

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: HILL, DAVID

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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

Signature: D HILL

Date: 06/01/2018

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

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On Sunday 19th November 2017 I was interviewed at FULHAM Fire Station on audio disc by Dc FOLEY and Dc ROBINSON. The interview commenced at 1033 hours and concluded at 1443 hours. Also present was Mr David HART, from the Fire Brigade Union. This is my statement I gave during the interview. I completed some notes after the incident which I produce as my exhibit DBH/1

I am Mr David HILL and I am a Fire Fighter at FULHAM Fire Station G35. I make this statement in relation to a fire at GRENFELL TOWER, GRENFELL ROAD, W11. The incident I will speak about occurred on WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017. I have been in the service for 5 and a half years and currently posted to FULHAM where I have been for a year, I am considered as competent. I started at HOLLOWAY and was there for 5 years, then KENTISH TOWN for 2 months and at FULHAM since.

On the evening of TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017 I paraded at FULHAM FIRE STATION at 2000 hours on red watch. It was a normal evening routine, we had roll call and I was detailed to drive that night, call sign G351 on the PL (Pump ladder). We had a chat in the watch room to see if there was anything they needed to tell us, we checked our sets, normal procedures. I did the drivers checks for the appliance for that night, I checked my BA set, checked the equipment and the pump on the machine was working ok. It was pretty much just a normal evening. As driver you are in charge of the vehicle for that shift, you do drivers checks at the beginning of the shift, there is a routine we go through to check the appliance is working ok. If you get a call your job is to go to the watch room with whoever is in the box that night, the watch room assistant, they have different roles but one of their roles is to help you find where the call is

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and check the grid reference on the map. A call slip will have the information of what the incident is, how far away it is, who else has been called, we get on the appliance and we drive there.

That evening my crew were WM (Watch Manager) Glyn WILLIAMS, CM (Crew Manager) Chris BATCHELORDOR, myself, FF (Fire Fighter) Maj, from RICHMOND, I believe his full name is Malik ABDUL and a FF whose name I can't recall but I think he is Tony from TOOTING, again I don't know his surname. Maj and Tony were standbys that night crewed with us at FULHAM.

At some point our Command Unit (CU) were called out to a fire, I don't know what time it was but it will be on record and I thought it might be but I don't know what the call was or in fact if it was the GRENFELL fire, they go to big jobs all the time. A CU is essentially an office on wheels. If there is a job of 6 pumps, so 6 fire engines or more, or other tricky incidents they will send a CU down.

They assist the officer in charge, they have more equipment and will be more tactical than if you were on the ground, they manage lots of practical areas. They are called to bigger incidents to help manage it, it would be manned by two (2) WM's. It's a mobile van or small lorry, it will have computers systems, maps, charts, and lots of information about decision making modules, policies etc. Not long after they were called out we also received a call and I presumed it was the same job, I don't know the time but it must have been within 5 minutes after the CU. I went to the watch room and obtained the call slip to see what we were going to and where. I don't remember exactly what the call slip said but it was to a smell of burning in KENSINGTON, the address I can't remember exactly. A smell of burning is pretty much a standard call, sometimes you get a lot of information and other times you get very brief information. By the time we arrived an appliance was already there, it's quite a drive for us so I don't know how long they had been there, but it will have been long enough to get out of the appliance, find out what it was, so by the time we arrived they knew it was false alarm. They radioed through that it was no big deal, they were already investigating and the other unit had dealt with the matter and they would probably be sending us away shortly. We were there for a very short time when we were stood down so we started driving back to the station. I don't know the address of where we went that night but it was totally different to GRENFELL as it was about 5 miles away.

On the drive back, I can't recall in what order but I heard radio traffic from the GRENFELL job. I think the first thing we heard was make pumps 10, then I think it was followed by make pumps 15. Every incident will have a PDA (pre-determined attendance), this means who is turning up, how many fire engines, whether there is going to be a CU. I don't know exactly who turned up originally to the job, I think it was a standard PDA for that building. They had realised that what the standard for a job of this

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type was it wasn't enough and we needed to get more fire engines. So, essentially what it generally means is more fire appliance. It's an important phrase for a WM, it means it's a very dynamic situation and we need more help now. Make 10 is a big fire, make 15, make 20 is a very big fire. I did think what is it we were being called to because whatever it was it is its big from the make up of the pumps. It could be a warehouse or something really big, if there was no one in there, we could surround it with pumps and water. So with that and then hearing all the FSG calls, and the ordering I knew it could only be a tower block. I thought it would have an uneven fire spread or it's just a very bad fire, this was a worrying situation as there was a lot of people in the building.

