

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CLARKE, CARL

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 18 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: C CLARKE

Date: 23/02/2018

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

This statement refers to my attendance as a firefighter to the Grenfell Tower fire on Wednesday 14 June 2017 as part of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) response to this incident. After leaving Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 I completed some notes in relation to this incident. These notes were made contemporaneously on 14 June 2017. I also drew two sketches for the police whilst giving my statement which I now exhibit as CC/1 and CC/2 respectively.

The people I will refer to by name in my statement are LFB personnel. These include: Crew manager Greg YEOMAN, station managers Gary SQUIRES and Adam BARNETT. Firefighters; Steve DOUNIAS, Martin HOARE, and Matthew TANNER. And Deputy assistant commissioner Pat GOULBOURNE.

I will also refer to a number of members of the public. They are; a casualty I saw being dragged out of the building by firefighters and taken to the triage area, the casualty appeared unconscious and wearing pyjamas. I saw a male about halfway up the building. I heard children screaming from the top floor, shouting for help. A guy who ran up to me and told me a woman was holding a baby out of the window. I saw a body under a salvage sheet by the garages under the walkway, who had apparently jumped and between the 7th and 9th floor I saw the body of a male. I also saw some dead animals on the stairwell. My name is Carl CLARKE I work for the London Fire Brigade Service, as a fire fighter based at West Hampstead Fire station. I joined the London Fire Brigade at the end of February 2017, passed out in the middle of May, and started on station on 21st May 2017, three weeks before Grenfell, and I'm currently attached to RED watch.

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There are four watches, RED, GREEN, WHITE and BLUE and we operate on a 4 on, 4 off rota. 2 day shifts, 2 night shifts, 4 days off and that repeats. Day shifts are 9.30am to 8.00pm, night shifts are 8.00pm to 9.30am.

My crew manager is Greg YEOMAN, my watch manager is Adam BARNETT and our station manager, who covers all of the 4 watches, at the time of Grenfell was Gary SQUIRES, but we're currently between station managers.

At West Hampstead we have two appliances with a pump, and a pump ladder and we have about 10/11 fire fighters on our watch, it varies at the moment, a full watch will be about 12 but some people are detained, attached elsewhere.

An appliance is a fire engine in basic terms, there's two different type of fire engine, one appliance would be a dual purpose ladder that carries all our ladders and all our equipment.

Our pump ladder has a ladder called a 135 which is a large ladder, whereas the pump will have a 9 metre ladder, and both will have a short extension and a roof ladder as well. A pump will carry some equipment used in flooding, like a portable pump, where as a ladder carries 'breaking-in' gear. Our watch manager would usually ride on our pump ladder, where as our crew manager would be in charge of the pump, with 4 firefighters on each in total as a minimum.

At West Hampstead our call signs are Alpha 411 which is our ladder, and Alpha 412 our pump. West Hampstead Fire station is Alpha 41.

Being a fire fighter is quite a varied role, its split into two parts, operational response to incidents, fires, RTC's, special services, shut in lifts, etc, and a preventative side like fitting smoke alarms, giving safety advice, doing visits to premises to check for hazards or risks.

When a member of the public dials 999 requesting the fire brigade, what is despatched is dependent on what type of call it is.

We have what's known as a PDA — a pre-determined attendance, for example, for a fire it might just be our two appliances at West Hampstead are mobilised and no other stations mobilised, but it could be 'made up' at the incident and it could become a larger incident if required.

From my understanding it's our control and what type of incident dictates how many appliances are mobilised to that specific incident.

If it's a small bin fire, someone's locked in a lift, locked out of a property for instance, just one appliance (our pump) maybe mobilised, but generally both appliances are mobilised.

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Some properties have A.F.A's (automatic fire alarm) that's quite a lot of what our shouts are, depending on the type of property, occupants, building, further risks, then that also determines what attendance that incident will get. If we have a large residential property, in the middle of the night then it might be more than two appliances mobilised.

We know when there's a shout, as our mobilising system activate the lights at the station, then over the tannoy / speaker system, a recording will say 'mobilise, mobilise' then it would say the call sign of what appliance is required to go to that incident. If it's both it would say 'Alpha 411, and Alpha 412' and that repeats for about a minute or so.

