried to tell me it was [REDACTED] but they insisted and he just let them treat him in the end, I think they ended up giving him some oxygen.

Me and FireFighter EDWARDS went over the pub where Pav was, I told Pav that he was not putting his set on again, he was retiring and he needed to be looked after. We left the pub and I took him around to look for his Crew. As I was walking around I saw CM MURPHY, he was taken to the ambulance after he got hit but just took a few paracetamol and he was fine, he is a tough cookie.

At this point Pav SINGH went back to his Crew. Me and FireFighter EDWARDS walked round the streets to get back to the Leisure Centre. Members of the public were trying to give us food, it was quite emotional really. It was light at this point, this is all I knew about the time, that it was daylight. We got back to the Leisure Centre and did a 'Fire Ground A test' on our BA sets, this is basically to check the cylinders and to replace them if we thought we were needed to go again. We would never normally wear

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twice, but this was unprecedented. My tunic was soaking wet so I took it off and laid it out on the grass, I was freezing.

This memory is a bit sketchy but from where we were sat I could see people in the windows of the Tower. I would guess at saying maybe the 12th to 13th floor. I know that FireFighters got to these floors earlier on in the fire but we couldn't get past the 12th because the heat barrier was just too much, and when we tried the 12th floor we didn't manage to find anyone. It's a horrible feeling knowing that we couldn't save life, that is our job. We could see people were probably going to die and we couldn't do anything about it, it was a horrible horrible thing.

Specifically, I could see in one window sheets tied together and hanging out the window, I have marked on exhibit ABW/3 where I could see the sheet, I have marked this on the South Elevation diagram. I'm sure I could see a person further up at the window at the same side as the tied sheets but I'm not sure, my mind is quite hazy around this. I feel like I definitely saw someone on that South side but we were at the Leisure Centre and so quite far away, I have no memory of any detail of the person I saw. The South side was the last side that caught alight.

We weren't asked to go in again, thankfully. I saw CM MURPHY putting his set on to go back in with another Crew. I just remember feeling thankful that he was ok after being hit.

There was a lot going on at this point, Surrey's TL Ladder turned up, we could still hear explosions from inside the Tower. There were lots of FireFighters in BA waiting to be committed.

Pav SINGH joined us again, I don't know where he walked but he ended up at the same point at the Leisure Centre as us. I also saw colleagues from other stations.

We walked round to where the Salvation Army was and got some coffees to try and get some energy back. I went from freezing cold to burning hot as the sun came up as it was a very hot day so I went to sit in the shade.

FRU that I work on is a small community so I was bumping into colleagues I knew and that I hadn't seen for a long time. I ran a few small errands with Firefighter EDWARDS to collect Leaky Feeders and Repeaters and then headed back to the truck.

I was heading back to the truck there was a female reporter with BBC lanyard on, she kept trying to ask me and EDWARDS questions, I kept saying to Firefighter EDWARDS "DON'T ANSWER THEM", she was annoying me because I said she needs to go through formal route to speak to the FireFighters, and felt she was being sneaky and we had clearly just done a massive job. I remember her asking me "WAS

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THAT THE WORST JOB YOU HAVE EVER BEEN ON” I thought she was being completely insensitive and walked off.

When we got back to the truck, which was in the same place we left it when we initially parked, we had a difficult conversation with the caretaker of the school. He said “WHAT HAPPENS IF THE KIDS DON’T COME TO SCHOOL, WHERE ARE THEY” Realising that they may still be in the Tower still. There were people on the streets trying to donate food and clothes. We were then directed back to the Leisure Centre to be told what to do. While we were at the Leisure Centre our Commissioner, Danni COTTON was talking to the FireFighters making sure that everyone was ok. I don’t know anybody that she didn’t speak to that morning. She asked us to go to Paddington FireStation before we went back to our own so that we could write statements straight away. She explained the reasons for this and said that when the Lakanal Fire happened in Peckham the FireFighters didn’t write their statements straight away and when they came to it their memories were a bit hazy, and so said the statements for this needed to be written now. I understood that and had no issues with doing that under her instruction. She thanked us, we went to our truck and drove off site.

I’d say we got off site at about 1400hours. I offered to drive in place of FireFighter EDWARDS because he was drained, and drove to Paddington Fire Station. Myself, FireFighter EDWARDS and FireFighter MOORE were on the truck. CM MURPHY was with us on truck to Paddington but once at Paddington he was told he had to go to hospital for a check up and was taken by car with a Station Manager.