We knew we would be called to it as it was a bigger job and we were local. I could hear fire survivor guidance calls coming through the radio, then it was make pumps 20. I can't remember in what order it was but that's the radio traffic we were getting. I think at pumps 20 we were detailed to go and it was either sent through to the MDT or it was via the radio, so we didn't get a call slip but information about the address wasn't coming up on the MDT so that made it slightly more difficult for us to find the exact address. The MDT is an on board computer called a mobile data terminal (MDT). Glynn was going by some information that he had and we didn't have a map. Glynn knew the area and he was directing me as I hadn't been there before and as driver I wouldn't look at the MDT. We knew it was bad as the FSG calls were from various floors, all over the place. People were asking control to send it through to the MDT and you could hear control were trying to be very clear and were doing their best but were getting flustered as there was so much going on, the information wasn't coming through to the MDT and they were saying here's the address just get there.

FSG, Fire survivor guidance calls are when control will have a call from a member of the public saying, I'm in the building which is on fire, they can't get out or what should they do. The brigade will then say, tell us exactly where you are, we will come and get you. They then stay on the phone but they also radio it through to whoever is the ICP, Incident Command Pump. The ICP is where the radio messages would go through until the CU arrive and they would take over. The ICP is a normal pump and anyone can do it and it's normally who would turn up first. The driver will be the comms officer basically and relays this information to the WM. The ICP driver or the coms officer reads it back to control staff who then say whether it is correct or not, he then gives it to the officer in charge. It's quite a process itself even for one call but it's something the brigade has put in place because of past mistakes. There were a lot of calls, it was like 10<sup>th</sup> then 17<sup>th</sup> floor, 20<sup>th</sup> floor and so instantly we know that the fire is in a lot of this building. If you are on that radio channel you can hear all the radio traffic, even though it's between control and the

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comms officer at the incident everyone going can hear everything, it's an open conversation. We had a good idea at this point that this was bad.

We got near to the area and Glynn couldn't remember the exact way there so we paused looking around.

We saw another fire engine driving past so we followed them. I looked over and noticed the big tower block on fire, it did look like 50% was alight not 70% as I said in my statement. I knew then this was what we were going to and said to Glynn "It's there". We made our way as best we could. We had to go through the back roads, there were quite a few engines in front of us, it was tight and the fire engine in front of us stopped and had to be seen back. We got as close as we could to the incident and we parked where the engines were. I don't know the route we took but it would have been along the BROMPTON ROAD I think for a while, the job earlier, the smell of burning was off the BROMPTON ROAD further down in KENSINGTON somewhere but we took a right off there. We don't often get called to KENSINGTON's ground so I don't know the area. I don't know the road where I parked but it was just outside a church, it seemed to be a focal point for the community, there were metal railings on the left hand side and an open walkway which led up to GRENFELL TOWER. There were a lot of cars, its LONDON, so there were cars parked wherever they could be. Driving up to the tower was congested because of the parking. The appliance in front of us took a corner and because there were so many parked cars in the area, the crew had to see him back so he could take it again, it was tight and those were the roads all the way up to it and even driving out the next morning was a nightmare because it was just so tight with the parked cars. There was only so close we could get to the building, but that was because by the time we got there, there were fire engines parked and it was probably cordoned off, so I can't say how much closer we could have got, but we were only 20-30 metres away, this was a close as we could get, it was a 1 or 2 minute walk.

When we parked I wasn't sure what the situation would be, because a fire that big, that number of fire engines and as driver my role would normally be to help other FF's get water or help the pump operative but Glynn said no get your set on. I got all my gear on because if you are driving you wear uniform, shirt and trousers. I put my set on and myself and Maj took off the appliance three (3) lines of 45 hoses possibly two (2) and probably the two (2) main jet branches, we carried what we could to the fire where we put all the kit at the equipment dump. A set is a BA set, oxygen, breathable air. You have a cylinder of breathable air on your back, which is like a back pack, your breathing apparatus (BA) has your mask so you can breathe clean air when you are in a fire. SDBA (standard duration breathing apparatus) is a shorter amount of oxygen and the longer cylinders basically have two cylinders on the back so you have

