

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: REYNOLDS, CHRISTOPHER

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 11 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 REYNOLDS

Date: 27/11/2017

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

This statement has been prepared from the audio account I provided to Detective Constable Paula BARHAM and Detective Constable Roxanne DAWE on Friday 10th November 2017 at PADDINGTON Fire Station. Also present was my Fire Union Representative Nigel COX.

This statement will detail my actions as a firefighter at GRENFELL TOWER FIRE from 13th June - 14th June 2017. In this statement I will mention my role and duties as a firefighter during 13th - 14th June, I will also mention other colleagues who I was with during this time and residents I had interaction with.

I have worked for the London Fire Brigade for thirty-one (31) years, I joined in 1986. I was initially stationed in DEPTFORD on red watch where I worked for ten (10) years. I then became a temporary leading firefighter at SHOOTERS HILL for a couple of weeks. From there I went again as a temporary fire fighter to EAST GREENWICH where I was stationed for six (6) months. I was then posted to LAMBETH where I was on red watch. Whilst at LAMBETH I was detached out to OLD KENT ROAD to be their turntable ladder operator as they did not have anyone trained to operate it. I returned to LAMBETH after this attachment. Between 1997 and 1998 I temporarily went to ERITH before returning to LAMBETH until 2009. I then left LAMBETH and joined PADDINGTON Fire Station where I am still stationed.

With my length of service I have witnessed how fire-fighting has changed within the London Fire Brigade. However it has always been the case that the inner London fire stations are where fire fighters

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who are passionate, dedicated and hardworking generally work as it is busier. I have enjoyed working at PADDINGTON, they are very professional crews and the Station Commander/Manager is the best I have ever worked for.

During the thirty-one (31) years' service I have done various training within the brigade to obtain additional skills. I am qualified as a driver, pump ladder driver, pump driver, turntable ladder operator and driver, an aerial ladder platform operator and driver. I am also trained to drive and ride the fire and rescue unit. This unit doesn't carry water or hoses it carries equipment such as cutting, jacking and line and rescue equipment.

On Tuesday 13th June 2017 I started my night shift at 20:00hrs. There are four (4) firefighters on my crew who are turntable ladder operators and for the shift it was my turn to drive the appliance. I was assigned to drive and operate the turntable ladder, call sign A213. Assigned alongside me was Dan HARRIMAN who is a Crew Manager. Only two (2) firefighters ride on the turntable ladder appliance. I went outside to carry out my checks on the turntable ladder and check my breathing apparatus (BA) set as I always do at the start of my shift. I then had my supper and at around midnight I went to bed to rest.

At around 01:10hrs/01:15hrs the first (1st) call to our fire station came in to attend the GRENFELL TOWER fire, the pump responded and left the fire station. A short while after at 01:19hrs the bells dropped again which meant a second (2nd) call had come into PADDINGTON fire station. The fire had been upgraded to a six (6) pump fire with a request for a turntable ladder to attend. We received the information from the tele-printer at the station. Dan and I went to the turntable ladder appliance. The only information we had at that stage was that there was a fire at GRENFELL TOWER and that it was a six (6) pump fire with aerial one (1). I then heard the bells sound again and they were requesting our fire and rescue unit and our pump ladder to attend. We knew at this point that the fire had been made at least to an eight (8) pump fire.

I drove the turntable ladder appliance with Dan out of PADDINGTON Fire Station. I discussed with Dan which way we should drive, we had been to the estate before on a day shift so we were familiar with where it was. We knew there were two (2) ways into the estate. Dan said lets go the way we know; so we agreed to take the route via the A40, past Westfield, then left into HOLLAND PARK. We were receiving priority messages whilst on route via the mobile data terminal (MDT) built within the appliance. As we were driving along the A40 we heard that the fire had been increased to ten (10) pumps, then twenty (20),

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then twenty-five (25). This indicated to us that the fire was going to be large. You can request additional information to be sent to the MDT such as where the hydrants in the area are etc. We didn't request any additional information and as we knew that the other appliances were already there and would have this information. My priority was to get the turntable ladder there as soon as possible and as close to the building as I could.

