

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: DOWDALL, COLIN

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 DOWDALL

Date: 04/03/2018

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

This is a statement regarding the Grenfell Tower fire and my role at this incident.

In this statement I will mainly refer to four of my LFB colleagues, Crew Manager (CM) Jason HUNTER and Fire fighters Larry PITT, Mark BEER, and Dee an [REDACTED] colleague who's surname I do not know.

During this interview I will refer to some prepared notes to assist my recall of events that took place that evening and morning of the 14th June 2017. I exhibit these documents as:

CJD/1 - Map of the area with locations and exit routes added.

CJD/2 - Original notes made at Paddington on the date of the incident sometime between 1300hrs - 1500hrs hours.

I am also aware that I am entitled to have representation during this interview, so I have requested that my Fire Brigade Union representative Matthew WILLIAMS is present for the duration of this interview.

My name is Colin DOWDALL, I reside at an address known to police. I am employed by the London Fire Brigade as fully trained and competent Fire Fighter (FF) based at Northolt Fire Station attached to Red Watch. I have been posted to Northolt for the entire 12 years of my service as a FF. I joined the London Fire Brigade in 2005, and completed the four months basic training which was based at Southwark training school. During that training we were taught to use a broad range of fire-fighting equipment, such

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as our Breathing Apparatus (B/A), as well as undertaking FF awareness, first aid training until we reached a competent level to be deployed at a fire station. On completion of my initial training, I was posted to Northolt Fire Station where I was attached to RedWatch. During my FF service I have undertaken I have all compulsory training required off me this includes completed Emergency Fire Appliance Driver Training and Mass Decontamination training. Being a driver also enables me to drive the pump ladder, this involved me passing my HGV licence, and the Emergency Fire Appliance Driving (EFAD) training which includes skid pan training and in addition, Emergency response. As well as the normal station based training we as an FF you are required to use B/A, there are two types of B/A, the first is the Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) and then there's the Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA), I'm trained to use the SDBA. The duration of each B/A depends on how hard the FF works and the conditions they face at a fire, for example, climbing lots of stairs would see the air supply fall quicker than someone standing in situ. Every year we receive compulsory one day B/A refresher training, and every two years you are also required to attend a two day B/A refresher course.

On Wednesday 13th June, I reported for night duty at Northolt Fire Station at 2000hrs, after role up and the completion of checking my equipment and recording it the log book, I was informed that I would be required to work from Wembley Fire Station (call sign G30) on standby. This was around 2030hrs. There are two types of standby within the LFB, Direct Standby where you are required to parade at a different fire station at the start of your shift or Non Direct Standby where you are deployed after you arrive at your own station. Mine had been Non Direct. Just after midnight CM HUNTER who is also stationed at Northolt was placed on non direct standby also joined me at Wembley. This was because their CM had to leave work early as his wife was in labour. Wembley Fire Station is bigger than Northolt, they have five LFB vehicles. Some stations will either have one or two appliances. Those that have only one appliance would have a Dual Purpose Ladder. This means it carries all the specialist equipment held at a station on one appliance. Those stations that have two appliances would have a Pump Ladder which has a 13 and a half metre ladder, and holds both the normal equipment and specialist equipment on board and it is therefore controlled by the Watch Manager (WM) and the Pump would have a 9 metre ladder and have the standard equipment on board and would be controlled by the CM. Wembley has the one Pump Ladder, one Pump, a Fire and Rescue Unit, 1 Aerial and a Command and Control Vehicle.

I think I arrived at Wembley Fire Station between 2130hrs and 2200hrs, I reported for duty and took over a new B/A set, completed the A Test to test that it was in good working condition and then recorded my checks into the log book. This is standard procedure. I then packed my kit in the Pump (G302) that I had

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been assigned too for this tour of duty. I know some of guys at Wembley, but don't really know them that well, so I'm not really sure of all their names, though I do recall FF Larry PITT, FF called Dee [REDACTED] but I don't know his family name, and the driver of the Pump (G302) his names was FF Mark BEER. After stowing my kit in the pump I basically sat down with the crew in the mess. Around midnight CM HUTER arrived at Wembley and by now we were on stand down time: which means you can sleep, watch TV, train in the gym. Basically you can do your own thing as long as you're available should there be an alarm activation. I chose to go for a sleep.