In our watch room on the ground floor, next to where the appliances are, there's a tele printer. From there we get a tip sheet, and that will say the type of incident we're going to. It contains the address, what appliances have been mobilised, what stations ground it is, and any further information, like the callers number. From there, the drivers can work out where we're going to, and take out a route card if required. Each fire station covers its own set ground but we're mobilised on a GPS type system. I don't know exactly how big the ground is we cover, but we go from Golders Green to Kilburn, and St Johns Wood in the south, we cover quite a large ground.

I haven't been in the fire service long but Grenfell was my first proper fire. I'd been to skip fires, and silly little things like that, but since then I've only probably been to a handful of large fires, maybe 4 or 5. I have often attended incidents on other stations grounds, a couple of months ago in Tottenham we had a large incident, a large warehouse fire. I can't remember exactly how many, but I would guess there were 20 to 25 pumps.

MY TRAINING

Initially once you've passed all the application process and you've got through, there's around 6 to 8 weeks of training that you'd do at home, which is computer based learning. Majority of that isn't very technical in terms of firefighting its more health and safety, legislation behind the fire service, the general way the fire service works and ranks. Once you've done that and started your initial training it goes on for 11 weeks. I started on 27th February at Plaistow, there we had 12 other fire fighters in our course, the initial 6 weeks were at Plaistow fire station where we learnt the very basics of firefighting, tying knots, and lines, to pumping and how the fire engine itself worked, the equipment, hose, ladders then moved onto BA (breathing apparatus), how to search building effectively, first aid (IEC) and the limitations of our equipment. We then moved onto Park Royal training centre where we did two weeks of real fire training, they have a 'burn house' where they set up real fires in rooms. Replicating search and rescue in a

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real fire situation. Then 2 weeks after real fire training we did a few days of HAZMAT training, followed by training for RTC's (road traffic collisions) where we learn the hazards, how to use cutting gear, how to take roofs off to extricate casualties safely.

Our final few weeks are at Harrow, where we learnt a few more new skills with BA but it was more a culmination of everything we'd learnt over those weeks, and was testing us for LFB day. A pass/fail day where we demonstrate everything we'd learnt. A few more exams and then we pass out. The whole time, throughout those 11 weeks we worked Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm, but we also had a lot of learning at night for the next day, so it's quite an intense week.

When you're a probationer, you have a diamond marking on your helmet. You're on your 'diamonds' until you achieve your competency which is approximately 18 months. Over that 18 months we have a developmental book where you need to submit evidence to prove you've attended certain incidents and you've dealt with them effectively, and you need to show progression over that period. Then you get signed off and you're shown as a competent fire fighter. There are 9 different areas which are tested, covering home fire safety, operational incident, road traffic collisions, fires, shutting lifts, flooding, animal rescue and driving an appliance. You need to have driven for 9 months before you're put forward for your EFAD (driving course on blue lights). At the time of Grenfell I was in development.

FIRE SURVIVAL GUIDANCE

During our training we are also taught about FSG (fire survival guidance) - the best way to explain FSG is if a person is trapped in their flat/house, and there's a fire somewhere in their property/adjoining property, and they're trapped and they're not sure what to do, they can ring up the fire brigade, be put through to our control, and be given guidance on what to do in that circumstance and how best to wait for us to rescue them. There is a number of questions our control will try and get information from for us, their name, age, any kind of mobility issues that they have, their location in relation to the fire, and more importantly the best way for us to get to them. We work off walls and doors when we're searching properties so if they can tell us they're on the 3rd floor once we get to there, follow the right wall and we're the 3rd door then it makes it much more effective when we're coming to rescue them essentially. If we know exactly where they are we're not going to waste any time trying to search other rooms or other properties that don't need searching.

I'll know it's an FSG call because when we're immobilised to a fire it may say 'persons reported', so that's the first clue someone is still in that house whether it's FSG or not, we know someone is inside that property. Once we're at the incident I believe FSG calls can be transferred from control to the appliance

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main scheme radio so then our governor or watch manager can take over from there. We can also find out on route over the main scheme radio and it's shouted out over the back.