As we drove around the bend on the A40 we saw GRENFELL TOWER; I could see it was on fire on the whole of one (1) side in the middle of the tower block. I could see the fire had spread all the way to the top of the tower. My initial thought was "shit!" and then I thought I need to get this appliance as close to the tower as possible and get water on it. The fire looked like a big roman candle with bright orange flames. Due to it being at night from that distance I couldn't see any smoke just the orange flames.

As we approached WESTFIELD the road was shut so we had to go past WESTFIELD and then past SHEPHERD'S BUSH tube station. We turned into STONELEIGH STREET and then into GRENFELL ROAD. As we were getting closer we were being directed in by fire fighters from NORTH KENSINGTON and HAMMERSMITH fire Stations, they were waving us in. I think there was at least six (6) other appliances already at the tower at that time. They had already started making room and moving their appliances ready for us to arrive. We were the first turntable ladder to arrive so it was key we got as close as possible to do the best job we could. We knew that we were going to be used as a water tower.

It was pure luck that the route to GRENFELL TOWER that I had decided to take was the most direct route which led us to the side where the fire was and where we had access. Due to there being possibly six (6) other appliance already there I was concerned that we would not be able to get close enough to the base of the tower to work the best we could. There was a parked car and a temporary fence on one (1) side. I think there were some bollards there too but I managed to get the appliance close enough to the tower to be able to set it up into position.

We arrived there at 01:32hrs, I looked up at the tower and could see that the fire was running up from the fourth (4th) floor right the way up to the roof. I could see that there were people in their flats who needed rescuing. The turntable ladder is a thirty (30) meter high ladder with a cage at the top of it where a firefighter fights the fire from with a fixed hose. The base of the turntable is called the turret where the operator controls it from. I took the jacks out, these are the legs which extend out from the appliance and

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form the base of the turntable to stabilise the ladder. I could not extend them fully due to the limited space that we had and the parked car on the left hand side. I then took the ladder off and connected the hoses to the monitor. The monitor is the part of the machine which throws the water out into either a jet or a spray. There is a big hose on one (1) side of the ladder which is connected to the monitor and to a solid pipe. This runs up the length of the ladder and allows the fire fighter in the cage to be able to fire fight. The ladder is in four (4) sections but the solid pipe is only attached to the top section. So I connected the monitor to the top of that solid pipe and then attached a role of 90mm soft hose to the bottom of the solid pipe. When I extended the ladder up the hose extended with the ladder at the same time. I fitted a collecting breach to the bottom of the soft hose and then connected the two (2) hoses from the fire engine to the collecting breach. This allows the water to pass through and pumped out. The water passes through these hoses to the collecting breach then through the soft hose, into the solid pipe and then out through the monitor where the fire fighter can spray water onto the fire. I didn't have anything to do with setting the hydrants up, someone else had done that whilst I was setting up the ladder. It takes around four (4) to five (5) minutes to set the turntable up and only turntable trained operators can do so.

Dan HARRIMAN got into the cage and I extended it up to the maximum height of thirty (30) meters. This was up to around the tenth (10th) floor, the water was able to reach a few more floors higher but it was dependant on the angle and pressure of the water. It would never had reached the roof. The ladder was positioned around ten (10) or twelve (12) feet away from the building. There was a pump (fire engine) already there that was going to supply us with water. At that point there was only one (1) hose line going in and providing us with water. My Guvnor, the watch manager, Steve COLLINS was there at that time and I said 'just give us what you have got'. The ladder was around ten (10) feet away from the actual burning building. It's a self-resting ladder which sits away from the building, like a crane. From the turret at the bottom I was able to control and override the controls from Dan so should he have got into any difficulties I would have been able to get him away to safety straight away. I was constantly keeping watch on Dan to ensure he was safe. It was difficult communicating using the radios due to the amount of radio traffic and the surrounding noise. I could hear the pumps revving, people shouting and screaming. Dan and I managed to communicate by up shouting up and down to each other. The issues with the radios didn't hinder what we were doing. We knew exactly what we had to do.