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more breathable air. You have a time of whistle, we used to have the pneumatic time of whistle which whistles on your back and I think that is around 80 bar when it goes off. You have the digital one which starts going off a bit below 90 bar. You shouldn't be getting down to those alarms, you should be out of the building before that goes off. When I came out of the building at time of whistle my set I was down to about 40 bar and it was full before I went in. On this night I was wearing SDBA. A branch is a pistol type system for opening and closing a hose, it's like a cylindrical outlet at the end of the hose that controls the shape of the water, so it can go out sideways or out like a jet, a main jet allows you to have more water coming through. You have to put the branch onto the hose physically yourself with as many lengths of hose as you like, they are essentially the ends of the hoses, it has an on off tap. It enables you to turn the water on and off, you can select how you want the water to come out, like a jet or a spray, you can control how much water comes through the branch. A 45 is 45 mm diameter internal bore, you get, 90, 70 and 45, 45 is the standard used if you're walking around a building.

We took what we could to the tower and left it at the equipment dump. This was initially by a tree outside the base of the tower block, it wasn't an equipment dump as such, and that was where others had left their equipment. It did move later on to the mezzanine floor. Walking up to the tower I could see a lot of the building was alight, I initially thought the rubbish shoot was alight as there was like a straight line of fire, it was one column alight. It was obviously a very bad fire. There were parts that were 100% alight and then it had other pockets that were alight around the tower. It looked horrendous, I was thinking I don't know how we are going to get hold of this as it was too big. It looked like it had gone all the way up at one point and had spread to another side. I wasn't outside the building for very long so I didn't have time to take it all in. At this point there were small bits of debris falling and it was fine to walk in but later on it was horrendous.

As myself and Maj had to get the equipment we were a little behind. When we got there Glyn had been talking to some senior officers, possibly the incident commander and told me to go with him so we went to the base of the tower. When Glynn told us we were going in, we got the equipment back from the dump and put it inside on the mezzanine floor. At the entrance there were about three (3) other teams, WM's were coming in and out forming a plan and trying to work out what to do, there were bits of equipment, hoses, breaking in gear. We then decided to go up, there is a set of stairs up to a balcony on the mezzanine floor. Glynn was told to do a management role and not wear a set. Some of the FF's were being called up the stairs towards the bridgehead but we were told to wait in the foyer which is just one set of steps below. We waited there for about 5 to 10 minutes. Then CM BATCHELORDOR said lets go,

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so we started to join the queue outside the bridgehead. We went through the doorway and walked through a small hallway, the lifts are on the left hand side, the beginning of the stairwell is on the right hand side and the bridgehead was just there with the ECO, the Entry Control Officer and the ECB, Entry Control Board. It did later get moved but at this point it was just there.

The ECO and the ECB are different things, the board is where you put your BA tally's from your set into the board and you do it with your team mate. It will speak to your BA set and will tell you what information you need from it and will tell you how long you need to be in there for. The ECO also does a manual calculation and will work out how long you have until the time of whistle. They will write down your names and where you are from, Fulham pump ladder three (3). They will give you a brief and details the crew, sometimes they will have a separate comms officer. I think there were two (2) ECB's set up at this time. The bridgehead should essentially be two (2) floors below the fire and that's where you would normally get all your equipment you would need. The crew would go up one floor below the fire and that's where they would plug in their hose, so that's high rise procedure we normally use. In this instance it wasn't exactly text book in that way. The bridgehead wasn't two floors below the fire, in the circumstances they did the best they can.

At some point we were detailed to grab more hoses which we did and then joined the queue to the bridgehead again. It wasn't a long wait when we got the bridgehead. Chris and the standby from Tooting, I think his name is Tony, went in just before us. Maj, a FF from Richmond and myself went to the bridgehead and were detailed by the Entry Control Officer (ECO) to go to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, flat 95 I presumed to assist with a fire survivor guidance call, to go and get them out. We were not briefed on who or how many just 12<sup>th</sup> floor, flat 95. Maj had a 45 hose but there were no branches. I went outside to look for a branch but there wasn't any and I was told to go back in, I told them I didn't have a branch and I was told to DRA it (Dynamic Risk Assessment), this is where you assess danger over risk, don't get yourself into trouble and don't do anything dangerous. It basically means you can operate outside of specific procedure if you know that your actions would cause no harm to yourself or others. I was told I would have to play it by ear type thing, go up and do your best. Maj had a single line of 45 hose and that's all we had. I did say to Maj I didn't have a branch but it wasn't a normal situation, I knew Chris and Tony had gone in just before us and I think they had a branch and the crews just before them did as well, so if we were the first and only crew being sent up then I would have probably said more but it wasn't that kind of situation.