PERSONS REPORTED

Aside from Grenfell, we had a fire recently, a few weeks ago, which was a 'persons reported' fire but I don't think the lady managed to get through to the fire bridge she was on the phone to someone else so it wasn't technically, other than that, I haven't been involved with 'persons reported'. Person reported means there's people involved inside the property that we need to go and search for and rescue, they may not necessary be conscious.

'STAY PUT' POLICY

During our training we were made aware of the 'stay put' policy. It's something the LFB use, its advice given to people who live in purpose built flats, or residential accommodation. With 'stay put' my understanding is that, if there's a fire in that property and the fire isn't inside their flat, it's in the flat opposite for instance, and the smoke or the fire isn't affecting the person inside directly, our advice is for them to 'stay put'. Two fold, because we know where they are if we need to come and rescue them and also they can cause a risk to themselves if they try to escape, but also they'll be in our way if we try and search. The advice is to 'stay put' until you're told otherwise. 'Stay put' policy only generally applied when they're not directly affected by fire, if the fire is in their property and its safe for them to leave then our advice is for them to leave if their exit is clear, and the fire is somewhere else then that doesn't apply. The whole reasoning behind it, as I understand is to ensure they don't get into further trouble, people do generally panic understandably in a fire situation and if they open their door and they're confronted by pitch black smoke, they can't see then it's safer for them to stay where they are. They should put something under the door, prevent anymore coming in and ring the fire brigade.

When a person dials 999 it goes through our control and they go through the FSG and they'd be given the advice from there on in.

The only time I've known the 'stay put' policy to change was at Grenfell. I've not been involved in any other incidents where that's been in place or it's changed.

'BA'

BA is breathing apparatus, it means we can go into hazardous environment filled with toxic smoke and still have breathable clean air. Our BA standard duration or SDBA as we refer to it, lasts approximately 31 minutes and there's about a reserve of about 12 minutes. You should be out of the incident before you start to use your reserve. BA is carried on all frontline appliances and at change of watch you'll be

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designated your own breathing apparatus set which you need to test and check, making sure it's not defective in anyway, and that's yours if you need it. The 31 minutes is dependent on your work rate of 50 litres per minute, if you're working harder, and your, searching, pulling a lot of hose, your heart rate is up, then you'll be going through it a lot quicker. You could make the 31 minutes last a bit longer if you're not doing much. You'll know when you've hit your reserve because we've got something called a 'body guard' which is a digital gauge which shows us how much air / bar we have left. Generally we have 270 to 300 bar when we come on change of watch. When you hit 84 bar when you're using it, an electronic alarm will sound which warns you, you've only got 84 bar left and at 74 plus or minus about 5 bar, and a whistle will sound, so you know you haven't got long left. In the ideal world, and you've used your BA to the best extent, and you've walked out of a job and your alarm would go off, so you haven't put yourself at any further risk. The whistle is a pneumatic whistle situated on the back of the apparatus under the cylinder, its quiet loud, you can hear it through your face mask and helmet. It's a warning to let you know, or anyone else with you that you're at around 74 bar. The electronic alarm on the body guard, flashes and sounds when you're at 84 bar. The electronic one goes off first, then the whistle after a short time.

Anyone can manage our BA through an entry control point with an ECB (entry control board). Someone is designated the ECO (entry control operative) and that would be their sole role for as long as BA is required. Prior to going into a job, we give them our tallies to the ECO who would put them into the board and we'll have telemetry between the board and the BA set. Every 20 seconds it pings back information to entry control and let them know outside the job how much air we've got and how long it's going to last for.

Each BA has a tally. On a change of watch we write our name on it and how much air we've got, for example 'FF CLARKE 290'. When we're under air, we'll take out our tally, give it to our operative they'll put it in the board, along with what time we've entered the incident, so they'll know what fire fighter they have and what time they went in, and what time they should be coming out. The tally is written with China graph but once it's gone onto the board its electronic, it then communicates electronically between the BA and the board. It updates every 20 seconds. It will also know if the fire fighter is in distress and they've pressed the button on their body guard which is called an ADSU (automatic distress signal unit). It also knows if we've not moved in a certain amount of time and an alarm will sound letting the ECO know.

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Once you leave a job, we'll close down our BA, take off our face mask, close the cylinder down, purge the BA of any air then the board will bleep because its showing as zero bar left — we show the operative we have no air left and they hand us back our tallies.