I kept constant watch of the building and spread of the fire. There was burning debris and embers starting to fall from the building which was getting worse and worse. The pieces of the building were fairly large

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and it was becoming dangerous. I was not sure what all of these pieces were, it looked like it was the cladding, the window frames and other parts of the building. I would imagine it was the extensive heat from the fire which was causing the window frames to fall out. Some of the falling pieces were hitting us on the ground and also hitting Dan in the cage. I could see the fire rising and going all the way to the roof it started to spread across and then started making its way downwards. It was getting closer and closer to where Dan was in the cage.

We had been fire-fighting like this for around thirty (30) to forty (40) minutes. When I shouted up to Dan it was getting too dangerous and I brought him down. Dan got out and we resighted the ladder to the other side of the building. There was someone at the window that needed rescuing on the side of the building where the main entrance was; their flat was just above the main entrance. They were on the fourth (4th) or fifth (5th) floor. I have drawn a labelled diagram to help describe the position of everything in relation to the tower. I exhibit this as CJR/01.

There was more and more debris falling around the appliance. I managed to pull the appliance back slightly, between eight (8) and ten (10) feet, it was partially under the covered walkway which was just in front of the main entrance of GREFELL TOWER. There were other flats by the covered walkway (GRENFELL WALK). We could not move the appliance back any further and because there was limited space to extend the jacks out it meant we were limited as to how far out we could extend the ladder. We tried a couple of times to reach the people at the window but we could not extend it out far enough to reach them.

Due to the amount of burning debris falling in front of the appliance we then could not even move it forwards again. The burning debris was damaging the ladder and appliance to the point where some of the wiring and the cage ended up getting burnt. I think the window of the appliance had been left open on one (1) side and the seat inside the appliance was also burnt. Dan had a hose and was having to spray the appliance with water to save it from catching fire.

My Guvnor was standing by the covered walkway and he had a ground monitor. A ground monitor is a piece of equipment which sits on the ground and enables two (2) hoses to be attached and creates a big jet of water which is able to reach about ten (10) or twelve (12) floors high. He was spraying the jet of water to the fire above where we could see the people to stop the fire spreading downwards. We were using a lot of water, pumping it quickly and at times there was a lack of pressure. In general, if the hydrant is not

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big enough to supply the water that's required it will stop working properly and you will overrun the supply. There can often be problems with the water pressure when the hydrants are smaller on smaller roads. Main busy roads tend to have bigger hydrants and a stronger supply of water than smaller roads. The water pressure could also be effected if Thames water are doing work on the mains and they have knocked the pressure down.

I don't know exactly what was causing the lack of pressure on the evening of the fire. However, to try and keep as much pressure as possible we were using one (1) of the tanks to fill with water and then using that as our water supply rather than direct from a hydrant. Once we had filled the tank with water we were then opening the revs as high as we could to make sure we had good water pressure. We managed to get the water to hit the right place to protect those people and that corner of the building. We kept having to stop spraying the jet of water and refill the tank; this would take a couple of minutes to refill each time. It was the only way that we could get the water up that side of the building, there was nothing else we could have done. If you look at the tower now that corner is the only corner of the tower which was unscathed.

Whilst fire-fighting a Borough Commander wearing a white helmet, I am unsure of his name, approached us and told us to stop as it was becoming too dangerous for us. My Guvnor, Steve said to the Borough Commander that he was going to keep doing it otherwise the people inside were going to die. The Borough Commander said 'OK but make sure you keep watching the top of the building'. We were unsure if there was going to be any movement from the building and if it would collapse.

From where I was standing I could see that there was embers and pieces of burning building falling onto the roof of the flats above the covered walkway (Grenfell Walk). There were people still in those flats. I was concerned for their safety so I told my guvnor and then I started escorting them out. There was one (1) flat I was particularly concerned about as I had seen some large burning debris falling into the flat. I didn't know if there were people inside that flat. I told two (2) police officers and together we went up to the flat and took the door out to check that there was no one trapped inside. Luckily there was no one in there. I then returned back to where I had been.

I returned back to where my guvnor was positioned with the jet of water, we were there for quite a while. We were told by another fire fighter that one (1) of the main hoses fixed into the dry riser main had burst from the falling debris. It had been punctured and there was water leaking out. Usually in a situation like

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that you would disconnect that hose and attach a new hose however in these circumstances we could not get to where we needed due to the falling burning debris. The hose was completely covered in debris.