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Myself and Maj went in and we were not too far behind Chris and his crewmate. The stairwell was lit so the lights were working. It was a very stripped down stairwell, there were no carpets, it wasn't modernised or anything, it was a standard concrete looking stairwell. The stairs were not steep, they were not very wide, you couldn't get more than two people with BA sets on any area of the steps and each floor had a small landing. If crews were coming down we would have to back up onto the landing below us to allow them to pass, it was a tight squeeze just to let them past. Three (3) FF's with sets was too much. The flats were on the right hand side to where the stairs were. This was the only set of stairs I saw, as I was detailed to use the stairs I don't know if there was a fire lift or if it was being used.

The 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> floors were all looking the same, it was clean air, but with wispy smoke. About the 4<sup>th</sup> floor it pretty quickly went from wispy smoke to fairly thick white smoke. We got to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Maj was taking slightly longer than I was as he was carrying the hose and here it was a little smoke logged. The higher up the more it was smoke logged. The 6<sup>th</sup> floor was thicker smoke again, I didn't notice any specific noises, smells or bangs.

When we reached about the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> floor the smoke was getting dark, there were FF's coming down with casualties. It was like no fire I had been in before, there would normally be one (1) or two (2) crews max but there were FF's everywhere, it was just very busy. People had left kit and hoses everywhere, I don't think they were charged hoses. As crews were coming down, it was a small stairwell, there wasn't really enough room to get everyone down. They were shouting "casualty, casualty" "help with the casualty" they were exhausted, I wanted to carry on with the brief but Maj wanted to help them with the casualty but they already had two people, so Maj helped with the casualty I would go up with Chris who was in front of us so we formed a team of three (3). I couldn't have assisted with the casualty anyway. I did see a number of casualties and I can't remember when or where I saw them. I do remember one casualty possibly wearing a blue shirt or top. It was thick dark smoke so I didn't see their faces. I have seen casualties in other jobs who have died from smoke inhalation where they black smoke around their mouths but the smoke was too thick to see that much detail, we were so bunched up trying to get out of the way I have no clear picture of what the casualties look like, I don't even know if the casualty was male or female but I think they were an adult. There are somethings I can't remember and I don't know why I can't remember.

Maj went down with the casualty and I went up to meet with Chris, they had a brief that was different to mine so I was trying to assist them on 10<sup>th</sup> floor, we got to the door well and they were looking for a branch or hose because it was hot and they couldn't get in. They were trying to get water to work, so I

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was assisting them in trying to find some hose. I think I ended staying on a floor below when they went up, I was looking for equipment, I found a charged branch just inside a doorway, this was letting through quite a lot of black smoke. I thought this would work so I called out to see if there was a crew that was using it because obviously you don't want to take a branch from a crew. I couldn't hear anything but I did hear a beep beep which was far away, I wasn't sure if it was a smoke alarm or a FF's ADSU to begin with, I shouted and listened again, if it was a FF ADSU going off that's a FF emergency but then I heard it again and realised it was a smoke alarm going off. As I was getting no response I gave it a bit of a pull to see if the branch head was right there but it wasn't giving way and the branch head wasn't there. The hose was really charged so it was really hard to move and solid and it didn't give way at all. A charged branch is a hose full of water. It is easy to tell if a hose is charged or not, it's either flat or its bulging. If a crew had used it they would normally leave it by a doorway, its standard practice. I didn't go further in as I didn't know what was in there and I couldn't pull it in case a crew was using it. An ADSU means Automatic distress signal unit, it's a piece of kit that monitors whether you move or not, if it doesn't move for 30 seconds then it starts a countdown to I think 15 seconds and if it doesn't get shaken in the next 15 seconds an actual alarm will go off, it will also signal on the ECB as well. So if a FF is unconscious it would go off.

