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Statement of: HARRIS, DUANE

Form MG11(T)

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WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: HARRIS, DUANE

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 6 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 HARRIS

Date: 13/12/2017

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

I make this statement with regard to my involvement in the Grenfell Tower Fire on the 14th of June 2017. Also within this statement I will be mentioning my colleagues who I was with on the 14th of June 2017. They were GM Pat GOLDBOURNE, WM Paul MERRYCK, CM Tom SHARP, FF (driver) Adam WILSON & FF James GEAPIN.

I joined the LFB in May of 2011 . To the present day I have been posted to Peckham Fire Station on the Red watch. I have received all the normal training to be a qualified fire fighter. I have received regular ongoing training as a fire fighter. This would include lectures, drills, and practical exercises, at various locations but the majority of the time it would be at fire stations. I am considered a competent fire fighter. I have plenty of previous experience of attending fires at high rise buildings as Peckham has lots of various sized buildings. I have been to a few high rise fires previously but nothing to the degree of Grenfell Tower. I was not aware of Grenfell Tower before the incident; I have never been there before. No matter what type of training you have had previously had it could not put you in the readiness for Grenfell. We only have 1 appliance at Peckham which is a pump ladder. The majority of the time there are 5 staff that ride the appliance but it can take up to 6 fire fighters. We have a 135 ladder on the vehicle which distinguishes it from a normal fire engine. This would be used for incidents where we have to reach a certain height. We have a small team which is like a close knit family. We normally work with the same crew. The BA sets on the appliance are a bit like a rucksack with a cylinder of air in it. The air lasts a certain amount of time and then has to be recharged. We have just got normal BA sets. We don't have the EDBA apparatus. Everyone on the pump ladder would be equipped with a BA set. The BA sets are stored

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on the appliance. At the start of the shift we test it to make sure it is all in working order. And we know it is there if it is needed. No one at our fire station would have an EDBA set.

When we received the call, the mobilizing bell went off quite a few times. We were wondering why it was going off so many times. We went downstairs to the printer and it was like a mile long worth of paper being printed off. We were being called onto a 40 pump shout. I just couldn't believe it was a 40 pump shout. Since I have been a fire fighter I have never seen a 40 pump shout. I was thinking this must be something big. So we jumped in the motor. FF Adam WILSON was driving that night with WM Paul MERRYCK in the front of the vehicle and myself, CM Tom SHARP and FF James GEAPIN were in the rear of the vehicle. We were not familiar with the ground. So we made our way to the destination. As we got closer I can't remember what flyover it was but we could see Grenfell Tower in the distance and we were quite shocked with what we could actually see. Basically from where we were at we could see that it looked like the whole top of the building was on fire. As we got closer we could see it was actually different levels that was on fire but from the distance it looked like the whole building was on fire. So when we got closer it was a bit manic for us to actually get somewhere to park. We had to go round and round to actually get somewhere close to park our appliance. As we jumped off the motor people were handing us their phones and saying speak to this relative and speak to that relative. They were calling for help. We could see people with flash lights like sending SOS signals well not even flash lights it was their mobile phones. We could see them flashing away. We had quite a few people running up to us saying help we have a relative or friend trapped in there. At the same time we were trying to grab our equipment. Our RVP was quite a bit of distance from where we were parked. Well it felt like it was a good distance anyway. We grabbed our sets and went to the RVP. We were told to back to our machine and grab our breaking in gear and our first aid pack and various other bits. So we had to walk back to our machine grabbed the equipment then returned to the RVP where we were told to sit down and wait for our role. They were sending in crews bit by bit, but whilst we were there I am sure they said there was a fire fighter emergency where they couldn't locate one of the fire fighters. This turned out to be a false alarm as they had not activated their BA tally. All of that time they couldn't work out where this person was. But it got sorted out in the end.

