

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: FRIEND, DAVID

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 10 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: DAVID FRIEND

Date: 07/02/2018

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

I am the above named person and my details are known to the Police. This statement is in relation to the Grenfell Tower Fire that occurred on WEDNESDAY 14th JUNE 2017.

Prior to making this statement I was able to read the notes I made at lunchtime on WEDNESDAY 14th JUNE 2017 at Paddington Fire Station following my time at Grenfell Tower. This is exhibit DHF/1, original notes made on 14/06/2017. Within this statement I will make reference to my London Fire Brigade (LFB) colleagues; Watch Manager (WM) Stuart BROWN, Crew Manager (CM) Adam CLARKE, Firefighter Richard PEACOCK, Firefighter Matthew HAROLD and Firefighter Lewis RICE.

I have been a Firefighter for twenty seven (27) years and my pay number is [REDACTED]8D. I am currently based at Wimbledon Fire Station. On the night of the fire at Grenfell Tower I started at 8pm on TUESDAY 13th JUNE 2017, it was the first of two (2) night duties on Redwatch. I was posted as the driver of the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) appliance call sign H346. The FRU appliance carries five (5) firefighters. The FRU carries specialist breaking and entering equipment as well as tools for rescue. The FRU carries Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA), two (2) cylinders of air compared to the Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA), one (1) cylinder. The EDBA has a Distress Signal Unit (DSU) giving a warning to the wearer of air levels. The amount of air you get from one (1) wear of the EDBA is based on how hard you are working and breathing. Wimbledon Fire Station also has an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP), used for firefighting.

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I am a competent firefighter. I have had on going training throughout my career including lecture and practical based training using the four (4) storey tower at Wimbledon Fire Station. I have been to Park Royal for Hot Wear training on Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment within the last year. I have attended High Rise fires, including an incident in Wandsworth where a person was pulled from the fifth (5th) floor but that was a contained Compartmental fire. I have seen flat fires before that have spread however nothing like the Grenfell Tower fire. I have had practical and lecture based training for Compartment fires. If there is a High Rise fire, the LBD uses the "Stay Put Policy". This is advice given through Control units to people within the High Rise. The Policy is that people are safer within a fire proof compartment, such as a flat, with a fire door holding the fire back long enough for Firefighters to reach them. It has been proven that this is a safer means to escape than trying to leave the building alone.

I am trained on where the Bridgehead should be, at least two (2) floors below a fire. If the Bridgehead fails, it moves down to a lower floor. The senior officers would be involved in the decision making. The Crew Manager gives a board to the Entry Control Point. This lists the Firefighters, appliance and Station you are from. The Entry Control Board links to each BA wearer through a tally handed to them.

I have completed Section 7(2)(d) visits for High Rise buildings. These involve checking facilities, fire doors and fire safety considerations. I have never done a Section 7(2)(d) for Grenfell Tower. I do not know if there was a Section 7(2)(d) for Grenfell Tower in place. I was not aware of the Grenfell Tower Building and I had never been there before attending on WEDNESDAY 14thJUNE 2017.

On the night of the fire at Grenfell Tower I started the night duty at 8pm on TUESDAY 13thJUNE 2017. I was in my room at Wimbledon Fire Station when I heard the bells go down, an audible alarm alerting the Firefighters to a call. This was about 02.20. As I had been designated as driver of the FRU at the beginning of the shift, I went to the Watchroom where the Tip Sheet is printed out. The Tip Sheet details the reason why an appliance is needed, location of the call and any further information. We were mobilised as FRU as we were EDDBA equipped. I remember that the Tip Sheet said forty (40) pumps. This made it a major incident. The largest pump incident I had been to before this was twenty (20). The Tip Sheet said the location as Grenfell Tower, Lancaster West Estate. I went straight to the FRU appliance. CM Adam Clarke was in the front of the appliance next to me as Officer in Charge (OIC). The Mobile

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Data Terminal (MDT) in the front of the appliance was monitored by OIC CM CLARKE. Firefighter Richard PEACOCK, Firefighter Matthew HAROLD and Firefighter LEWIS RICE were in the back of the wagon.

I drove towards the incident leaving Wimbledon Fire Station, heading through Putney, down the Fulham Palace Road and on towards Shepherds Bush. Traffic was light due to the time of night. I left the roundabout at Westfield Shopping Centre looking for Ladbroke Grove, B450. As I turned in to Ladbroke Grove I could see the incident, I had never seen anything like it. The building was on fire from the around the fifth (5th) floor to the top of the high rise. I thought, "What are we going to do with that? Why would it be burning like that?" It was like a film. The cladding was on fire, I did not expect a building to act like that. I did not have time to think about the building for long as I knew I had a job to do.