If we run out of air, we carry a minimum of 5 spare cylinders on the fire engine, so we can go out, change our cylinders, carry out a fireground A test, similar to what we do at change of watch — then change over and get rid of the old one.

THE NIGHT OF THE GRENFELL FIRE

On the 14th June 2017 we were on our first night shift of our 4 shifts of tour, I was at roll call designated as BA on pump Alpha 412 and deputy in the watch room. I had only been at station 3 weeks, everything was still relatively new, and I was still trying to get to grips with everything. Up until then I hadn't had any fires really, I hadn't worn BA operationally and hadn't been up in the night for an incident before. It was about 12.30am, the pump I was assigned to was mobilised to an incident at the Royal Free hospital. Someone had a ring on their finger they couldn't get off. It was myself on the back of the pump sitting behind the driver, FF DOUNIAS, the officer was temporary crew manager FF Martin HOARE and FF TANNER on the back as well. It was the first time I had been to such an incident, we went to the hospital, and using our ring cutters tried to remove a ring from a female. We were there for quite a while. During that time, our driver FF DOUNIAS informed us over his hand held radio that North Ken had picked up a job of 5 or 6 pumps. By the time we removed the ring it was made up to 8, a high rise procedure implemented and 'persons reported' confirmed. When the 'high rise procedure' is implemented it means a bridgehead will be establish two floors below the fire floor, and fighting it from there, dividing up to sectors, and using the firefighting equipment we have there, like dry risers. Unlike a normal house fires there are set procedures when fighting a high rise fire.

In my previous job I was working in construction for a surveying firm, I worked on the leisure centre and school next door to the tower and I knew the area, but never visited it in my capacity as a fire fighter, only the flats next door to the tower. We had been called to a hoax fire there when I first joined.

We were trying to hurry up because we knew, being a neighbouring station we were more than likely to be called. We removed the ring, returned to our appliance and went 'status 6' which means we were clear to go to another job. As soon as we did, we got mobilised to it. If we're at a station when we're mobilised we get a tip sheet but as we weren't, so we got it over our MDT. Because it wasn't our ground and quite a distance from it, we weren't quite sure how to get to it, I think FF TANNER used a map on his phone to show us the quickest route there. We knew via the information coming over the radio it was now a 20

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pump so it was moving quite quick. We knew it was a large scale incident at that point. FSG in progress and 'persons reported' we could hear over the main scheme radio as well.

The Crew manager said for me and Matt to get rigged our BA, so we got rigged on the way. I'm not sure where we were, we just come over a bridge, a rail way station I think, and I could see, in the distance, a tower completely ablaze, at that point I knew it was definitely a job, I could see how big it was, I was in shock as to how big it was because it's not something you see very often. We made our way closer to Grenfell. We could see other fire engines and we followed them round. I'm not sure the name of the road, but we parked behind another appliance and there were a lot of ambulance, members of the public and police. I got off the appliance and took our TIC with us (thermal imaging camera).

I remember it was a dry evening, fairly warm, quiet a nice night weather wise.

I waited for FF DOUNIAS and CM HOARE to put their kit on before we made our way to the cordon. There was well over 50 members of the public there. We pushed our way through those, turned right at the leisure centre and then I could see Grenfell about 50mtrs in front of us. It was completely alight from the 4th floor to the roof. It was only on the right hand side of the tower so at that point I was astounded by what I was looking at. Because of the scale of it I thought everyone would be out of it, I really didn't think anyone would be left in there. I really didn't think anybody would still be in there purely because of how bad it was already. Now from experience, over the past 6 months I've got a better understanding of what we're going to. Because of the time of night, most people are asleep.

