

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: KENNEDY-MACFOY, EDRIC

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:

Date: 06/07/2017

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

I have been with the FIRE SERVICE for 12½ years. I am currently detached to the Incident Command Policy Team at Union Street where I have been for the last week. Prior to that I was at BATTERSEA BLUE WATCH where I was CREW MANAGER. I had been on BATTERSEA GREEN WATCH prior to that.

I have been on standby in NORTH KENSINGTON before now but have never dealt with a fire at GRENFELL TOWER before.

On the 13th June I was on the first of two day duties starting at 9.30am and finishing at 8.00pm. I went off duty on the 13th and the first I knew of the fire was the following morning when I woke up and saw the news on my phone.

I got into work and was made aware by control that I would need to be ready at 9.30am on the dot along with four other EDBA (extended distance breathing apparatus) qualified firefighters. We were to travel to Chelsea and collect another five EDBA wearers from there and travel to GRENFELL TOWERS. I recall three of the four firefighters I took with me. They were:- CRAIG RIDDELL, STUART MCDONALD and DANIEL TOWLE. The fourth crew member was TOM O'CONNOR.

We travelled in our FIRE RESCUE UNIT MPC16 and after collecting the firefighters from Chelsea went on blue lights to GRENFELL. We had been directed to go to LADBROKE GROVE junction with ELGIN CRESCENT which is where we parked up. Upon arrival there we got into our kit and along with other crews that had also arrived made our way to GREFELL. We arrived there at about 10.15/10.30 and made our way to a group of firefighters we could see sitting on the grass. There were sets (breathing apparatus

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sets) all around and so we began to test the sets belonging to BATTERSEA RED who were on the grass.

This means we did a full set of tests on the BA to ensure they were fully working before use, checking their functionality and so on.

This was the first time I had seen the tower block myself. It was about 9 hours in but the building was very much alight still. It looked to have been destroyed by the fire. A significant amount of debris continued to fall from the building.

Initially we were met by SM SIMON ELLIS. However once I had finished my BA test a lad I know from WEMBLEY asked me to join G38 HESTON's team as they had been told to prepare to go in but they only had a team of five and needed a sixth person. So I went with them to SECTOR 2 BA Holding Area. This area was positioned to the side of GRENFELL so we had to walk from the grassed area, past the front of GRENFELL and were then seated to the side of a brick built building which was near the side of the tower. At this point it was about 11am. We were then held in that area for about 2-3 hours. In that time WM RONAN was extracted and set to perform another role which then left us as a team of five. We were then relocated inside the building under the protection of the Police shielding us from falling debris to another BA holding area on the ground floor inside the building.

From the lobby we were directed up to the 4th floor where the bridgehead was located. We went up the stairs and at that point although we had our BA we did not have to mask up, the air was breathable. We then waited in Flat 3 for a briefing. This flat had smoke and water damage but had no internal fire damage.

At 2.30pm firefighter MORRIS and BARRETT were tasked as a crew of two and committed. This means they were briefed and sent off to do whatever they had been tasked within at the incident. This then left us as a crew of three.

About five minutes later the bridgehead was moved to the 7th floor where we again waited in Flat 3 for a briefing. When I say Flat 3 this was not the door number of the flat purely the 3rd flat in the lobby to the left hand side as you entered the floor.

At approximately 3pm a group manager detailed us to proceed to the 15th floor to assess the situation. We were told to look into but not enter any of the flat, inform entry control of the location of any casualties and fire conditions found. We were to repeat this process moving up the building as far as we could go where it was safe to do so.

As we made our way up we met an SDBA crew who told us the 15th floor had already been checked and recorded so we went up to the 16th floor.

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We were wearing our BA at this time and had been from the moment we were committed from the bridgehead.

As we ascended the stairs it was hot and the visibility was poor. I had with me a dragon light – which is a large torch. Also with me were TEMPORARY CREW MANAGER HARRIS and FIREFIGHTER WHITE.

We had a quick look around the control core of the 16th floor and no casualties were found. There were multiple soot's of fire in most of the flats, some of which I believed were as a result of the gas supplies into the flats – the flame was blue and this led me to believe this was the cause of at least some of the soot's of fire. We tried to inform control but we had lost communications. As a crew we took gauge readings and agreed to proceed up the levels as per our brief. Because of the issue with comms we made notes using chirograph pencil on the wall of the 16th floor as to our findings but as we ascended the floors I made notes on my phone as the chirograph was difficult to read.

On the 17th floor we found the body of an adult female in the lift lobby. There were multiple small soot's of fire in all flats.

On the 18th floor there was the body of one adult male in the stairwell. Again there were multiple small soot's of fire in all flats.

On the 19th floor there were the bodies of an adult female and a small baby in the stairwell. There were multiple soot's of fire in all flats.

There were still no comms available but at this point the temperature began to increase. We took a gauge reading and a welfare check and agreed to proceed up the floors.

Between the 19th and 20th floors there was the body of an adult male.

On the 20th floor there were flames coming from an electrical riser next to the lift and multiple soot's of fire in all the flat. On the 21st and 22nd floors there were again multiple soot's of fire. The internal walls of all the flats had collapsed and it was extremely hot.

By the 23rd floor the heat and conditions were unbearable so we agreed to go back. However on that floor we did see the upper half of a child's/baby's body in the lift lobby, the shut metal access to the roof was found and there were large soot's of fire.

As we descended the stairs we met an EDBA crew from WEMBLEY on the 17th floor and informed them that we had checked the upper levels as far as we could and there was no point in them continuing on due to intense heat and deteriorating conditions on the 20th, 21, 22 and 23rd floors we made no notes about what was found we each committed a floor to memory. We were able to state the sex of the bodies seen

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because although burnt – 4 superficial and 2 full thickness – it was still possible to state whether they were male or female.

We returned to entry control on the bridgehead on the 7th floor and were lead to a debrief with two senior officers. They asked in our opinion if there was any point in continuing to commit crews to the upper levels. We replied no. In our opinion the risk seemed to outweigh the benefit and we didn't think it was necessary to send other crews to witness the horrific scenes of it wasn't necessary. We were then ordered not to wear our BA again as we were all feeling the effects of the conditions and we then made our way back out of the building.

We were again escorted out of the building by the Police using their shields to protect us from any falling debris.

At this point I had left my set in the lobby inside the building but had misplaced my radio so I went back to the holding area to see if it was there and then joined my colleagues on the grass verge at the side of the tower where we had been when we arrived.

We waited there as my crew BATTERSEA were actually in the lobby awaiting deployment and I was not going to leave without them, plus I didn't know if I was going to be given another role. However I think maybe 20 minutes later a tactical withdrawal was given and all firefighters were removed from the building.

By this time I think it was 4.00pm or just after. We then waited until about 6pm at which time we were relieved from the incident.

Compared to when we arrived the fire looked to be more or less under control.

Although released at 6pm we were not able to get away from LADBROKE GROVE until about 8pm as another crew had taken our van and we had no means of getting back. In addition we had to recover our own van as it contained our keys, phones etc. While we were waiting a lot of the members of the public were thanking us, giving us kisses, food and drink. There was one lady who was quite agitated and was asking us why we didn't have nets to catch people. I think she had seen people fall from the block to the ground and was quite upset. I tried to talk to her and explained we didn't carry that equipment and that we wished we could use that sort of thing to help people. She calmed down after we spoke and apologised for shouting.

I have provided a sketch to indicate the layout at the scene in terms of the holding area and so forth and also the layout of the flats indicating what I meant by Flat 3. I exhibit this as EKM/1.

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