At around 0100hrs or maybe 0200hrs in the morning the alarm was activated. Wembley had received a message from control to attend "Grenfell to make up to Pump 40". I wasn't sure of the exact time of alarm activation. The Command and Control Unit was the first to leave the station, shortly followed by the Pump Ladder, and then followed by my crew in the G302. We were the third vehicle to leave Wembley. FF BEER was driving, CM HUNTER sat alongside at the front and FF PITT and myself sat in the back. I'd never been to Grenfell Tower prior to/or after this incident, so I didn't really have any knowledge of the it or if there was Stay Put Policy, let alone what to expect when we arrived on scene. I could not tell you where the incident was because it wasn't even on my Northolt's or Wembley's ground. I'm aware that this incident was covered by North Kensington Fire Station. In regard to the Stay Put Policy it normally means that the resident is to stay put as their flat is considered the safest place to be, but it needs to be flexible for the Incident Commander to amend the policy. This should have been judged earlier as it may have saved more lives. Some residents were forced to stay put due to the smoke logging. Each floor at Grenfell was different. So policy wouldn't be able to cover this sort of fire as no two fires are the same.

Once inside the truck I started prepare myself for the incident, mentally I was forward planning, basically trying to evaluate what might greet us on our arrival. How big was the fire? How many casualties? And how will this work as I've never been to a 40 pump fire before? I also prepared myself physically by getting my fire and rescue kit and B/A on so I would be ready on our arrival. But I still could not help thinking to myself "Oh here we go, overkill by the LFB, making the job up to 40 pumps. Sounds over the top. We will probably end up parking up somewhere far away from the job, keep us hanging around for half an hour to an hour before we finding out what going on, then give us something stupid that doesn't need to be done. Wait around for three to four hours wait for relief and then go home. Anything over fifteen to twenty Pumps, there'd be too many crews and you become like extras really; a fall back and just

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in case we need you type of crew.” As we were driven towards the incident I remember catching a glimpse of a road sign for the A40, which was the only landmark of any sort that I can recall seeing on the journey. The pump was quiet, no-one was really speaking as we drove towards the incident and I don’t recall any specific instructions being provided on the Pump’s main radio set. I think like me, they were just trying to get their minds around a 40 pump fire. I assumed traffic on route was okay as I cannot recall the Pump slowing down too much except when we finally approached the Tower. I believe we were on the A40 when I caught my first sight of Grenfell Tower, then it all made sense. The top 25% of the tower alight and 100% on fire. As we travelled closer to the incident our personnel radios started picking up the heavy radio traffic at scene of the fire, it became apparent then there was a lot going on. It was starting to feel real. We must have arrived on scene around 0200hrs. As I said I don’t know this area at all, so I’m not exactly sure whereabouts we were parked on our arrival. It wasn’t that far away from the incident. I’d say we were around twenty metres from the corner where the road approaches the tower, I think we were parked as close as the Pump needed to be. I have marked this position where I think we were parked and held on the map which I exhibit as CJD/2.

Our Pump didn’t appear to have any issues driving into the Grenfell Tower Estate, or even identifying a space and parking up, so I assume there wasn’t much in the way of any obstructions when we got to the scene. As we got off the Pump, the first thing that struck my mind was “You just don’t see tower blocks 100% alight. Here was this twenty-four storey high tower. At least the top six or seven floors on one side of the tower were on fire, It was like an inferno. The noise from the tower fire was like nothing you would have experience before, just a loud roar of the fire, you could also feel the heat even though it was so high up. I thought yeah I understand now why they went Pump 40. If I were in charge I probably would have gone for 50 Pump that was the enormity of the situation. I know it wasn’t the case, but because the fire was so hectic it felt like we were the first respondents at the fire and not just arrived as part of 40 pump fire two hours after it had started. Forty Pumps, plus other fire brigade support vehicles in the vicinity weren’t enough. I thought then more units would be needed. It seemed like chaos, FF’s everywhere, members of the public running around. Emergency services everywhere. Members of the public were also seen standing around watching like they were in shock watching the fire in total disbelief. It was kind of weird that no-one approached us or spoke with any of us when we arrived, considering how big the situation was.