I parked the FRU in Dulford Road which is a few streets away from Grenfell Tower. I was not able to get nearer the incident as there was a lot of traffic and I believe around forty (40) machines by that time, around 02.45. Other machines were parked up and there were crowds of people. As a crew of five (5) we got off of the FRU, putting on our EDDBA sets. We made our way through the crowds of people towards the tower. Members of the public were trying to speak to us on the way saying "Get in there". I was trying to get through to the tower. There was an ALP or Turntable Ladder (TL) parked at the bottom of the tower already. The Wimbledon ALP was parked up close by but there was nowhere physically to deploy from due to the space. There seemed to be an issue with water pressure, as the ALP had to use a seventy (70) millilitre hose in order to get water up higher to the seventh (7th) and eighth (8th) floors.

I saw WM Stuart BROWN, who was in charge of logistics outside of the tower. Initially WM Stuart Brown tasked us with getting water for the crews already at the incident. As we already had our EDDBA sets on, we were told to drop our sets and try and gather water. I spent a few minutes looking round the immediate area but I could see there was no water anywhere. There was so much going on, I was more concerned about getting involved in the incident.

As a crew we went back to WM Stuart Brown. We told him that we could not find any water and that as we were there as EDDBA we wanted to get in and do that. WM Stuart Brown agreed it was ok. At this point I could see that the building was still on fire from around the fifth (5th) floor to the top. We were

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designated to go through to the Breathing Apparatus (BA) area, where the BA crews were entering the building. This was located on the opposite side to where we stood.

With EDBA sets back on, as a crew of five (5) we made our way through underneath the building towards the BA area. As we got closer to the tower, there was debris falling down from above. This was glass from the windows in the tower that looked like they had been blown out. There were police officers with shields escorting people across the open area where the debris was falling. I could see that it was basically get in when you could. A Ground Monitor (Portable Fire Fighting Equipment) was working on the third (3rd) floor. The Ground Monitor has limited reach though only to the second (2) or third (3) floor.

I entered the building through the lobby area at the base of the tower into what I would describe as the main holding area. There were stairs from the lobby up to what looked like another lobby area, more open than the ground level. It looked to me that there was only one (1) way in and out of the tower. I saw CM Clarke get involved in helping someone out of the lobby, there were people from the tower being brought through the lobby. CM Clarke was designated with another role within the holding area. I was with Firefighter Lewis Rice, the other team was Firefighter Matthew Harold and Firefighter Richard Peacock. We stayed as a crew of four (4) but in teams of two (2). I went to the BA Board at the Bridgehead at the base of the stairs near the initial holding area within the lobby. The Bridgehead was on the ground floor, the lowest point it could go. We were given a few different briefs at first. These kept changing. As everything was so dynamic the Firefighters at the Entry Control were having to change what the tasking's were. I was then given the task of sweep and clear, search and rescue of the fourth (4th) and fifth (5th) floor for search and rescue.

We had the breaking in gear from the appliance with us. We made our way to these floors, I don't remember if I heard any smoke alarms, I did not see any sprinklers. There was so much noise. We got to the fourth (4th) floor, leaving the stairwell walking into the lobby and then into where the flats start. I was banging on the doors and calling out. The idea is to shout out so that anyone there would hear us and come to us. I smashed doors to the flat with my partner, working the way around the fourth (4th) floor as two (2) separate teams of two (2). There was no one answering our calls and we found no one. There was no fire within the flats on the fourth (4th) floor.

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We left the flat area of the fourth (4th) into the stairwell. I did some hose management briefly on the fourth (4th) floor trying to help get the hose up. There was hose that had burst on the stairs but as I was not involved in the firefighting I did not use this hose. The dry riser was being used as there were hoses being used on the higher floors. As pairs we went onto the fifth (5th) floor. It was hard work breaking the doors of each flat on both the floors with the enforcer. I remember the last flat I checked on the fifth (5th) floor the ceiling was alight. The fire was starting to break through. The outer walls of the rooms were on fire. There was no body on this floor. As we searched the floor, we were in pairs but kept coming together with the other pair. We became separated as a crew of four (4), but I remained with my partner.