REFERS TO DIAGRAM

It was alight from the 4th to the roof, you could see the cladding falling, alight, massive pieces of cladding and debris falling. It was causes a lot of risks around the base of the tower. As we walked closer there was a BA holding area, under a walkway. LAS had set up a triage area. In the holding area there was about 20 or 30 fire fighters there already. I saw a casualty being dragged out. There were fire fighters on each limb taking him out to the triage centre, he was unconscious and all blackened up from the smoke, and he was in his pyjamas. We waited in the holding area. North Kens appliance was there, and Paddington's TL (aerial appliance — turn table ladder). As we were walking to the holding area Paddington's TL had a fire fighter at the top putting water on maybe 6 floors up, to what he can, there was a lot of debris raining down and some hoses spilt on the ground. You could see it was causing a few problems for hoses and the pumps. As we got closer I could see people in their flats, I saw a guy, about halfway up the tower. As we were walking down you could hear children screaming from the top floor, shouting out for help that's when I realised there were definitely people in there. Someone mentioned when we were in the holding

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area that there was about 150 FSG calls going on. I remember hearing an order to bring in more 'breaking in' gear. Me and FF DOUNIAS went back to our appliance to get it. At that point it hit me there were definitely a lot of people that needed rescuing from inside. Whilst I was waiting in the holding area with FF DOUNIAS and FF TANNER, I saw more people getting dragged out, being taken up to the triage area, and a tonne debris raining down. I knew from our training and working in construction before that it looked like the cladding on the sandwich panels that were coming down, and a lot of them were fully alight. The trees and grass around us starting catching alight too. I remember seeing a number of members of the public on their phones, and there was this one guy recording what was going on on his phone. After 5 or 10 minutes of being in the holding area they had to remove Paddington's TL because there was too much debris coming down around us. They needed some help pulling the hoses away from there, so we helped move the hose, they then put the TL under the walkway. I know from training, wind can carry debris and I guess that's why they set up by the walkway. I saw more fire fighters arriving, they were looking up as they were arriving. Once Paddington's TL was moved under the walkway, a number of fire fighters were called to the entrance. There was a stairway that lead to the access to the flats. As I was waiting a guy come running up to me and said there's a woman holding her baby out the window, "she's gonna drop the baby, she's gonna drop the baby". I told him to calm down FF DOUNIAS grabbed an officer and then the two of them went up to the walkway whilst I waited down the bottom. I'm not sure what happened after that, I think FF DOUNIAS said he saw a room flash over where the resident was but I don't think it was the same one. As we made our way under the walkway there's a number of garages, there was a body, well, half a body, under a salvage sheet I assume where someone had jumped — there wasn't much of them left. We walked past that, just past some bikes, there was an officer at the entrance of Grenfell. By now there were a large number of fire fighters waiting to go in. There was loads of debris mining down. The officer was watching the falling debris. When it was clear he called to the fire fighters to go to the entrance area of Grenfell Tower. At this point there was still a lot of casualties coming out, I don't have a clue how many, and fire fighters were escorting them across. A number of them had fire fighters helmets on where they'd been given to them, to protect them from falling debris. Me and FF DOUNIAS ran to the entrance when it was safe to do so. In the entrance area there was a lot of equipment, hoses, breaking-in gear, and halises. There was a set of stairs, I think the lower floor had offices, the stairs led to the 3rd floor where the bridgehead was.

We were mobilised to this about 01.35hrs, something like that, so we've turned up about 01.45hrs/01.50hrs something like that. I knew the incident kicked off about 5 to. So when we were inside

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the lobby I saw more casualties coming down and fire fighters giving them their helmets to get them out, there were a couple of infants as well. Most coming down were all blackened up by the smoke, looking dazed and confused. I remember one female she came out and she just grabbed onto the first fire fighter she could see cos she didn't know where she was or where she was going, so she was escorted out. An officer said they needed more BA at the bridgehead, so me and FF DOUNIAS made our way up the stairs, there was a massive queue of fire fighters waiting to go up. I grabbed some hose I had with me to take up. We eventually got to just before the bridgehead when I saw a fire fighter I'd known from White Chapel fire station behind me. I saw the seriousness of the situation on all their faces. Just before we reached the bridgehead a fire fighter came past us, he didn't have his BA on and didn't have his tunic on. He had a 'Hudson free flow mask' on him, where maybe he had suffered smoke inhalation or run out of air. We got to the bridgehead and an officer said to us to look at the drawing on the wall, "we're gonna send you up to a floor to search, we don't know which one yet", I'm not sure what officer that was, it might have been Pat GOULBOURNE but I'm not 100% sure. There was probably 4 or 5 officers at the bridgehead at that point, and it was very hectic up there. A bridgehead is essentially a forward command point where we can operate safely from. Ideally it would be placed two floors below the fire. When we arrived at the bridgehead it was hectic. They were dealing with a massive amount of information, it must have been very difficult for them. I don't recall seeing nor hearing any smoke alarms. At the bridgehead there were two lifts and a stairway. On the wall they had written in China graph the layout of each floor, because every floor about the 3rd to the roof were identical in its layout. It had the door from the stairway, the two lifts, dry riser main, and showing the flats coming off these areas. Using that helped us locate what flat we were going to, and if we got a bit disorientated, if we found the lift, or riser we could make our way back.