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Myself and FF PITT were both ready to be committed. I wasn't wearing a body worn camera. Just my SDBA set fully kitted and personal comms, so I was ready to be deployed. CM HUNTER told us to stay where we were while he went off to find out where we needed to be deployed, we just hung around the appliance awaiting further instruction, I stood there looking around trying to gauge the situation, assessing what we might be required to do. It became apparent to me that this was a different kind of fire, for instance when you attend a normal type of job it becomes clear very quickly even if there's no RVP set up you know where to book in because one of the first things you'd notice would be the white Lids (Helmets) assembled in the one place. This will be where the supervisors or command and control would be set up. Where you would introduce yourself and ask what they wanted you to do. Normally at a fire the first four or five minutes the atmosphere is charged. Then the command is set up and things seem more controlled but here it felt like four or five hours of charged atmosphere due to sheer size of the incident, this was different. It was apparent that there was not a circular control or organisation to be seen. No cluster of white helmets; maybe it was because of scale of the fire. We were still held by the appliance. You could feel that everyone just wanted to help. Get on and do something, but also being professional. We did not leave the appliance because if the CM had come back and we'd all moved that would not have been any good. So we're held by the appliance awaiting instructions. I would say we hung around for about two minutes or so before CM HUNTER returned and told us to advance to the B/A holding area. I don't know where he got the message from for us to move there but he was certain and assured of the task and where we needed to be. As we walked around the corner towards the tower, my first thoughts were this is like a movie set. It was full volume shouting, debris was coming down from the roof. FF's were trying to enter from the corner of the building into the main entrance door on the side of the building, to the left side there was this concrete sheltered area, I don't know what was above it, maybe a car park or a building or something like that, I don't know. Crews of FF's were standing under it sheltering from the falling debris and queuing to access the tower. Between the concrete shelter and the tower entrance there was like an open space which we needed to cross to access the tower. Large aluminium panels. Small particles on fire and insulation type materials were falling from above us. It was piled up across the floor around base of the tower.

It was definitely a watch your head and ankles type situation. I would describe the falling debris as something similar to what you would expect to see falling from a building being demolished. I have never seen this kind or amount of debris from a fire before. As I joined the queue of FF's waiting to get inside the tower. I could see that there was a spotter at the entrance to the tower and another spotter under the

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shelter was wearing a white lid. I think he was a Station Manager. The two spotters were communicating and sending FF's across when it was safe to do so. It was like a stop, go go go, stop, go kind of situation which required full volume shouting, and that's exactly what was happening. You don't usually shout on jobs because it can be mistaken as panicking and you don't want to give that impression. In training situations, we're taught to shout, but it's not unusual to attend a fire and receive spoken instruction from the supervisor but here, everyone was shouting due to the noise the fire and the falling debris were making. It felt like chaos. So I'm now standing under the concrete shelter. Queuing with the other FF's, no one had been made into teams yet it was like one big conglomerate. The queue was snaking along the back wall.

I remember hearing someone saying that the fire was started in the kitchen of a flat but I didn't hear which flat or who actually said it. So I'm standing in a line of FF's in full kit waiting to get inside and do their bit. I would say I was under the shelter between five and ten minutes before I was called over by the spotter and made ready to cross over to the tower entrance. Both spotters gave the all clear we ran across the open spaced area towards the corner of the tower then along the side of the tower and in to the main entrance to the tower in to a lobby area.

The lobby entrance was basically that. The front was a double glazed. Like a shop front. There was a double glazed door which led in to the lobby area. It had a concrete wall which ran down the left hand side to a doorway which leads to a slightly open area and some toilets and then the emergency exit doors which were located at the back of the building. In front there was another door to another area. I don't know what was in there as I never took a look around there. Right hand side there was a glazed wall. Like panel which has another doorway in it. This is where there were stairs going upwards to the Bridge Head (BH). The BH basically is where there were you would find the controlling supervisors, like the Station Manager and CM and along with the incident decision log, during a major incident. It can also be used as an equipment dump where various bits of kit and hoses are left ready for deployment. Basically the lobby area had two sides which were fully glazed and the stairs between them. The BH was on like mezzanine level, about two or three floors up from the lobby. This was where the Entry Control Board (ECB or EC) was situated when I first arrived. I never actually saw the BH up there though, as it was moved by the time I was committed so the ECB was down in the lobby. The first thing I noticed upon entering the lobby were the FF's funnelling their way up the stairs. Literally within seconds of me being in the lobby someone shouted the order from the BH for FF's to hold them back as there were too many FF's on the

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floor and on the stairs. I can only guess they were shouting and receiving instruction from each other in this way as it was quicker than waiting for space on the comms which had become heavy with radio traffic.