On the fifth (5th) floor I went back out to the stairwell. At that stage I was not aware of who my partner was. We had been briefed with search and rescue on these two (2) floors, we had found no one and we thought that the rescues would be needed on higher floors. As I came out on to the stairwell on the fifth (5th) floor leaving the flat area, a Firefighter was coming down the stairs from higher floors. The Firefighter looked distressed and tired. He was with a woman who also looked distressed. I went over to him to help him. As I did this he said "I have had to leave someone a couple of floors up". I turned around towards my partner as it was just the two (2) of us at that point. I later found out this was Lewis Rice. The other two (2) must have still been by the flats on the fifth (5th) floor as I could not see them from where I was. I said "Come to me, come to me, we are going up". Lewis and I straight away started to make our way up the stairs hoping to come across the person that the Firefighter told us they had had to leave on the stairwell.

I was in the lead, walking up the stairs. I went up two (2) floors to the seventh (7th) came across a young girl. She was laying collapsed on the stairs. I could hear her breathing so I knew she was alive. There was water running down the stairs and I thought "If we don't move her she will drown". There was that much water. There was so much equipment plus water on the stairs that it was hard not to lose my footing. I wanted to get her down as quickly as I could. I had Lewis with me, there was another CM who was going up on the stairs at the same time. He must have been behind us. As I was trying to lift this young girl up by lifting her from under her shoulders, the CM was trying to get up the stairs. I was thinking, "Where he is going?" I said "We've got one here". He said "I've been told to go up".

Lewis and I started to take this young girl down. I cannot remember if the CM came with us or not. The girl was around twelve (12) or thirteen (13). She was wearing nightdress type clothing. She looked to

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have Mediterranean skin type. I was not paying too much attention to what she looked like, I just wanted to get her down the stairs. I had so much gear on and I was knackered. It was a struggle to get her down. We managed to get her down one (1) or two (2) floors and then came across the other pair from my original Wimbledon FRU. From roughly the fifth (5th) floor, the four (4) of us were carrying her. We had two (2) of us on legs and one (1) either side of her top half. We swapped around a bit on the way down. We managed to get her all the way to the first (1st) lobby area. There were crews coming in all the time. Another crew came towards us and took the girl. They continued and carried her to the next lobby area. I did not see this girl again.

We went to the BA control as a four (4) again, waiting for another task. Someone at control looked at our EDDBA sets and said "That's it, take them off you are done for this wear". From there we went to the BA Holding Area in the lobby. We were then escorted out of the building by police with shields. There was still so much debris coming down. We went round to the back of the building area, on the railway line side.

As our EDDBA sets were done for the first (1st) wear, we had to service our sets. This means swapping the cylinders with new ones. There were no spare cylinders at this holding area, there were quite a few people in this area. I felt that I wanted to get back in. I started looking for cylinders to replace the set I had already used. I spoke to someone who was the most senior person there. We were tasked to go on to the fire ground to find spare sets. We left our sets there at this point and began to walk around the base of the building as a group of four (4) again. We were skirting the building looking for any spare EDDBA cylinders. We also looked for any FRU unit we could find. Between us, I think we got about six (6) or seven (7) of these double cylinders from three (3) or four (4) FRU appliances.

There were members of the public talking to us as we walked around. Three of us were ahead, Matthew Harold got stopped by some members of the public but the rest of us carried on as we were carrying cylinders. We walked to where the last FRU was, by this point we had been around the whole bottom of the building and were now back at the point of where we had gone in the tower. I was on one side of the FRU and the other two (2) were on the opposite side of the appliance. I remember that we filled a trolley from the FRU with cylinders. As came around the FRU, the other two (2) from my crew had left. I was now on my own.

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I was carrying two (2) cylinders, ahead of me I could see a pile of cylinders. I walked towards that and placed the cylinders I was carrying down in the pile. I told someone who was there that the pile was of full cylinders. I said to that person "I'm going back to find my crew". I made my way under the building again, back to the holding area where we had dropped our sets earlier. There was no sign of any of my crew. It was mayhem there.

I found an EDDBA set, it said CM CLARKE on it. This was leaning up at the back. I put this set on as I thought that CM CLARKE would not need it as he had already been designated another role. I went over to where they were deploying crews from. I was chatting to a Firefighter from Chelsea. I don't know his name. I said to him "I'm on my own but I want to go back in, I'll stick with you". We then got escorted in to the lobby, back into the holding area. There was a queue to get committed. The rest of the Chelsea Crew were already in there, so I stayed with them. I got to the front of the queue pretty quickly as the crews were being deployed at quite a rate then.