There was definitely more than 4 flats on each floor, they were in every direction. Whilst at the bridgehead one of the officer said to break open one of the doors to the flat so you can gauge an understanding of the layout. There was another two firefighters with us, one of them grabbed an enforcer and put the door in. We entered the flat and had a look around. There was no one in there, there was no fire affecting these floors. I think was a little smoke at the bridgehead, whether it was coming down from the stairway or debris outside I'm not sure, but one of them said to open a window to get some ventilation. I had a look around the flat, whilst in there an officer came running in shouting to close the window because he was worried the debris outside would come back in, so we closed it and returned to the bridgehead. Whilst there I saw two fire fighters in front of us hand in their tally, was given a brief and

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went through the doorway and up the stairs. I remember at least two entry control boards there, possibly 3, there was a lot of information there, I could see how hectic it was for them, they were writing all over the wall, like showing the flats that had been searched. An officer told me and FF DOUNIAS to start up, we got under air, and we were going in as a pair. Having come straight out of training school I was being quite specific, about how my gloves were tucked in, making sure everything was done correctly. We were standing there, under air and I remember FF DOUNIAS said they'd better hurry up as we're under air. He grabbed an officer and told them they were wasting air and we needed to go through, the officer said 'we'll just be a minute, we'll just be a minute'. With all the information they were trying to handle they didn't want to send us where it had already been searched. I had my tally in my hand ready to go, just as we were about to go in, an officer came running in shouting to move the bridgehead to the ground floor as the fire had got below us. FF DOUNIAS said we can't go down, we're already under air it'll take too long, but they still told us to go down. I grabbed some hose and breaking in gear that was lying around with another 10 fire fighters and took it back down to the ground floor. By the time we got to the ground floor, FF DOUNIAS had less than 240 bar and you need a minimum of 240 bar to get through the bridgehead. I can't remember what I had, probably 260 something like that. He grabbed another officer and told them he had less than 240 what did he want them to do? The officer told him we'd have to change the cylinder and come back. We were about to leave via the main entrance but they'd stopped people leaving that way by now because there was too much debris falling down now. Someone said we had to make another entry/exit point. At that point I heard someone put a glass pane in with an enforcer and axe and that just smashed. We exited there and made our way around the tower, staying as close to the tower as we can. We got under the walkway, I saw a lot more debris around the tower than when we first went in, as we waited by the walkway, I noticed some hose going into the dry riser had split. We ran past the garages where the body was, onto a grass area. We closed down our BA sets, we were a bit annoyed at what had happened because we wanted to go in and we looked back at the tower, by now the fire had spread from the right hand side to the left. It looked like the fire had gone up and come back down, so more or less from the 4 up it was alight. At no point did I see a fire below us maybe they decide to move us from the bridgehead because there was a lot of debris below us. Where we were, were a lot of fire fighters that had come out, looking exhausted. We closed down our BA sets and talked about what had happened, at this point we decided we wanted to go back in, we saw some spare cylinders and grabbed two. We serviced our BA sets, carried out a fireground A test and ready to go back in. We went back to the BA holding area, but an officer said they weren't taking anymore BA at that point. I

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remember an officer saying 'we gonna ask you to do things we wouldn't normally ask you to do' because at this point a lot of the policy had been thrown out the window. Because I just come out of training school where they taught us you never go in without a charged branch and now you got fire fighters searching floors with no water and fire all around them. He was trying to rally everyone up before we went in. From training school and reading policy notes, you never enter a fire compartment without suitable media, i.e. a charged branch. We didn't really do anything outside of policy we did what we would do normally, but I was aware that officers had said we're gonna ask you to do things we wouldn't normally ask of you, so from there and speaking to other firefighters the policy was put to one side. Policies are there to be followed but they also state they can be deviated from if its risk assessed to be beneficial which is this case it was because fire fighters were searching for people and got people out without media, without a branch. I know fire fighters ran out of air, they took their BA off up there, but this wouldn't normally happen. The fact that the fire spread externally the way it did hasn't been seen much in this country.