The FF's were filtered back down stairs again and were held in the lobby with the rest of us. By now you could see there was smoke within the lobby area, it wasn't a lot but certainly became more noticeable. All FF's around 20 to 30 of them seemed to be congregating within this area. I believe it was a Station Manager (SM) who I didn't know, was in control in the lobby area, he was filtering the FF's up as and when they were required by the bridgehead. So I looked around to see if CM HUNTER was nearby but I couldn't see him anywhere. I think he may have been tasked with something else so he entered the lobby. So I was basically separated from my crew at this point, awaiting instructions with the other 20 or so FF's. So I'm still held in the B/A waiting, the smoke was becoming heavier and heavier. It was uncomfortable and this must of went on for few minutes. The smoke continued logging and we were eventually moved away from this area. I am assuming that we moved on the orders of the SM in control but it was the right call to around an hour or so, it certainly felt like a long hour. We were told now the smoke was so bad the B/A holding area was now being moved outside the tower, we would need to go out the back of the tower via the emergency exit. This was basically an entrance/exit created by FF's earlier, so that casualties could be lead away and FF's could be escorted in by Police Officers carrying riot shields above their heads to protect those underneath from the falling debris. For the first time I noticed that there were casualties, being lead down the stairs.

I don't think I've ever seen so many live casualties before. I would say, for the first couple of hours casualties continued to stream into the lobby waiting to be escorted by a FF away from the building. Some were conscious. Some were not conscious. Some were children. Some were talking and some looked like they were in shock, even though there were lots of casualties passing us. I never engaged in conversation with any of the them. I do remember seeing this guy who came strolling through the lobby wearing swimming goggles. In all the chaos that was surrounding him he just walked though looking relaxed and what struck me as being truly bizarre, was the fact he had the most casual demeanour you could ever see as he did so. e just stood out amongst all the other casualties that I had seen. I think it was CM HUNTER who spoke with the man in the swimming goggles. I think he said he was from flat 115, but I'm not too sure. I'd also heard on the comms that there was a guy on the roof. I never saw him and I don't know what happened to him either.

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Waiting there within the lobby made me feel irritated with what was going on. Why were we not being used why had we not been inside the building properly yet? I was frustrated that I had not been assigned to a task after waiting an age. I was looking around and noticed that there were command and control written on the walls in the lobby. After about an hour the stream of casualties had slowed right down. I got the impression that they were trying to clear the back log of FF's at the BH before sending additional resources back to the BH. Waiting around the lobby to be moved and escorted over to the new B/A holding area, I thought about the guy on the roof. He certainly wouldn't be happy knowing that nobody had come to rescue him yet. Once we were escorted across to the new B/A holding area we had to wait again. I found this very frustrating. Once at the holding area, I took a few moments to take in my surroundings.

There was lots of activity it really was busy. I looked up at the tower the fire had taken control. There was fire on all four side of the exterior to the building. The fire was moving fast. Spreading, moving down diagonally at a ridiculous speed. The intensity of the fire was like nothing I had ever seen before. I could see residents in their flats trying to the open their windows but they were unable to get them open. Most high risers have safety windows that prevent them being opened more than a few inches. I can only guess they were thinking why haven't you rescued me. I was thinking why haven't we rescued them? Why haven't we helped them? There was one woman in a flat waving. I'm not sure which floor she was on but you could literally see the fire which was about three floors above her. You could visibly see the fire moving down and across. I have never seen anything like it before. It wasn't nice the feeling of helplessness. I've been to high rise fires before on my ground they don't compare or behave like this one was doing. Basically all buildings should behave the same. The stairs and risers might be in a different place but structurally they should behave the same. You just don't see high risers catching fire on the outside.

You don't normally have this amount of Debris falling around or on you. This fire was totally ablaze from the outside so this was very unusual fire both in its ferocity and its behaviour. There was obviously fuel in the building where all combustibles were feeding the fire. You could feel the heat coming from the tower. We were about 30 metres away from the base of the tower and it was so intense that I thought we would be moved away from the tower but we weren't, it was really hot. I was feeling more and more frustrated knowing people were up there and we hadn't been used as any resource yet. But just looking at the tower made me say to myself "Jesus Christ" as the enormity of this fire. To me this had definitely become

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damage limitation exercise. The aerial ladder had arrived and this can reach up to around ninth and ten floors of a high rise building, so therefore this was about containing the fire before it engulfed the lower floors. In my opinion the Damping Down Surrounding Risk (DDSR) appeared to be ineffective. This is where FF's saturate the lower floors nine or ten down so that less damage would occur. Again I reiterate that the intensity of the fire was like nothing I had ever seen before. High risers fires don't catch fire on the outside like this one was.