We couldn't knock the water off as there were fire fighters inside the building who needed constant access to the water. At one point there was someone holding a riot shield above my head to protect me from the falling debris, we were trying to pull the pieces of the debris off of the hose to find out where it was leaking from, we couldn't find where it was punctured. We started to throw lengths of rolled up hose down on to the damaged hose to try and stem the flow of water coming out. We just needed to try and do anything that we could to make sure that we kept a flow of water to the firefighters who were fire-fighting inside the building.

My Guvnor, Steve COLLINS and I could see that there were people standing at the windows waving towels and shouting. I looked over to them and could see that they were on the fifth (5th) floor. My Guvnor said that he wanted to go up and get them. He said he would go up in the cage and get them.

We had planned to put the riot shields over us to protect us and to try to clear some of the debris out of the way so that we could move the appliance and extend the jacks out to get the ladder out. We attempted to move some of the debris and other fire fighters came to help us but there was so much that we couldn't clear the area. There was around three (3) to four (4) feet deep of debris around the tower. I have been a turntable operator for over twenty (20) years and I know the limitations of the truck. I was pretty sure that from where we were and the angle we would need the ladder to extend to, that we wouldn't be able to reach the people at the window. My Crew Manager Dan HARRIMAN is a rank higher than me and was in charge of the turntable ladder that evening. I asked Dan his opinion and he agreed that logistically we would not be able to reach them. I wanted reassurance that my decision was correct. He agreed that there was no point putting ourselves in a compromising position with all the burning debris falling down when we were not going to be able to reach them anyway. Fire fighters had come over to start clearing the debris and helping us but in the end it did not happen as we made the decision it would not have worked.

I was standing partially under the walkway between the tower and GRENFELL WALK when something hit me on my right shoulder really hard. I thought that it must have been a large piece of debris, like a window frame falling from the building. Standing behind me was a firefighter with an extended BA kit and a second (2nd) person who I believe was a police officer with a shield. Both of these males were hit and fell to the floor. When I looked around I realised that it was not debris falling but it was a male who

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had jumped from the tower. It was the body of a black male in his mid to late twenties, around twelve (12) stone in weight. I could see that one (1) of his legs had been completely ripped off and that he was dead. I did not see where he had come from. He must have hit the roof above the walkway which we were standing under and then fallen another ten (10) to fifteen (15) feet to where we were standing. The firefighter had to sit down for a little while, I think he was in shock. I was not injured. If the male's fall had not been broken by him hitting the top of that walkway he would have killed us or seriously injured me and killed the other officers.

I grabbed hold of one (1) of the males arm, I think it may have been a senior officer who grabbed his other arm and we dragged him into a garage area by the walkway where we were standing to protect him from the falling debris. He was not breathing and I could see he was dead. I then covered him with a plastic sheet which was in the garage and went to get an ambulance crew. I directed the ambulance crew to where I had left the male and they made their way over to him.

I recall speaking to a couple of members of the public who were asking if people were ok and telling me what floors people were still up on. I spoke to a male member of the public at one point. He came up to me and told me his family were trapped inside the building. I told him we were doing everything we could.

Dan and I took our BA sets off of our turntable appliance and then went to the Salvation Army to get a cup of tea and have a cigarette. We had decided that there was nothing more we could do with the turntable appliance and we could not move it as we were now wedged in. We decided that we would go into the tower to assist. We put our BA kits on and went to the playground area outside the tower where the crews were waiting to be committed to go inside. This was a muster point for crews. Once it was our turn we were called and the police escorted us with the riot shields to protect us from the falling debris. They took us into the ground floor of the tower.

It was around 06:00hrs - 06:30hrs and the building was still a light the whole way around, although it was not as bad as when we had first arrived. We walked through the ground floor and into a room, it may have been some kind of nursery. They separated crews into different rooms for BA and extended BA. Dan and I had standard BA kits on which last around twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes depending on how hard you are working. We waited there to be committed to the bridgehead w was on the third (3rd) or fourth (4th) floor. We had our kits on, helmets and gloves and had the BA masks hanging around our necks. We

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then sat waiting in one (1) of the flats on this floor until we were called. We were then given a brief. We were told to go to the sixth (6th) floor and do a search and rescue. This was basically to conduct a sweep to make sure that no one was there and to also fire fight any pockets of fire which we came across.