I don't think there was anybody there that didn't want to get in there and rescue as many people as possible. We understood the gravity of the situation and how bad it was, and were keen to get stuck in. We went and rested by some steps, by a wall by the leisure centre, looking at the tower, astounded. We then heard they were accepting BA on the other side of the tower so we made our way round. I remember walking past a playground to an opening where there was an office, where we found another triage that had been set up. There were a lot of fire fighters there resting, some still in their BA. I had a thermal imaging camera that needed charging so I put it in an appliance to charge and waited in the area. Only a handful of casualties were coming out this way, I remember a family, parents and a couple of kids come down to triage, one of the children who being treated by the ambulance service. I saw firefighters coming out with EDBA, a lot of them looked exhausted, I remember one coming out, he almost looked blue in the face and steaming where he had been so hot. Another one came out with a burn on the back of his neck where debris had fallen between his flash hood and tunic behind his helmet, people were pouring water on him and was taken to the LAS. At this point we were watching the fire from the other side and saw how the fire was creeping back down. From when we first saw the fire it went round the tower and started to go back down. There were 2 or 3 fire fighters in the playground, they had a branch trying to put water on the tower as high up as they possibly could, they did look like they were controlling it because it didn't come down any further. We waited in the holding area for quite a while. FF DOUNIAS kept telling officers 'we want to go in, we want to go in', but they said they would call us forward when we were

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needed. I remember at some point there was only EDBA going in from what I call tell, from the higher floors anyway. I remember it was starting to look light, and I looked at the time and I couldn't believe where the time had gone. By now, the police were running people back and forth under riot shields because debris was falling down around the whole tower and there was still a lot coming down. An officer said they needed SDBA, so I grabbed the TIC which I had left on charge, and made my way by the walkway toward the riot shields. There was about 10 police officers there. We grabbed onto an officer, trying not to trip on the debris on the floor and made our way to the entrance. I remember bumping into some of my crew, FF YEOMAN, and FF NELSON. I remember seeing a lot of water running down the lobby area and the windows around us all smashed. Me and FF DOUNIAS went up to the bridgehead where I saw two Fire fighters from the Old Kent Road. An officer decided to put us 4 together and told us he was sending us in, advancing the branch from the 10th to the 12th floor, to look at the conditions and take it from there. We started BA at the entry control point was. I was careful not to put my helmet on the floor because the water was starting to rise. We gave our tallies to ECO, made our way up the stairs, I don't remember anymore casualties coming down the stairs, there was a couple of fire fighters coming down. We reached where the bridgehead had been, then back into the stairwell. It was pitch black in the stairwell, it wasn't very Smokey though. There were a lot of hose on the stairwell, bags, and some dead animals.

The stairwell was probably about 1.5mtrs wide with two sets of steps per floor with metal hand rail. The doors had glass panels but you couldn't see through them as there was zero visibility. I knew what floor we were as the guys in front were wiping the signs as we were going up. We started to make our way up, some crews were coming down, visibility became a bit worse, it started to get warmer the higher you got. It was a bit Smokey but a lot of steam where fire fighters were putting water on from inside. I think we got to between the 7th and 9th floor, I had my torch on, I remember stepping up and my foot hit something, I saw something move so I pointed my torch down and saw the body of a male, face down that was on the staircase. I imagine a crew had pulled him out of a flat somewhere and couldn't take him any further, he was obviously dead at that point. From our training we're told to leave people in situ if they're apparently dead unless conditions are gonna get any worse. So we had to step over him and carry on, got up to around 10th and the fire fighters took up the branch — it seemed a lot more busier with fire fighters in this area as we got further up. I remember some in EDBA at the side of the stairwells a couple came past and I think he tripped on some hose and prevented him from falling down the stairs and then he said thanks and carried on down. We went a bit further up where it was busy, a crew of two in SDBA opened the doorway

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to the lobby area, probably on the 11th this thick black smoke started punching out onto the stairwell so someone shouted to shut the doors. We closed it. After about 30 seconds they shouted, 'its gonna flash over, its gonna flash over' so we carried on up and carried the branch to the 12th and it wasn't charged, there was no water in it, we all tried to radio down to the entry control point to tell them it's not charged. A 'flash over' is when there's a fire in a room to a room on fire, it's a stage of development of a fire, essentially when a room flashes over, everything is alight, walls ceilings carpets. At this point it was plugged into a dry riser quite low down, but the radios were playing up and we couldn't get through to them there was just a whining noise.