I believe another hour had passed since I we were moved out of the building and to the new holding area near to the playground. This was a restricted area so there were no members so the public around, just the emergency services. The LAS were there. I could see that the LAS were handling the casualties once the fire fighters had handed them over. They were working on some of the casualties that had been taken from the tower. Some were being treated and others weren't. Those that weren't had had their faces covered, so I can only assume they were life extinct, but it didn't look good. There were police officer situated there too, they had the big riot shields which they were using to escort FF's and casualties with. It was around this time that a message had been received that EDBA were going to go inside, so all the EDBA wearers made themselves known for tasking. The Wembley Crew I was working alongside were all EDBA wearers and made their way forwards to be tasked, so I was basically separated from the Wembley crew but still held in the holding area, with other SDBA wearers. I have to say I thought this was a ridiculous idea to send EDBA wearers into fight the fire. EDBA isn't suited to fire fighting for long durations. It is meant for a moderate work load for an extended period of time. Or for incidents where you have to travel further to reach it.

The problem with Grenfell was you were working in the heat, so EDBA wearers would be exposed to heat exhaustion for longer periods of time which can't be right. SDBA would have been sufficient. You can't work that long in that heat with two cylinders on your/their back. My priority would have been to rotate the crews and use SDBA for firefighting as there would be less chance of FF's becoming exhausted. I think it was wrong. I also found out that there was another B/A holding area. Apparently FF's that were here, would had been deployed and then came out rested, and gone back inside for second time and third time. And there I was,, standing at the back with the other SDBA wearers, who have yet to be deployed. I think I was finally deployed sometime between 0630hrs and 0700hrs. It seems bad saying this but, I felt jealous that some crew had been in two or three times and I hadn't. On a practical level it's about procedures. I suppose there must have been a breakdown in communication somewhere because

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having FF's going in that many times whilst there are FF's around the back wanting to go in and do their bit but have yet to be used, there had to be a breakdown in communication somewhere. I don't blame the supervisors for not communicating between the front and back of the tower, because this was unprecedented territory on a huge scale. They were doing a great job, but I do believe that using the EDBA wearers to fire fight was a bad decision.

A call was made for twenty wearers. Volunteers for other jobs to drop their sets (B/A). To help others do some other tasks around tower. No one was willing to put down their sets. We all wanted to go inside and help. To do something that could make a difference. Finally, after what seem like an eternity, I was committed to the lobby area along with two FF's from Park Royal, whose names I don't know. Debris continued to rain down on us; you could hear the thudding noise as the debris hit the riot shields held above our heads by the police officers as they escorted us into the tower via the same emergency door at the rear of the building. Once inside we were held again this time at the BH. Smoke logging had continued and was getting worse. It was really heavy. I could see that someone had smashed the toughened wall in order to try and release the smoke from the lobby.

A Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) fan had been set up. This is designed to push smoke through the space and out via another method. This was meant to push smoke in one direction so that it can be extracted away. But this was not working. If anything it was blowing more smoke inside. It made no difference. The smoke was a bit of an issue to be honest. I would say there were maybe twenty or so FF's in the lobby waiting to be committed by the BH there was more than enough room for people to sit down and drink tea if you wanted. It was surreal. Inside the tower it was calm but there was an air of tension within the lobby, but outside, it felt like organised chaos and falling debris and body parts. We were held here for about an hour. This was the second time I'd been held in the lobby area and each time it had been for over an hour. During my second spell in the lobby, two incidents took place that I shall remember for a long time. Firstly the man wearing the swimming goggles came through the lobby and was lead out to the LAS and secondly, I remember hearing a loud but unusual thud from just outside the lobby doorway.

I walked over to see what it was and there on the floor outside was a human leg which had been separated from its body. I just thought "that's somebody leg. I wondered if it was from the man from the roof? I did find out later that remainder of the body was found close a little time later. The casualties were few and far between now. It was getting to the stage of the job where it was getting increasingly unlikely that there would be any more walking casualties. We were now held at BH which had been moved and was now in the

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lobby area and was being organised by some supervisors wearing a white helmets. The ECB has an operator who collects the yellow Tallies off each of the FF. The tallies are removed from you B/A and the given to the operator. He then places them in the ECB, this then displays the FF's name, entry time, remaining air pressure and exit times and which task they been assigned and your group call sign. In my case we were Park Royal Pump Ladder Three. I would say there were around twenty FF's in their SDBA kit waiting to go inside. Eventually we were called over to the BH, once we were at ECB, myself and the two guys from Park Royal handed over our tallies to the supervisors and checked our comms to establish if they were working properly. As we moved away from the ECB we were given a quick briefing in what to do and what to expect when we entered the tower.