They were sending four (4) firefighters up to the bridgehead at one (1) time. The bridgehead is like a muster area where you wait for a brief and then get committed. This is where the BA control point was where we had to give our tallies to the Entry Control Officer (ECO). The tallies are what each fire fighter has unique to them with their name and pressure of their BA kits. The tally gets put into the tally board, this electronically connects to the BA set. This means that the ECO can see how much time each fire fighter has left on their BA kits. The ECO checked that our tallies showed the same pressure as our gauges on our BA Kits, he also recorded our time of entry.

We walked up the stairs to the sixth (6th) floor. The visibility on the stairwell was good and I think I recall seeing the numbers of the floors written on the walls, I am not sure if the lights were on or not. The stairwells were concrete and around four (4) feet wide. Two (2) people could pass each other crossing on the stairs. There were self-closing doors on each of the floors to the stairs. There were lots of lengths of hoses on each of the floors going up and down the stairs. There must have been something that had burst on one (1) of the floors further up as the stairs were flooded with water running down.

Once on the sixth (6th) floor we made sure there were no residents left up there. We went into one (1) of the flats which overlooked where our turntable ladder was parked at the front of the tower, this was the side of the tower where the fire had actually started. There was a hose line already on that floor, I think it was where the lift lobby was. We went down and got a branch from another floor. A branch is the end of the hose line where the water comes out from, like a nozzles. We turned on the dry riser so we had a charged jet of water. The flat was alight still but only slightly, mainly smouldering embers. We put that out and checked the other flats on the floor.

We could see where we were walking as a lot of the smoke had cleared and the ventilation was better on that floor. There were no windows left in any of the flats. There was serve smoke and fire damage inside the flats. There was nothing left within them, even the internal walls had gone, they were completely burnt out.

Once we had completed this we then made our way up to the next floor to see if we could assist the crew on the seventh (7th) floor. We then continued up a few more floors. I think it was between floors seven (7) and eight (8) however it may have been between floors eight (8) and nine (9), I cannot be sure, but we

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saw a biggish woman who had died on the stairwell. It felt so undignified as we passed her and stepped over her but there was nothing we could do with her at that point. There were hoses over her body. That was the only obstruction in the stairwell that I came across. We continued up and spoke to the crews to see if there was anything we could help with.

A short while later we checked our BA kits and started to make our way back down to the BA control point. We went back down, we had done and collected our tallies.

We then went outside and back to appliance where we took our BA kits off and left them on the back of the appliance. As far as I was aware, during our time inside GRENFELL TOWER, we did not go into the flat where the fire had initially started.

Whilst Dan and I were at the appliance a Station Commander approached us and explained that the main dry riser was still leaking lots of water and lacking pressure. He asked us if we could throw some lines down. The idea was that we would lay out the hose lines on the ground and then the firefighters on the floors would throw down lines of ropes from the windows; firefighters would attach the hose to the ropes and they could then pull the hose up to them. The firefighters could then use the hoses to fire fight with them whilst connected to water outside rather than connecting them to the dry riser main within the tower. The continual issue with the water pressure meant that they couldn't get enough pressure to fire fight effectively. We laid out five (5) lengths of hose which were twenty-five (25) meters long each. In total we had laid out one-hundred and twenty-five (125) meters of hose. I don't believe this method was ever actually used.

Once we had completed this we then returned to our appliance, It was stuck due to the debris, we could not move it to drive it back to our fire station. We made our way to the command unit who explained that they were arranging police carriers to ferry firefighters back to their fire stations. I then called my Guvnor, Steve COLLINS and he said to wait at LATIMER ROAD Tube Station and he would send out a fire truck to come and collect us. Blue watch from our fire station came to collect us at around I 4:30hrs and took us back to PADDINGTON. Once we arrived back they wanted us to see a counsellor and make our notes. I made my notes but I told them I didn't want to hang around to see the counsellor. All I wanted to do was to get home to see my son. I got home at around 17:00hrs and saw my son for about an hour and then returned back to work for my night duty shift which started at 20:00hrs.