With dry risers, after 18mtrs high you're meant to have a wet riser. I think Grenfell only had a dry riser, where as it should have been a wet riser.

I noticed none of the fire doors up to the 14th floor had been compromised, just heavy smoke logging. In the staircase all fire doors were closed unless opened by fire fighters.

On the 12th floor it was quite warm, there was a lot more steam so we all tried to trace it back down to the dry riser to ensure it was on and plugged in correctly and go from there. On our way down, at some point, a large crew of EDDB a couple of them come walking past me and said there was someone on the 6th floor and they were going to look at it, they turned around to see their other crew member but couldn't see where he was. They were shouting from the staircase below, I could see their other crew member so I got his attention to come back down to show him where his crew were and we followed. We made our way to about the 3rd or 4th floor. I couldn't see exactly where the dry riser was but a crew member said it was on, so we thought at that point there must have been a problem with the dry riser because there was no reason for it not to be charged. The fire fighters from Old Kent Road made a decision with Steve, I'm not sure how much air they had, and we still couldn't get in touch with entry control, so we made our way back down, closed down, and gave debrief to the officer that was there which was deputy assistant commissioner Pat GOULBOURNE at that point and told them there was something wrong with the dry riser but we had moved the branch up to 12th floor and left it on the staircase. He acknowledged this, and thanked us for what we did.

As we closed down our sets and come back out by the new entrance. There were a load more police officers. I saw one female officer who looked quiet young and scared of the situation, she ran me out under the riot shields with FF DOUNIAS. By this time we were getting on for about 7/8 o'clock, we had gone in just after 6. It was light. We went back under the walk way again, but this time the body wasn't there anymore it had been moved. We went past the holding area then waited around. At this point they

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were only sending in EDBA maybe where the lower floors had been cleared. I was then made aware that the 'stay put' advice had been changed, I think by an IC (incident commander) over the radio.

I'm not trained in EDBA. EDBA I think allows 45mins to an hour's air. Essentially EDBA is two cylinders, slightly smaller. The only officers trained in EDBA are ones that have been stationed at FRU stations and there's only about 14 across London. I think it's a two week course.

We waited near the holding area, I remember seeing a firefighter from Willesden who had been on my training course. At this point the police had set up a tent and a load more cylinders had arrived. The commissioner had arrived at this point talking to a load of fire fighters — we were there for another couple of hours. We all sat there waiting to be called talking about what we had witnessed, I think the Salvation army got us a tea and we stayed there until crew manager YEOMAN called us over the hand held, and walked over to our appliance. About 9.30/10 we were told we were going to be relieved and we needed to go to Paddington fire station where we needed to do a statement. I remember there was a lot of the public watching as we got into our appliance.

Every appliance that had been to the job had to go back to Paddington to report before going back to their base station, Firstly to write their witness statement and then to voluntary chat with the ACS. We went back to Paddington where we had a chat with the ACS (advisory counsellor service.) The whole incident felt like a film, from the moment we arrived, it was the first time I had been up in the night, it's the kind of thing you wait for as a trained firefighter in some ways, I had nothing to refer it back to, but it felt very surreal, it still does, it's the first time I had seen fatalities, one of them wasn't in a great state. A feeling of surrealness, frustration at the bridgehead. Coming to terms to what we had dealt with. It wasn't until we got back to the station and saw it on the TV I realised how bad it was. Being stuck in the middle of it, you don't realise at the time the scale of the incident. I spoke to some other fire fighters, one was upset by what she had seen, it was a mix of emotion.

Then returned to West Hampstead. I can't remember what time we got back, maybe midday and we were back it by 8. Crew manager YEOMAN said we could come back in a little later but I just stayed and started the next shift.

During my deployment I used my TIC in the staircase. It's stored under our tracked items list.

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