We were provided with an explanation of the floor system. Where the lifts were located in the centre of the each landing floor, and with a staircase to the side. Six flats on all floors and the floor numbering system. So we had to remember to count to each floor as there was no numbering system in place. The briefing also included that we were required to carry up three lengths of 70mm hose to the 11th floor to the EDBA wearers and assist them with firefighting. The BH didn't provide us with a Thermal Imaging camera (TIC). TIC; is a hand held machine with a small screen which is used in poor conditions to assist with locating the seat of the fire and/or possible occupants/casualties. For our tasking it was not relevant, and therefore not required. We collected the 70mm hoses from the equipment dump and started making our way into the tower. I wasn't aware if there was a fire lift, as far as we were concerned one way in one way out.

As a crew we had to ensure that we all stayed together. At no point were we permitted to separate. As we left the BH we walked along the lobby to the first stairwell. These were very narrow and went up a couple of flights of stairs until we reached the mezzanine/balcony level where the BH was originally situated when I entered the tower for the first time earlier. The first thing you noticed as we started our climb was the water cascading down around the numerous hoses which were laid on the stairwell, the stairs were really narrow roughly about three and half feet wide. It was very cramped conditions considering we were wearing B/A and full kit. You had to be careful where you placed your feet in case you lost your footing. There were no numbers seen on the wall as far as I could see, but it was dark due to the thick black smoke and the fact the lighting was not working in the stairwell. The smoke was really thick down by the lower floors but visibility become slightly better as we ascended, so the only presence of light in stairwell were from our lamps attached to our kit. I wouldn't say that it was zero visibility but it wasn't far from it. We

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had our lamps were on but they weren't great, because the lamps we use are rubbish in these conditions. If there was a smoke management system within this tower it wasn't working.

There was just enough room to manoeuvre passed the fire fighters if you met them on the as long as you passed each other on the landing area at the top of each flight of stairs. Water continued to cascade down the stairs, each landing entrance had either a FF's or hose reels left there waiting to be used. The conditions were extremely cramped. We continued climbing up and with each flight, it was becoming physically noticeable that the temperature was starting to rise. The higher you were the more you could feel the heat intensify with each step taken. The smoke logging had remained the same, as did our visibility, poor. The heat was getting too much. I think it would have been even worse to be an EDBA wearer in this heat. Add to the fact they had additional heavy equipment it would have been intolerable. We continued up counting each floor as we went, in doing so we also passed several crews that were heading down the stairwell or held at a particular floor to let us pass. I remember as we approached the 9th floor I saw a deceased casualty.

We cannot pronounce life extinct but we can say apparently dead, and she looked apparently dead. You could she was deceased when we shone out lamps on her. I would say that it's possible that the intense heat and smoke in the stairwell may overcome her and killed her. The deceased was a large black female. I think she was black but it was hard to tell really because if a white person is badly burnt by fire they too could be mistaken as black person. This could also lead to the burnt skin sticking to the floor so if moved the body is moved the skin would stick to the floor. She was large lady and must have weighed around fifteen to sixteen stone. She lay there really close against the banister rail on the inside of the stairwell, like she was wrapped banister rail. There was just enough room for me to place my feet beside her so that I could walk around her and continue with the task we had been assigned to do. I'm not one of those people who can walk on or over a deceased body. Although she did look like she had been there for some time. I did hear afterwards that three other crews had tried to reposition her or attempted to bring her down but were unable due to the cramped condition and smoke. I don't know who, but someone had made a tough decision not to move and carry on with firefighting and rescue. Our task was to deploy hoses so we carefully made our way past the deceased female and continue our ascent towards the eleventh floor. We did stop at the tenth floor and the FF's deployed there were asked if they required more hose to which they replied no so continued our way up.

