

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: HAINES, EDWARD

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 13 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: E HAINES

Date: 07/02/2018

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

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This is my statement regarding the GRENFELL TOWER fire and my role at this incident. While giving this statement I referred to a copy of notes I made on the 4th July 2017 at the request of Chris ROSE from the Fire Investigation Team. I had been sent the questionnaire from which the notes were created through the Brigades Intranet System. I exhibit a copy of these notes as ERH/1.

I am a Firefighter that has worked for the London Fire Brigade since June 2007 and carried out my initial Fire Brigade training until November 2007. I was signed off my development book in February 2009 after fifteen months at a fire station and twenty months' full service in the London Fire Brigade. I am considered competent having worked in this position for ten and a half years. The other people I know who I shall be referring to in this statement are Watch Manager Steve VYDALINGUM, Firefighter SYRED, Firefighter BOYCE, Crew Manager CHESSUN, Crew Manager DIXEY, Firefighter CROWE, Firefighter KELLIE, Firefighter BEALE and Firefighter SKINNER who all also work from BROMLEY Fire Station. I also refer to Crew Manager Bryan DENNY who is stationed at ADDINGTON which is a neighbouring station to us. I know him from having undertaken standby duties there over the years.

The incident occurred in SOUTH KESINGTON which is not known to me. We were given a rendezvous point (RVP) about half a mile away from the actual incident. This was because they didn't want every appliance from all over LONDON descending right on top of the incident. Our RVP was several streets away. That would have been on the call slip which I'm sure the Brigade has access to. It was on the same street as a Command Unit which was about 100 feet closer to the Tower from where I was able to park.

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I've have marked on an A3 colour map the approximate vicinity I believe the BROMLY appliances were parked with the call signs 'E391' and 'E392'. I exhibit this map as ERH/2. The whole street was lined with fire appliances. It was about 500 or 600 meters out from the Tower. The road I parked in was a residential street with parked cars. There was an alleyway from here towards the Tower and a Leisure Centre. There was a green were everyone was mustering between the Leisure centre and the front right hand side of the Tower as I was looking at it. Further down past the East side of the Tower was where an aerial appliance had been positioned spraying the Tower with water. There was a second mustering point for fire fighters at the base of the North side of the Tower for those to be committed into the Tower. There was a kids play park adjacent to the building.

On Wednesday 13th July 2017 I started my shift at 8pm at BROMLEY Fire station. The call sign for the station is E39 and I was assigned to ride E391 which is the call sign for BROMLEYS' 'Pump Ladder'. I was with Watch Manager Steve VYDALINGUM who was the officer in charge of the 'Pump Ladder'. I was the driver of this fire-appliance. Also on duty that night was Firefighter SYRED, Firefighter BOYCE, Crew Manager CHESSUN, Crew Manager DIXEY, Firefighter CROWE, Firefighter KELLIE, Firefighter BEALE and Firefighter SKINNER. Both of our machines (Fire engines), the 'Pump Ladder' and 'The Pump' were mobilised so everyone that would have been on sift that night would have attended GRENFELL TOWER. I can't recall if we had been deployed to anything prior to GRENFELL. I don't think so but I can't recall for sure. We have a watch room attendant who sleeps down in the watch room overnight. He's the first person who hits the acknowledge button and tears of call slips for different jobs. I can't remember who that was on the night. We got called on and mobilised to GRENELL TOWER at approximately 4:30 in the morning on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017. At the time I was resting. I believe that everyone was resting because of the time of day. I had no prior knowledge of the fire at GRENFELL TOWER. Because of the proximity between BROMLEY and KENSINGTON we were nowhere near. We actually got called on when it was made up to forty pumps.

I had no previous Knowledge of GRENFELL TOWER and have therefore never carried out a 72D familiarisation visit at the Tower. I have carried them out on other premises. On any given fire ground there are certain premises that require a little bit of extra knowledge. It's essentially a pre planning visit in case you are ever call there for an emergency. A 72D familiarisation visit would cover Leisure Centres, Government building, larger buildings with internal firefighting infrastructure, Supermarket and anything other than domestic housing really. However, potentially even domestic housing if there are alterations in

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it to cover anything that might impinge us if we were called there in an emergency. We do them frequently. All premises that require a familiarisation visit are logged centrally. We have a mobile data terminal on the machines linked to that information so that we have access to that information while mobile. I have been to fires in high rise towers before but noting even approaching the level of GRENFELL TOWER. I remember a small flat fire about three years ago and multiple A.F.A.'s (Automated Fire Alarms) whereby you go through the same protocols. As an appliance driver you'll site the appliance close to a visor inlet in preparation to set into it. You take the equipment you need up to the bridgehead and set that up but inevitably we are stood down when it becomes obvious that there is nothing to do as it's a false alarm or has been taken care off. These are like dummy runs though really. Being that the Tower is in an area of LONDON which is unfamiliar to me, and I had never been there before. I was not aware of any pre prepared firefighting plans for the Tower.