When I came out Chris wasn't there and I presumed he was on the floor above as I could hear FF voices. I went up to the next floor but they were not there. I could hear a female FF's voice on the floor above so I knew there were FF's nearby so I continued up but there was no one there. The building didn't have floor numbers on but FF's had been writing the numbers on the walls with chino graphs of what floor it was, the walls lower down were a yellowish colour and even further up it wasn't too bad so if there had been floor markings you would probably be able to see them. I got to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor and still couldn't find anyone and but I could still hear FF's above me. It was hot at this time with thick black smoke, this wasn't an ideal situation to be in from my training but I knew I wasn't on my own and only 4 floors down I would be in pretty much breathable air. Part of me thought I should go back but there were people in there and I could run to clean air, my brief was to go the 12<sup>th</sup> floor so I was going to continue with that brief and I had got this far. I got to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, I opened the stairwell door to the floor, and I did door procedures as best as I could. Although there was thick black smoke at this point, it was not as hot as the previous floor. The floor below had been hot where the hose was and I wasn't sure what the 12<sup>th</sup> would be like but it wasn't actually very hot. I DRA'd it as I could tell it wasn't as hot as the floor below. I went down low and tentatively opened the door, it surprisingly wasn't very hot. I took the right hand wall and

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went through the hall, I wouldn't know if the lights were on as it was pitch black with smoke. I came to a door on the right, it was like an electricity cupboard or something, I don't know what it was, and it wouldn't open. The wall went round to the left and I came to the first door I found, I was looking for flat 95 but the door didn't have a number on but it was a red door. I knocked on the door, there was no answer, so I knocked again. A male opened the door with his family, his wife and two (2) young girls. The dad said "thank god you're here, get us out of here" I went into the flat and told them I was going to get them out, that there was heavy smoke and that it was very dark. I told them they would find it hard to breath so I told them they need to get some towels and to put them around their mouths. They got some t-shirts and towels and came back pretty quick and they put them around their faces. Although I knew it wasn't the safest environment to take them out in I knew that clean air was five (5) floors below, I knew it was do able and this family needed to get out now. I don't think I communicated with them how intense it would be out there so in hindsight I would have probably spent more time with them.

I got the family all in a line, I led them and they were holding each other and we left. As soon as we were in the hall they were plunged into the darkness, I don't think they were expecting how bad it was. Very quickly the girls starting screaming "daddy I can't breathe" I was saying "Let's go, let's go we have to get out of here". I did take in some of that smoke and one breath is toxic. We went through the door into the stairwell, they were making very slow progress and it took us quite a long time to get from the flat door out to the stairwell. They were screaming and the dad was shouting "Mr Fireman, Mr Fireman my children can't breathe" As I had come up I had seen a crew that had an extra set and a girl had walked out with a face mask, that stuck in my mind. I DRA'd it and I knew there was safe air about 5 floors below which wasn't a long way. So I took my mask off, held my breath and gave the family each a breath. For some of them it worked well but it was very tricky to get the fittings of the back of the mask out of the way, especially for the youngest daughter. It's a sad reminder, now looking back I think the youngest girl hardly got any air. Some members of the family got more oxygen than others. I don't actually remember giving it to the mum at all.

Whilst they had my air I did take in a few breaths of the smoke. I put my mask back on and we continued down. It was again slow progress, I was shouting at them all the time that we needed to go. It was dark, it was wet, there was hose on the floor, like a snake, and if it's wet it gets slippery. Even FF boots although are protective they were slippery. The family were bumping into each other, they were all panicking, particularly the girls so it wasn't steady progress. When I had the daughter and the mum I did nearly fall a couple of times with both of them. I gave them air 2 or 3 times from my mask. I think I tried to hold my