They were asking for a lot of EDBA crews so we were sitting down waiting to be deployed. I am sure we were waiting by the gym. So we were basically sitting outside there. This was directly across from the tower. I don't know how long we were waiting there but it felt like forever. I couldn't actually put a time on it but I was with my crew. There were other crews there as well. I was with my CM SHARP and we

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were requested to go over to perform a specific task at the Tower itself. So we both went over. We were told we had to wait for a police escort because they had the shields to. So we waited by a little walk way. Because of the falling debris we had to have the police escort to cover our heads with their shields. I remember some police coming over and leaving us their shields as they had to go and do some other task. So myself and Tom SHARP did a few shuttle kind of runs with the shields over our heads getting other fire fighters in. We had to move briskly but there was a lot of debris on the ground so we had to watch our step.

We then sat down in a BA waiting point near a playground. The playground was just in front of the tower so we were sitting up against a wall. Then we were given a brief to go into the tower to carry out firefighting and rescuing. So once again we had to go over and get the shields to get into the tower itself. We were given a brief by GM Pat GOLDBOURNE to go up to a floor but I can't remember which floor it was to tell the truth. It was me and Tom SHARP and two other fire fighters I think from Brixton. Our brief was to knock back the fire and rescue if we could. So we were at the Bridgehead. Which was unusual as the Bridgehead was right on the ground floor. It normally would be two floors below the fire. I think we walked up to about the 5th floor. So we made our way upstairs and relieve the crew who were already up there. So we had to take their hose, so basically it was a straight swap they would come down as we had come up. So that was it fighting back the fire in different compartments. I am sure it was the 5th floor. Yes it was the 5th floor. The only equipment we had when we went up was just our BA sets. We followed a hose that went into one of the flats. We entered that flat and there was another crew of 4 in there as well. So we told them we were there to relieve them.

For some reason the radio communications were quite poor. We just took our time and went through all of the flats. I remember one particular flat had loads of fire in it. So we were knocking back the fire and searching the bedrooms as well making sure there was no one in there. The visibility was extremely low. So we have to feel with our hands. We have standard sweeping techniques that we use. We weren't sure if there was anyone up there so that is why we were using the sweeping technique. As we knocked back the fire we could see the whole of the window frames were missing. By now it was beginning to get light. Once we put the fire out in one compartment the visibility was a lot better. Because there were no windows there it was venting out anyway. We worked together as a group. There were two hoses up there but we could only use one of them. One of them was busted because there was no pressure coming out at all. But I took the other hose from the crew coming out and was using that one as there was a lot more pressure on it. Yes there were two hoses but one of them the water was just trickling out of.

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One of the rooms was properly on fire. So we knocked that one back and some of the other rooms had small pockets of fires. We could see charred remains of beds and furniture. Some of the walls had been crumbling down. We could see the wooden frames but the plaster board had burnt through. A lot of the hallways were alright. We didn't find any casualties. I am assuming everyone on the 5th floor self-evacuated. We checked every flat on the floor. We checked what air supply we had left and then we had a cheeky little look upstairs. So then we made our way back down and told them what we had done. We stayed downstairs in the lobby for a little while. Then we went back to the BA area and put a new cylinder on our set. Then we waited for another brief to see if we could go back in. We were trying to back in but they said no you cannot go back in. So once again we had to sit down and just wait. We were on the 5th floor for about 20 minutes or so.

When we went downstairs to the lobby it was like a mini swimming pool with loads of water gushing in. A lot of the water was travelling down from above. At the time there was only one way in and one way out of the lobby area. I think they smashed one of the windows in the lobby area. I am sure a big pane of glass got smashed. But initially there was only one way in and one way out. There was a little bit of smoke in there for a little while but it wasn't thick smoke. I collected my tally from the control board. They told us to go out and get some water. So we went out as a crew of 3 I think Tom was with us with a shield above our heads. We tried to get another wear but at this time they still had crews that hadn't worn yet. They said no just sit down for a little while and get your composure. The adrenalin was kicking in and I wanted to get back in there and go higher. I felt that I had quite a bit of air left and I was sure I could have got up much higher the first time. So the second time I wanted to see if I could get higher but I didn't get round to that at that point. I think we got to the tower just a bit before 2 am. By the time we parked up it would have been between 01.30 hrs and 02.00 hrs. I am not 100% sure to tell the truth. I think there were 3 waiting points when we arrived.