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We finally reached the eleventh floor. The door was open and hoses were propping the door open to the 11th floor lobby area. Visibility was not great due to the smoke logging but we could see that there was a WM (Female) on the branch which is unusual to see as that would not be the WM role. We were told that we had to find the dry riser which was situated the other side of the landing. We just couldn't see it due to the smoke logging, so a decision was made to go down to the tenth floor and attempt to connect the 70mm hose the dry riser below then bring the hose back up due to the possible risk in going across the 11th floor landing before it was clear and safe to do so. The two guys from Park Royal went down to the tenth whilst I remained on the eleventh. I recall that they weren't successful for whatever reason I don't know. I made my way into the fire floor on the 11th floor landing area. The crew were ahead and to the left so I walked in behind them and was told don't go too far but I wanted to have look around see what was going on. I stepped inside and went left and left again. In front of me I could see the flat door was glowing with embers, so I gave it a little shove. The door was like a proper door it wasn't flimsy or anything, but when I shoved it the top of the door started wobble back and forth then collapsed inside like a pile of ashes. From where I was standing I could see inside the flat it was 100% gone. Not a single thing except ashes spread all over the floor. All the windows were gone and all I could see was skyline of London. It shocked me because this was only the eleventh floor. What would the higher floors be like? I have never seen a fire like this before; I basically knew from that moment that there was no chance of finding any survivors alive on the floors above.

I retreated back to stairwell and never went near or in another flat upon the eleventh floor. In total I would say between the tenth and eleventh floors there would have been around ten FF's each doing their own tasks. I do not recall seeing any firefighting taking place during my time up the tower. I think it was when we were going back down stairs that I had a look into the lobby area of the tenth floor and was surprised to see that it was completely free of smoke. For me the policy should have been fire the fight outside and search and rescue inside, because there would have been insufficient water pressure within dry riser system to support the amount of FF's hoses connected to it on each floor. I wasn't aware of any issues with the dry risers but I assumed it was okay as no one had said otherwise. Additionally there was vast amount of water around the place and within the stairwell. An Air pressure alarm activation went off on one of the Park Royal guys B/A, so we knew we had to withdraw. My B/A was fine and air pressure was fairly normal. We dropped the hoses to the ground and left them in situ for the next crew to takeover. The walk down the stairwell was dark, hot, uneventful, and slow due to the hoses laid down the stairs and the water running down them. The radio traffic was still heavy, and would more than likely continue do so. I

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did not see any further casualties on the way down, though we did see other FF's coming up and going down. We spoke with a few of them, nothing significant just this is going on here and that's going on there, sort of thing, be careful as you pass the ninth floor. I recall thinking that the only alarms I had heard since arriving at the tower were from FF's B/A's, there had not been any audible alarm activation or sprinklers system activations, I'm not even sure if there was even a sprinkler system within the tower.

We finally reached the ECB in the lobby area; one of Park Royal guys briefed the controller over our movements and as I collected my tally. I could see that there that a lot more detail had been written on the walls. There wasn't really that much room remaining to write anything down. The ECB must have been really busy. I wasn't wearing a watch but I think it must have been around seven to seven thirty when we made our way over to the emergency exit door and waited for the police officers with their riot shields to escort us away from the tower. Debris was still falling down and I remember looking back at the tower and thinking you could never imagine when you were inside that the outside would like it did now. Truly shocking. I could see that fire fighting was continuing. The Aerial was there and water was still being aimed at the tower from the various appliance deployed. Around me seemed chaotic still. Fire fighters everywhere some resting some preparing to go inside. The police were still ferrying people across under their riot shields. Smoke was billowing from the fire and yellow flames burning from the top downwards. That said to me it looked like it we had it contained. I just knew that so many people had died this day. Once beyond the playground I made my way back along the road past the leisure centre where I met FF BEER and he advised me that the pump was parked up near the community centre which would later be opened and used for refreshment area. I found G302 parked near here.

As I walked away the FF's from Park Royal were making their way back to their own appliance, so that was the last time I saw them. After five minutes I reached G302. I placed my B/A set down in the appliance, nobody was around. It was strange knowing that it was relatively quiet by the Pump and it was chaotic literally just around the corner. I basically composed myself and made off towards the leisure centre where I'd seen FF BEER earlier. It wasn't long before I was back at the leisure centre. This space had become like another holding area for FF's to rest, use the toilet facilities of the Leisure centre, relax a little and catch their breath and take on board some well earned refreshments. All the emergency services requiring a break or rest period were starting to gather in this area. There was a group of EDBA wearers who resting on the grass. Thirty minutes had gone by when the Salvation Army arrived in their food van. It was a welcome relief to see them and great opportunity to grab a hot drink and something to eat. It was

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around this time that I found the rest of the Wembley crew. They were still engaged in EDBA activities they looked like they had just returned from their deployment. I could see they had taken on water refreshments to hydrate themselves too. I re-joined my crew once they had finished their EDBA associated activities. They were basically finished up. To be honest most of us had finished by now, so not much was going on. Because of the task I was assigned too, I knew that as EDBA wearers would more than likely have possibly been frontline firefighting within the tower somewhere. So in my mind they didn't have to mention that they had already been deployed. We stood around talking about this and that, I cannot recall what was discussed exactly, but it would have been something along the lines I've of not seen anything like this before I suppose.