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breath but there were times when I took in some deep breaths of the smoke. By possibly the third time I realised I would end up passing out which was good for no one, we just needed to get out. I knew the building wouldn't collapse on them, I just needed to get them out. I don't know if they still had the towels, or if they had dropped them, I don't even know if they made any difference. Around the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> floor I picked up the eldest daughter around her waist with my arms in a bear hug type lift, her back was to my chest and I ran down the stairs with her. She was making a gurgling noise by this point, she wasn't really shouting anymore, it felt like she had passed out or she was semi unconscious. On my way down I didn't see any other FF's. I took her to clean air and thankfully there was a FF there so I handed the girl straight over to the FF. I then went back up again as I knew the family was still in there, they were nearer to clean air than when they started. As I was going up the dad was running down, I can't recall how far I went up. I can't remember exactly if the person I picked up next was lying down, standing up or shouting for help, I don't know why but I just can't remember. I thought it was the youngest daughter and so I carried her down. Whilst coming down, I thought wow, they are really heavy because I thought it was the youngest daughter. I knew I already had the oldest daughter so I must have taken the youngest daughter down first in which case. I was trying to get down quickly, I got a bit flustered on the way down, there was hose everywhere, you couldn't see anything, and it's a narrow stairwell, it was heavy and I had all the equipment as well, so I almost ended up going into one of the hallways and I had to regain my bearings and managed to carry on. I got this lady down and by that point my time of whistle was going off on my set. I was absolutely exhausted at this point. I don't think I could have done much more and I was struggling to breathe. I soon realised that it was the mother not the daughter, she was however the same lady that I saw in the flat. Luckily another crew was there so they helped me with the mother. I was trying to assist them, I don't know if they had been working before but they were not a strong team, they couldn't manage the woman and really struggled so I was trying to help. I was trying to lift her arm or leg with the crew but I couldn't physically lift this woman anymore. Taking her down took all that I had. I think at that I point I thought the dad must have taken the youngest daughter. I knew I couldn't go back up because I was exhausted and my time of whistle was going off. I thought wow that was intense, we'd got them all out. I spoke to that crew afterwards and they had been even higher so I think they were exhausted as well basically. This is what I remember, however I have since spoken to a FF from who I believe was from that crew who stated that I was actually assisting them with a casualty from the 16<sup>th</sup> floor. I knew I had trouble remembering specific details before this part of the incident but was surprised by what she said because I thought I had remembered this part quite clearly.

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I went down to the bridgehead and took my mask off as I couldn't breathe. You are not supposed to do that but I was struggling to breathe. I went to where it was clean air at the ECO but it wasn't there it had moved to a floor up so I went up. I was just finding it difficult to breathe, I was spitting up gunk basically from the fire. My ADSU was going off at this point. (Automatic distress signal unit) It is loud and someone got their BA tally out and silenced my ADSU and then put it back in their own set. This isn't exact procedure but it's not hugely uncommon, he shouldn't have done that and I should have got my BA tally. A normal fire would be for me to come out without my alarm going off. It wasn't a bad move as the ADSU is really loud, with all those people there you can't even get to the ECB with the amount of people and they were trying to talk so it would be hard for anyone to hear each other with that alarm going off. I still would have needed to get my tally, he just silenced the alarm.

A WM, I don't know who he was, saw that I was struggling for breath and told me to take off my tunic and my set and sit down, so I did. They gave me oxygen and assisted me out, I was really trying not to throw up. In all of that, I didn't get my BA tally off the ECB, which was a mistake, I should have got it. There were about 20 FF and about 4 WM's so I couldn't just walk up to it. I thought they knew I was out, I thought they had recognised me, they had committed me not long ago but were now asking me to leave. I just don't think I was thinking clearly because I was really struggling to breathe. I soon realised I hadn't told entry control what had happened regarding the flat, so I radioed through to entry control, I told them I had been up to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor flat 95 and the flats cleared. I presumed it was flat 95 because the family had been in there. Then I thought if the dad didn't have the youngest girl then she's still in there. I tried to radio through again but my radio had stopped working, which was typical. I spoke to a WM and explained the situation as I needed to tell someone about the girl, he said there was a specific FSG CU so I went to that CU and told them there might be a girl on the stairwell on about the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> floor and she needs to get out. They said they would radio it through. I then realised I didn't have my BA tally, I got my set and went back to the bridgehead and said that I needed my BA tally, they said are you FF HILL, oh good you're ok we have been looking for you. At this point another crew were bringing out a girl and I don't know if she was the girl from the family, I don't know if she deceased or not. I got my tally and went outside and sat down where I saw my crew, we debriefed together and had some water.