When we were outside it was just me and Tom. When I and Tom were given the specific task Adam WILSON and James GEAPIN were still at the initial holding point by the sports gym. There were lots of other fire fighters waiting with us. By then we could still see signs of life from some of the floors above. That spurred us on even more to try and get back up there. We were passing on messages to say that we could see movement in some of the flats. Our WM Paul MERRYCK was co-ordinating a lot of the BA team so We were passing on the message to him. I know it was higher than the 5th floor but I can't remember what floors it was for definite. Over a period of time certain floors were not on fire but after a short period of time they would catch on fire. This was very noticeable when we were at the first initial

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BA point by the gym. We could see there were floors that weren't touched by fire then some time later they would be engulfed in fire. That was when you could see people at the windows there as well and you could hear them screaming for help. When we were sitting waiting you could see bits of cladding coming down on fire, large bits of metal to. Also some window frames were falling out as well. I could see appliances putting water on it but it wasn't really very helpful as the fire was well above where they could reach. The fire was at the top. The majority of the tower I would say was on fire. They were still rescuing casualties, we were just like in a chain helping them out to a casualty handling area. This is where the LAS and a few police officers were. So they would come out of the lobby and have to be escorted out with the shields. The main casualty that stood out in my head was an elderly Chinese man. The reason this stands out in my memory is because it was late in the morning. I was quite surprised to see him getting carried out. Tom went back into the lobby and he was doing I think BA control duties. They had asked for a CM to help out in the lobby. We were asked to go and cover up some deceased people. We were also asked to do various other tasks. We were just doing what we could do to help really. One gentleman that we had to cover up was in a garage area. We just had to put a sheet over him. I didn't see James GEAPIN and Adam probably until about the time when we were about to leave. Tom was still I am sure was doing the BA control. Paul was mainly doing quite a bit on the outside.

Paul, Tom and myself met up by the second BA point where the park was. We met Adam and James by the gym. We congregated there and were finding out when we could be dismissed as we were back on duty that same night. But then we were told that we had to go to Paddington to do the statement. We left on the same appliance and made our way to Paddington. So we back on duty that same night at 20.00 hrs. I think we got back to our station around 16.30 hrs. Back to Peckham. So went home and then came back to work that night. Back at 20.00 hrs to do the night shift. I didn't go back to Grenfell. I haven't been to the doctors or hospital and have no injuries.

Whoever is on duty in the watch room, their main job is to go to the printer when a shout comes. You press an acknowledge button on the screen, rip off the message and hand it to the driver. Yes it was me that night. Normally it prints out what the incident is where it is and how many appliances are on it. And on the tannoy system it will broadcast mobilise mobilise E371 . That tannoy system was going off for ages; normally it goes just two or three times. Our one was going on for ages and I remember thinking it doesn't normally go like that. It was a forty pump fire so it had all the call signs of the machines attending. I have been on 20 pump fires and 10, 15, 20 pump fires before. But never a 40 pump fire. So we got the call at about 00.55 hrs and I am assuming it would have taken us half an hour maximum to get

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there. It could have been less it could have been more. We were getting more information over the radio but we couldn't hear it properly as we were on the back of the machine. The Watch Manager would have been getting the information. We would not get that information on our personal radios. We have a radio at the front of the vehicle where the driver or the officer in charge can speak to control to find out what is going on. We have a screen called an MDT at the front. This has the same information that comes out on a call slip. But where we were sitting in the back of the vehicle we could not physically see it.

I remember we were travelling over a flyover and Grenfell was on our left. We could see that it was going well. From a distance it looked like the whole building was on fire. We could only see probably two or three sides of the building.