From the holding area we were redeployed. There was a CM there, I was at the head of the Chelsea crew. At the BA, we got our brief. Again, like before the briefing kept changing. It was go to this floor, then it would change and be another floor. We were told to search for another crew that were missing and could not be contacted. The communication equipment was bad and the radio channels had changed, the missing crew could not be reached. As we had been given the new briefing, the crew that had been missing arrived in the lobby safe and well.

The Chelsea crew and I were then tasked with going to the ninth (9th) floor for search and rescue. I knew there were people still in the tower who needed to be rescued. I had seen people on the phone talking to the people in the tower. As I was in the lobby leaving to go to the ninth (9th) floor someone came up to me with a piece of paper saying "If you get a chance". I told that person I was going to the ninth (9th) floor, I didn't even look at that piece of paper. I did not see a fire lift in the building. I would not have used one though.

I picked up a breaking in tool from somewhere in the lobby. I made it three (3) floors with this tool. I was full of adrenalin and wanted to do something to help but was struggling carrying this tool up the stairs. I

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couldn't carry it any more, I put the tool down and carried on. I counted the floors. I was at the head of the crew at this point. As we got to ninth (9th) floor I found the door to get to the flats. It was hot and smoky. I got my torch out and got down low to try and see. The first thing I saw through the smoke was feet. I was shouting "Casualty Casualty". I started to try and pull these feet. The casualty was beyond a doorway into the flats. I hopped over and went in over the casualty, in towards the direction of the flats. The smoke was so thick and dark I could not see, even with the torch I still had to feel my way and there was fire burning.

As I felt down, my hands stopped a couple of feet off the ground, it was a large person. At this point I did not know if this was a man or a woman but they were not saying anything. I could not move this person on my own. I shouted out in the dark "Pull! Pull!" and "Give us a hand!". As a four (4), we were trying to move this person but we were just getting nowhere. I was physically exhausted. I came out from behind the body, another crew were now at the casualty too. Someone said "We are moving on!". There was nothing else I could do there, I could not move the body on my own.

We left the casualty on the floor. I was walking behind the CM of the Chelsea Crew, walking up the stairs to the next floor when I noticed that the ADSU alarm on my EDBA set was going off. I could not believe I had not noticed it going off. The ADSU link backs to the Entry Control Board with updates on your kit, it is also an audible alarm on the Firefighter. The only way it can be reset and stop the alarm is to put the tally back into the BA Board. The training states that when this alarm is going off then you have to get out. I wanted to continue up the tower and keep trying to help with the other crew but I did not want to be a distraction or a problem. I wanted to carry on. I said to the Firefighter I was with "I'm going down". I know I should not have gone down on my own but I left and went down.

I got back to the lobby, I gave my tally to the Entry Control and told them that the ADSU was triggered. I told the Firefighter there about the casualty on the ninth (9th) floor. I explained that we could not move the casualty. The Firefighter said "We know about that". I did not know when they knew about that. Had we known about this before, we may have been able to continue on our search for longer and not have spent so much time and energy in that one location.

That was the end of the wear for that set. I went back out to the area where I had found the set marked

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CM Clarke. My Wimbledon Crew were there. I still felt that I wanted to do something. I knew the ALP was on the other side, back where we initially came in. I went around to the ALP, they were not able to site the ALP due to lack of space. I managed to take some time for a breather while I was by the appliance. The Wimbledon pump ladder was in attendance and I teamed up with Firefighter Earl as a BA partner. There were sets and cylinders everywhere. As I approached the Entry Control they said "No you can't go in again, you have already been in". I went back outside the tower. I could see a blue flame, I believed it must have been a gas main. I think it was around the eight (8th) ninth (9th) tenth (10th) floor facing the railway. The Chief of the Fire Brigade was walking around and she spoke to me. There were Deputy Assistant Commissioners there liaising with fire sector and Watch Managers.

The firefighting was still going on when I left the incident at the Tower at around 10.00 on Wednesday 14th June 2017. I left the incident and went to Paddington in our FRU appliance to make notes and I arrived back to Wimbledon at around 5pm. I had already booked the night of the 14th June off as a holiday so I was at home but I felt I just wanted to be there at the tower.

Since that night I have been back to the tower to pay my respects.

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