I don't know what the time was but I presume it was about 0300 hours to 0330 hours but that could be wrong. I was then runner for FSG calls, I don't know who he was, he had sheets with details of over 100. I was assisting a FF and a WM, my main task was trying find out everyone that was coming out of the building, to get what flat they'd come from, how many people had come out of the flat and how that

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correlated with the FSG calls so we could then give that information to the CU who were dealing with the FSG calls. Now and then the WM would come up with a list and say flat 13, 2 people evacuated and then we would basically check our board with over a 100 of these calls on sheets. It was very minimal basic information. I would also go to the bridgehead where they would ask about a certain flat and I would take that back to the CU and vice versa. So the main job was getting the information of those who had got out from the WM, going through the sheets and checking them off. The more we could tick off meant we didn't need to send FF's to those flats. I was running between the FSG calls CU and the bridgehead trying to get this information. The bridgehead was obviously in the building and the CU was just around the corner and we were camped out next to the bins near the base of the tower. The WM I have worked with a few times, I don't know his name or where he is stationed now, I used to work with him at Holloway, and the FF is from Hammersmith who I don't know. I did that for about an hour, they told me to take a break and come back which I did. Not long after I was told they had enough information and took the sheet back so I stopped. I had been outside for some time now, there was water everywhere, it was deep puddles everywhere, there was constant debris falling, we were under cover so we were ok. When I was doing the running for the FSG I had to go under the police shields to get into the building. There was a body of a jumper right next to us, but I didn't realise they were jumper at the time, it was when I was looking for my set that I saw a leg under some tarpaulin, it was like a war scene to be honest. From where I was doing the FSG running I couldn't see the fire but other times when I was walking around I could see that 50-60% of the building was 100% alight, I did think at one point the building may collapse, I couldn't imagine it would hold its integrity much longer because it was just completely burning, the whole building was just a light, one side was one side less alight. The side where the main entrance is to the right of that was completely alight. The debris was bits of building, cladding I imagine, quite often there would be big bits of cladding falling which were alight, and there was debris everywhere. There was drips of metal falling, I found some on my PPE after. I didn't sustain any injuries from that night. The water on the lower levels inside the building was about a foot deep. I don't recall any specific smell other than a wet, damp, dank, acrid burning smell, that's standard, I didn't notice anything standing out. When I finished the FSG running, I looked for my set which I had put down and I believe someone else took it as a second set. I then met up with my CM and my crew and explained the situation, I don't know what time this was. My CM Chris had taken a really distressing call from a woman who was in there and she had died whilst she was on the phone to him. I spoke with him about what we had both done and it was obviously a really distressing time so we talked about that for a while. I was waiting to see if I could

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be detailed again but I didn't have a set, I knew I couldn't go in anyway as there was something in my throat I just couldn't clear it and for a day or two after I had a bit of pain in my chest. There were literally hundreds of FF there who hadn't worn yet. I sat with everyone and waited to be detailed to do something, we waited for a number of hours I believe. I spoke with other FF who hadn't worn and some who had been in and had seen some nasty things, who weren't dealing with it very well. It was at about 0830-0900 hours or maybe a bit earlier when we were sent home, we went back to PADDINGTON Fire Station and had to write our statements, we were asked if we wanted see a counsellor, my chest and throat at this point didn't feel too bad to honest, it was when I woke up the next morning it felt slightly intoxicated, stuffy in the chest. I spoke to an online doctor about it who gave me advice. I don't have any lasting effects.

During the incident I did have to DRA a few times which is me doing a dynamic risk assessment. The first time when I had to go in without a branch I don't feel that was actually my DRA because for me not to have done that I would have to have said, sorry guv I think you are wrong, and that's not going happen, I am not going in. They had DRA'd it that it was ok to go in without a branch, that was the order, I tried to follow procedure and was basically told in this instance it was ok not to. If I thought I was going to lose my life then I would have done one or said no I am not going in. I could have said something but because of the nature of the job I wasn't being sent to a confined space, which is 80% alright. To some extent I knew there were people in there, there was hose up there, and it's a different situation. I was surprised at this decision because we spend so much time going through procedure and you are told never to break procedure. DRA would normally be for snap decisions, so I was surprised to hear this coming from a senior officer, however I thought if that is the situation then fine, I don't have a big problem with it. The other times I used DRA was when I took my mask off to give the family air, again I knew this wasn't procedure. Even if I held my breathe I knew I could get to clean air, it wasn't that far. I also knew that the rate this family were going is that they were not going to make it to clean air if they didn't have a breath of air, it was like they were almost trying to hold their breath the whole way and walking slowly. I knew that I would be ok, I didn't know if they would be ok so it just seemed like a feasible thing to do. If I didn't know that egress wasn't protected it might have been a different situation but because I knew essentially we weren't that far away from clean air it seemed like an ok risk and an ok decision to make, given the fact there was a family of 4 walking very slowly.