While we were at Paddington we were also offered some counselling. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I have seen a lot of people go under trains and have seen people in quite a bad way. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Whilst I was at Paddington we were offered a 15 minute session with FireFighter EDWARDS, FireFighter MOORE and someone I know as Swampy, I think he was a Watch Manager at the time. As a group we decided to decline, so I missed out on that occasion. After that the three of us, myself, FireFighter MOORE and FireFighter EDWARDS took the truck back to Bethnal Green we probably got back at about 1700-1730hours, had a rest then were back on shift again at 2000hours.

Someone called me after the 14th June and asked if I wanted some counselling, it wasn’t too long after. I said no, it wasn’t the right time, [REDACTED] and I was talking to my wife about things, and maybe to ring me in 2 weeks’ time and maybe I would be ready to talk about things then. I got a call back in 2 weeks and took up the offer to have counselling, I got an appointment

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booked in. I have had eight sessions since, and they are ongoing, I have found the sessions helpful for me. The LFB have been very good in that I am allowed to do this on job time.

In terms of whether I was physically injured on the night, other than exhaustion, no I wasn't. I saw my CM MURPHY get injured, the only other person I saw that was injured was a FireFighter who got a bit of debris down his neck and think he got a burn from that.

I haven't been to a Section 72d at Grenfell, I have been to these visits in other Towers. These visits are basically to do all the necessary checks if there were to be a fire. We would check the nearest hydrant, look at the floor structure, check the lifts, understand the length of hose needed, where to place the truck, where the dry riser is, check the fire doors; check the flat layouts sometimes, and anything else appropriate. Bethnal Green and Bow have lots of high rises so we have done these visits quite a few times.

I have been asked whether I saw a lift when in was inside the Tower, I don't remember seeing a lift nor did I know about anyone using a lift. I didn't see the dry riser whilst I was there, the Crews that arrived in the beginning would have sorted this out, we didn't have to think about the dry with what we were tasked to do.

I wasn't aware of any smoke management system in the building.

At the time of being in the Tower I wasn't aware of any gas, or issues with any gas. I know though that you don't put a gas fire out, you would leave it burning because it needs to be cut off at the mains for it to stop burning. I think in hindsight the gas would have made the fire fiercer. I am not sure who would have been in charge of cutting the gas supply but at a guess probably a caretaker.

In terms of training that we do, I'd say we do quite a lot of drills, both in low and high rise buildings. From memory I'd say that we did training in a high rise a few weeks before Grenfell Tower Fire, and because I am in a specialist Unit, the FIU, I'd say our training around high rise Towers is quite good really. I don't think I have actually attended a fire in a high rise, I have attended lots on 3-4 story flats, but don't have a memory of anything higher. Before I was based at Bethnal Green, the housing was mostly terracing.

I've been in the Fire Service for almost 22years and would say I'm a competent FireFighter.

From my experience, there were no sprinklers in the building, nor any alarms going off, apart from the one in the Leisure Centre. I am aware there were issues with the dry riser, but I wasn't aware of this on the night, nor did I have anything to do with the dry riser on the night. The dry riser is basically an internal pump that pumps water up the building and has outlets on each floor of the building so

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FireFighters can connect their hoses to fight fire more easily. On the ground level a hose is connected from the hydrant, to a pump then into the dry riser, so this being the source of the water supply.

I wasn't aware of any issues with the cladding on the night, other than that it was clearly falling off the building. I am aware that fire can travel on the inside of cladding, but not for it to actually set alight.

In terms of the Stay Put Policy, this is basically to instruct people to stay where they are in the vent of a fire, the idea is that the fire doors should stop the spread, and allow the Firefighters to put out the fire before it burns through any fire doors. It also allows easy and quicker access for the Firefighters to the fire, if people were leaving their properties it was cause obstruction, and delay. As I said earlier, Pat GOULBOURNE told us the policy was no longer in place, but I don't know if this was his decision or not.

I wasn't involved with any decision making or operational tactics on the night, I was there to save life. The higher ranking Officers and Command Units would be involved with this. Again, from memory, I think there was about 7 Command Units there. I'm aware that the Command Structure would have changed throughout the night but I have no idea what it would have changed from, and to.

In terms of how I evaluate what happened and if resources could have been better. I think that the MDT's in the trucks can be improved, with the technology we have available to us today they are below standard. We shouldn't be relying on our phones to get us to a location.

I think the communications were a problem for us as well, as I said, when I went in the Barry Sets didn't work above the 3-4th floor, so communication above this floor had to be from person to person, and I imagine time could have been saved had the Barry Sets worked.

There was only one stairwell in Grenfell Tower for means of escape. It would probably have looked a lot different if there two stairwells.

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