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[REDACTED] When I was watching the residents leaving the tower; some were adults and some were children, a few were being carried out, some of whom had died. [REDACTED]

It was really, really hard.

When I was there at the tower it almost felt surreal like I was watching a film. I have been a firefighter for thirty-one (31) years so I have been involved in other serious fires. I was at the BETHNAL GREEN ROAD fire in 2004 where we lost two (2) firefighters. I was driving the same truck that night - a turntable ladder. It doesn't seem real at the time and does not hit you until after the incident.

On the night of the Grenfell Fire everyone went above and beyond their duty. I could see that firefighters were going back in two (2) or three (3) times. There were residents in there that needed rescuing. We all wanted to do our best for those people.

Before the night of the fire I had never been inside GREN FELL TOWER. I have been onto the estate but never to that specific tower. I had no previous knowledge of the building or any fire regulations relating to the building. I wasn't aware of any pre-prepared fire-fighting plans for GREN FELL TOWER.

Each fire station will have their own procedure for dealing with high rise fires which will detail what equipment you take up depending on what appliance you're riding for that shift. Everyone at the start of the shift is told what appliance they are riding and what position they are so they would know what their role would be at an incident.

At PADDINGTON fire station we train for fires in high rise blocks using the tower at the back of the fire station. We train regularly together at the station in the tower, however it is only eight (8) floors high. We practice taking up the equipment, how much equipment would be needed, what items etc. On the night of GRENFELL TOWER it was a completely different incident to what we train for at the fire station. The fire behaved completely differently to how we all expected. Usually with a flat fire like that you would turn up and the fire would be punching out of the window. A crew would usually go in and put it out. In my thirty-one (31) years' experience I have never seen a flat fire behave and spread the way the fire did that night. In my career, I have been to hundreds of flat fires, house fires, warehouse fires but that was a completely different fire. I don't know why it acted so differently but obviously something was not right with that Tower, maybe it was something to do with the design or the cladding.

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I feel that on the night of the fire at GRENFELL TOWER we did go outside our usual policy and procedures. It was dangerous where we parked the turntable ladder because of the burning debris falling around us. Usually we would have moved the appliance as soon as the debris started to fall. It was a danger to ourselves but we carried on because we needed to get water onto that fire and do the best we could. We also put ourselves in more danger than we would usually when we were trying to stop the leak from the main water supply to the building by throwing the lines down. We would usually look for another, safer option but there was no other option and we needed to make sure the firefighters inside that building had a continual supply of water. We made our own risk assessment and used the police officers riot shields to try and protect us.

I believe there was a firefighter lift in the building but I do not know if it was used as I only went into the tower later on during the incident. In a tall building we would usually use the firefighter lift to take equipment up to the upper floors however I cannot say if it was used. There were no sprinklers in the building that I saw.

Prior to the Grenfell Fire I was not aware of any risk of fire to different types of cladding on buildings. Around ten (10) years ago, we had some input about the risk of buildings which are made up of sandwich panels and how fire reacts to them and the smoke that they produce when on fire. A lot of new industrial warehouses are made up of sandwich panels, they are basically two (2) sheets with insulation in between the sheets. They are made up of a material called Celotex. I have never been to a fire with cladding before however I have been to a warehouse fire where sandwich panels have been used. At these sorts of fires you would make sure everyone was out and then put the fire out until the warehouse collapses.

On the night of the fire I was not aware of who the incident Commander was or where they were. I have since found out after that Andy ROWE was the commander who was overall in charge on the night. I did see our Commissioner Dany COTTON there although I don't think she took command of the incident I think it was Andy ROWE.

I am aware of the 'stay put' policy and I understand it to mean that if you are in a block of flats and there is a fire within that building residents are to stay put in their own flat until we come to rescue them. If it is in a house and the resident can't get out then we would advise them to shut the doors and stay where they were and let us know where they were and we would rescue them. Residents are told to stay put if leaving would compromise their safety. The stay put policy is what the brigade has put into place and usually it

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would work. If we told everyone to leave the corridors would be filled with smoke which would compromise their safety. In any other fire we would put the fire out first and then get the residents out of their flats.