The family I rescued from the flat I can describe briefly. The father was Indian/Bangladeshi, I am not great at describing races so I think that was what he was, he was shorter than me, about 5'03 to about 5'5.

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He was stocky, he was an older guy, about mid 40's, he wasn't fat just a bit of weight to him, he was balding with hair around the sides, and he may have had stubble. I think he might have been wearing a grey t-shirt type top.

His wife was about 40-42 years of age, around the same age as the dad, possibly a bit younger. I think she had a blue jumper on with a lighter shirt underneath, I can't remember if she was wearing trousers or a skirt, the wife and the girls all had long dark hair, slightly curly, her hair wasn't tied up but in a scrunchy and loose down. She was shorter than the husband, about 5'01, she was fairly slender.

I am not great at guessing children's ages but I would say the older daughter was about 10 but could have been anywhere between 7 and 10, she was slender, slender than her younger sister, I think she had a purple dress on, long dark hair, she may have had a hair band.

The youngest daughter was anything between 4 and 6 years of age, she was a little bit shorter than her sister, fuller than her sister, long dark hair, I have this picture of her wearing blue but I could be completely wrong with what they were wearing. I don't recall hearing them calling each other by their names.

When I was in their flat it was in a contained department so I didn't see any air vents, or in the hallway, I didn't see any sprinklers either. I didn't go to any windows so I wouldn't have opened any. It would have been easier for us to fight the fire if we had closer access to GRENFELL TOWER, we needed more water pressure from the hydrants and more equipment would have helped and a better comms system.

During the incident I didn't use the dry or wet riser as I wasn't detailed to, however a wet riser is for use by a FF, it is essentially the same as going to a hydrant, its generally for buildings with a certain number of floors and depending on what year it was built, I think GRENFELL would have been built before that so I think it would have been a dry riser. They pump water up so that you can get water internally. A wet riser already has a water system in place from the mains. After a certain amount of time you then have to fill it up again. The dry riser is otherwise known as the rising main.

If the building hadn't been covered in cladding which was extremely flammable with an aluminium covering the fire probably wouldn't have happened. I had no previous expectations about cladding being a danger prior to GRENFELL. Internally they could have had some air vents and an internal smoke alarm system. In terms of fire spread, it spread on the outside and worked its way in, the hall doors I presume were all fire safety doors and self-closing. That probably did prevent smoke getting into the stairwell to some extent but there was a lot of smoke in the stairwells so I can't believe that was all from FF's coming in and out. I don't think it would have been possible to put that fire out so in terms of fighting that fire

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better, it just shouldn't have had that cladding on it. It's so sad for the residents because we couldn't fight that fire, we would not have been able to put that fire out. I think for pretty much everyone that was there this went beyond any previous experiences because there hasn't been a fire of that magnitude. I have been to fires where people have lost their lives but I have never been to a fire like this.

We do a lot of training and talk through training for high rise blocks, I am sure we even did it a month, two (2) months before GRENFELL. It was really just reminding each other about wet and dry risers and what equipment we might need. We do drills in our tower, obviously we don't have a high rise tower but we set it up as if it was. I did a real fire training course for three (3) days, so I have actually had a lot of training recently. Earlier this year we did a real fire situation training. I have experienced a couple of high rise fires when I was at Holloway, one in particular, it was on the fifth floor, two (2) rooms were pretty much 100% alight, a male had set them both alight, he was an alcoholic and had fallen asleep in the kitchen, we went in as a crew, we put the fire out and found the casualty, we bought him out, unfortunately he had taken in too much smoke and he died. It was quite a big fire. There was another one a couple of years after that which had a strange fire spread, it was something outside that caught alight and spread internally in the building, I went in later with a crew and helped put out some of the fire and checking the flats to see if any of the residents were in. That really just involved breaking down some doors and checking the third or fourth floor.

The fire brigade have a stay put policy so if a family or person calls the fire brigade and says my house or flat or block is alight, the fire brigade will advise them what's best to do in terms of getting into a compartment. They are to stay put, the brigade will stay on the phone to the person and it is radioed through to us and that becomes a FSG call, this information is then relayed to control staff who relays it to the OIC and we do our best to get that person out.

That night I didn't really receive any injuries although I did have some molten metal on my tunic. When I left the tower I was given oxygen from breathing in the smoke and had a bad chest and throat for a few days, I did speak to NHS online about it and they advised me there was nothing to worry about. I didn't notice any other members of the brigade being injured that night.

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