I am not aware of having any dealings with flat I 6 where the fire originated. A section 7 (2) D is basically getting yourself familiar with a building. Knowing various different points if the building has fire lifts. If it has got sprinklers or if it has got dry risers or wet risers. How many people are actually in that building. Basically it is making oneself familiar with the premises. These visits would be on your station ground. I have made these visits on my ground. High rises, some business premises. I have never done one for Grenfell Tower as it is not on our ground. I am assuming there would have been one done for Grenfell Tower as it is a high rise building. I cannot confirm that. I have never been posted to a fire safety department. When we arrived the fire was beyond just the one flat. The flames were going up and down the building. The fire was spreading quite rapidly. I think we approached the incident from either Mary Close or Sirdar Road. I remember police had already taped off the area. We could get as close to the tower as possible. I just remembered I think Adam had repositioned our vehicle by the time we left. I am sure it was parked in a different place when we came back to it actually. I couldn't tell you the name of the road that it was parked in. But it was in a different spot from where we initially parked. It was not further away it could have been a bit nearer. I was aware that the initial call came out as a 40 pump fire with multiple calls coming from members of the public. We could see that the fire had moved to the exterior of the tower. We were not told. I am not sure who we spoke to when we arrived we were just told to grab all the equipment off the machine. We never planned on what to do when we went up to the 5th floor we just went up there.

I cannot remember hearing any alarms being activated. It was easy enough to get up and down the stairwell. It was wide enough for two people to move around. I could smell the burning and could not hear a lot as we were wearing our BA sets. I opened doors to various flats. There were no windows to open as they had all burnt out. All the flat doors were open when we got up there. I cannot remember

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seeing a fire lift. I am also not sure if they used the dry riser. I haven't got a clue if and how the smoke management system was working. I do remember whilst we were outside saying to WM Paul MERRYICK, "has the gas being turned off?" We could see through some of the window gaps shoots of flames. He said he was sure the gas had been turned off. It was like a Bunsen burner kind of thing. That was probably half way up the building. It was going on for a good little while. I don't know or have any knowledge of the gas being cut off. Someone had a TIC (thermal imaging camera). I do remember swapping around from the hose to the TIC. I never had a body worn camera.

Whilst I was there I spoke to various people but I don't know if they were residents of the flats or just concerned friends/relatives. They were just handing over their phones asking us to speak to this relative. I spoke to a few people just telling them we were there to help them and get them out as soon as possible. Some people were getting upset when they saw us walking away from the tower. It is understandable so we just had to explain to them that we were getting equipment. We get trained on high rise building fires regularly. We do regular drills in the yard. The training we have had previously doesn't compare to Grenfell. I have had previously been to high rise kitchen fires etc. I am totally aware of what I need to do as I am a competent fire fighter. I was not aware of any pre-prepared firefighting plans for Grenfell Tower. We have normal procedures that we tell people what to do when compartmentation fails. The stay put policy is advice on what to do, like get yourself in a room away from the smoke. Stay as low as possible. Put wet towels, bed sheets underneath your door to stop the smoke from getting in. Wait for us to come and rescue you. I don't know who made any decisions around the stay put policy on the night. I haven't got a clue where those decisions would be logged. I don't know who or where the incident commander was on the night. I couldn't tell you who made the decisions on the night. All these things are above my pay scale.

The command units are there to give orders and we are just like foot soldiers following the commands. As far as I am aware there was only one way in and out. I am not sure whether or not the dry riser was charged or not. The only real difficulty getting into the tower was having to use the shields because of the falling debris from above. I was not aware of any risks of the cladding. Some of the cladding was coming down on fire. The rising main is charged with water and we have different points that we can plug into it. So each floor we can plug into it. I believe there was either a TL (turntable ladder) or ALP which is an appliance tackling the fire from the outside. But it was only going half way up the building it wasn't reaching the whole way up. I think if fire fighters were issued better communications equipment that would have helped. Also if everyone were to be EDBA trained. That would give fire fighters more wears

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and hopefully the opportunity to rescue more people. I had loads of near misses from falling debris. Going from one point to another point with the debris on the floor. It is what it is, all part of it really. Hearing people screaming for help. Seeing people jumping and attempting to jump from above. Before I had initially gone in by the gym I saw people jumping, opening up their windows. People attempting to climb out. Seeing rooms with the lights on then lights off then engulfed in flames. I definitely saw one person jump. When we arrived I saw the make shift morgue. Paramedics were covering up deceased. I just wanted to get in there and help people. I exhibit my original notes as DAH/1 which I handed over to DC Ferdinand ROZARIO.

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