It was early morning and sky was bright now, the fire was still burning, there were FF's still arriving and getting ready to deploy. By now police has set up their cordons further away so the restricted area had been made wider so there would be no members of the public around and I could see some LAS personnel doing their thing too. I think length of time the fire had been going just added to the enormity of the situation. Smoke continued to billow from the tower and the fire was still raging. CM HUNTER had also come returned and was with us now at the resting/holding area. I'm not sure who said it but we all started making our way back towards our appliance. People had started hanging around at the church community centre where refreshments were now being provided. Upon reaching our appliance we stood around and waited to see what would happen. CM HUNTER had moved away from the appliance and gone to Command and Control to see what was happening. CM HUNTER walked back and told us that the relief crews had now arrived so we were released from the scene to go to Paddington to make our initial statements. This surprised me as I thought that we would have been at the scene all day. We then removed our kits, packed them on board and got back into the appliance. A short time later FF BEER was driving us towards Paddington Fire Station, this was around 0845hrs. As we left the scene the Pump was quiet. I don't think anyone wanted to talk I think we were all consigned to our own thoughts. The only background noise was the main set traffic but I never really took much notice of that. I'm not sure how long it took or which route we had taken, but we had arrived at Paddington Fire Station.

Once inside the Paddington Fire Station compound we alighted from the pump and was met by the Borough Manager. She explained to us that we would be required to write down contemporaneous notes. We were provided with a sheet which was basically some kind of template. This detailed us with the time

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of the call time, the address of the fire and asked what we assigned too etc. This wasn't an issue. I found a table and sat down and wrote down my initial statement. This went this went smoothly enough as I had no issues with what was going on. Upon completing my statement, I handed in over to supervisor was collecting them in, I have no name of whom they were. Shortly after completing it, I was offered a one on one counselling introduction type session, where all fire fighters were offered counselling. Everyone had to provide their names and contact details. I have never followed the issue of counselling and I see no reason to do so. We hung around for a while drinking tea or coffee. Some were speaking about their experiences at the scene and some weren't. More crew had started to arrive at Paddington to do their statements. We took on board some refreshments and after two hours we left Paddington and drove back to Wembley. From Wembley I made my way back to Northolt Fire Station about 1400hrs. From there I went home for some sleep as I was due back on duty at 2000hrs, but I do get a two hours sleep period so the times were not as strict for getting back on duty later that day. I will say this, and it certainly applied to me. I don't think there was anybody there who was capable of making fully rational decision. This was purely down to the intense heat exhaustion everyone must have been suffering. I recall the conversation when we reached the eleventh floor when we asked "Have you got any water?", No!" "Well where's the riser", "Well it's downstairs", "Are we plugged in the riser?", "I don't know", Well have we got water? "No" "Well are we plugged in to the riser?" "Is someone plugging in the Riser?" it was this kind of conversation that was going on. You do get used to working in the heat but there are few triggers for heat exhaustion. Heat stress or the effect of heat on your mind, your intelligence and the capabilities to perform normal tasks. I could feel myself getting frustrated that nothing flowed naturally. No water. Circular confusion amongst fellow fire fighters. So I figured out that we were all suffering from the heat which is why I would not have had EDBA at the front line because they would have been exposed to more heat which would have effected their decision making and placed themselves of colleagues at risk. The option not to rotate crews using SDBA would have been better. Since the Grenfell incident I have been made aware of the de-compartmentation of flat training policy. I was also aware that an official statement had been released by an LFB senior officer that this fire would be treated as outside of policy, so no fire fighter would be disciplined should they go beyond policy or refuse to enter the tower.

I would say that I wasn't affected by the events that day. Absolutely no effect on me, and if anything I think the fire brigade has received a much needed moral boost. A real life team building exercise. A fantastic piece of team building. I was impressed how the Command & Control structure managed to do and organisation they showed under these extreme circumstances. The supervision, the command and

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control should be proud of the job they've done, under those conditions and that many fire fighters on scene, the mass casualty rescues, FF's from all over working as one to get the job done. It was a tremendous achievement by the officer in command, whom I'm afraid to say who's name I don't know.

I have provided an account to the best of my abilities for the situation that I found myself involved with on the night and day of 13th and 14th June 2017.

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