The stay put policy always works, apart from this one (1) time. On the night of the fire I didn't tell anyone to stay put and I wasn't aware that was the advice being given or if and when that advice changed.

I am the rank of a fire fighter I never been to the command unit so I am not aware of the rank and structure of the command unit. The command at my fire station is fire fighter, crew manager, watch manager and then station manager. They were all in attendance at Grenfell Tower on the night of the fire. I did not require any medical treatment, although I was hit by the burning debris and the male, I was not injured from it.

The spread of the fire was very, very quick. You could watch it moving, I saw it creeping all the way along the building. Fire usually rises up, I have never seen it travel downwards the way it did on GRENFELL TOWER. I have never seen it in any kind of training or on TV.

The behaviour of the fire did alter our decision making on the night. It was getting closer and closer to Dan whilst in the cage and we were both being hit by the falling debris we had to make the decision to stop what we were doing, pull the ladder and appliance back to try effect the rescue around the other side of the building. If it had behaved as you would expect a normal flat fire to behave then we would have been able to continue from our position.

Our appliance, the turntable ladder was the first one (1) and the closest one (1) to GRENFELL TOWER. They did order another one (1) which was the SOHO Aerial Ladder Platform. This appliance did arrive however there were trees obstructing them and they couldn't get close to the Tower. They were on the green, quite a bit further back. Around the tower there was a walkway and a playground. We were the only appliance of this kind who managed to get close to the building.

We have a policy at my fire station where if you are called to a three (3) pump fire and each of our appliances from the station leaves then the turntable ladder will always lead so that that appliance can get as close to the building as possible to work the most effectively.

If there had been more of these appliances arriving I don't think it would have made a difference as they would not have been able to get close enough to the building. As a turntable ladder operator and from my previous experience I think that if we were on the initial call we would have made a difference to that fire. The initial call came out at 12:55hrs and we arrived approximately half an hour later. If we had been one

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(1) of the first appliances we could have got access above the fire, cut away at some of the cladding with our axes and got some water in above the fire to stop it spreading upwards.

If we had a higher ladder it may have possibly helped to get above the fire to put the fire out. I don't believe a higher ladder would have made a difference to the rescues as we could not extend the jacks out any further to give the ladder any more stability to use the ladder at more of an angle. We were restricted by the space we had on the ground. Part of the policy for a turntable ladder is not to extend the jacks on grass or soft ground. We had to jack on grass on the night of the Grenfell Fire. We assessed it and decided that it was probably dry enough to work so took the decision to extend them. The jacks are self-levelling on the appliance so we were not concerned about that.

When I first joined the brigade in the 1980's if there was any fire whether an automatic fire alarm (AFA) or a fire; an aerial ladder would always be sent. Usually, nine (9) times out of ten (10) they wouldn't be needed. A decision was then made to stop them attending all fires as there were too many accidents involving the appliances on their way to calls where they were not being used. I can recall that a turntable ladder could go out up to twenty-five (25) calls in one (1) night shift but it was not needed at any of the calls.

A few years ago they cut back on the numbers of these appliances, there used to be lots of them all over LONDON. Due to the cuts it meant that we were the nearest turntable ladder to GRENFELL TOWER on that night. There are four (4) turntable ladders within inner LONDON and a ring of aerial platform ladders around London on the outer boroughs.

Up until a few years ago it use to be the policy that there would always be an aerial ladder or a turntable ladder sent to a high rise fire. It was always a PDA - pre determined attendance. They cut the numbers of them and then decide to take away the PDA. The policy changed and only certain addresses the turntable ladders or aerial ladders would attend. Each station would go around their own borough and identify which addresses would benefit from a turntable ladder in a fire. These would then be pre-determined addresses that we would always attend. However since the GRENFELL TOWER fire this policy has changed once again and now a turntable ladder will attend every high rise fire or every AFA in a high rise block.

I took photographs of the GRENFELL TOWER during the course of the fire which I have sent to DC DAWE and I exhibit as follows: CRJ/02 - One (1) photograph showing the fire as we pulled up and

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parked the turntable ladder. CJR/03 - one (1) photograph showing the turntable ladder in position, CJR/04 - one (1) photograph showing the water monitor being used to spray one (1) side of the building.

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