In the Brigade we do generic training on the drill towers at fire stations. This includes setting into risers, pitching ladders and doing drills amongst ourselves. All fire stations in LONDON to my knowledge have a drill tower including BROMLEY. We have a lot of lectures as well. I believe we are committed to do six hours of training per tour across a wide array of subjects. Our tours being two ten and a half hour day shifts and two thirteen and half hour night shifts. We have a central database that gets populated and identifies training needs which are addressed. They tend to be more practical based on days and lectures at night because it's not practical to drill at night. Externally we do compartmental firefighting. This is essentially what high rises are. Each apartment in a high rise is its own separate compartment. The fabric of the building and the way they are designed should hold a fire within that apartment. We do a lot of training on signs and symptoms of fire, compartment firefighting and what can arise from them such as 'flashovers and backdrafts'. It is extensive training. We have off site facilities for carrying out wider fire training including compartment firefighting, fire blocking and door approach at BECKTON.

With regard to the risks posed by cladding panels we had touched on it. This included different types of cladding and sandwich boards and the risks that they can compromise the integrity of a building which is now a case in point with GRENFELL TOWER. The original structure of the building was sound and was compromised by the cladding that had been added during the retro fit. We had seen it at LARKENAL HOUSE eight years ago as well. Utilities that get retro fitted into buildings can undermine the fire blocking. People start drilling holes to lay pipes and cable which if they do not sufficiently fire block undermined the firefighting integrity of a building. We are aware of these things and have lectures on

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them. The cladding at GRENFELL TOWER has shone a massive spotlight on the subject now what with hindsight.

The 'stay put policy' is a policy for when a fire breaks out in a high rise building. What it is based on is that the Brigade don't want an entire block of people panicking and trying to get out when the building itself is designed to compartmentalise that fire. We advise people to shut the door to the fire and remain where they are because fire coding such as it is, is good enough to deal with that. Our response times are good enough to get there and put that fire out before it spreads. We would have advised people on that day to stay in their flats. I don't know who made the decisions on the night with regard to this policy but I believe it would have been control giving fire survival guidance. I don't know who made the decision to withdraw the policy on the night but expect the decisions would have been recorded on incident or decision logs. I'm not aware of when the commander first became aware that the fire had started to spread externally. It had spread so quickly it was immediately obvious. Neither do I know how the operational tactics were approached and determined. I imagine they followed policy as much as they could but it was a one off event which became its own animal.

I came down from the Firefighter accommodation on the first floor down to the ground floor to the watch room and received the call slip print off. The first inkling of the severity was that the call slip was two feet long. 'Call slips' show a list of all appliances mobilised to an incident and it was the longest 'call slip' I have ever seen. I also knew it was over in WEST LONDON so I knew we were going to something but we did not know the extent of it until we approached the scene. I couldn't even look at our ground map because it was way off it as it wasn't on our own station ground. We have a Brigade 'A to Z', so I made my way to the machine, briefly looked where GRENFELL TOWER was and headed out.

I was driving and sat next to me was Watch Manager VYDALINGUM. Firefighter CROWE and Firefighter SYRED were in the back. I believe they were the crew of the 'pump ladder'. They were certainly there at the scene. We had a working 'Mobile Data Terminal' in the vehicle but we can't map routes on this. It has a generic map that moves along with the vehicle working off GPS. This is an aid only; we don't rely on it. We had a general idea of the direction we were heading in. I believe we used the Brigade A to Z to assist us. It was then mapped in as we got closer. We weren't mobilised on blue lights which would only be for an emergency response. We proceeded to GRENFELL TOWER at normal road speed adhering to all regular road traffic signals etc. We have emergency and non-emergency calls and we also have 'reliefs'. We were called in as a 'forty pump relief'. This means there would have been forty

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appliances at GRENFELL TOWER already. We had been requested to essentially replace the initial crews that had been there for several hours already. As it turned out I believe they stayed on. On route there was radio traffic with numerous messages coming across. I can't recall the exact route we took to get there, I was under instruction and guided in. We probably took the SOUTH CIRCULAR and then crossed over one of the bridges. I'm sure it would have been the most expedient route. We had no difficulties on route beyond the expecting normal morning traffic build up while navigating across half of LONDON. As we got close to the Tower I don't recall our route in. Unfortunately, I do not know that part of LONDON at all. As we got close we made our way in convoy as there were dozens of appliances making their way in. There was a little bit of jockeying for position but I found a spot and I parked up ensuring the appliance was not blocking the road. I don't know if there was just the one RVP due to the extent of the incident. We arrived at the RVP at approximately 5:30 in the morning. We went on foot back towards the Command Unit. We were met by officers from the Brigade Command unit and booked in.

A mobile Command Unit is made up of a minimum of two Watch Managers and their role is to go to incident requiring eight pumps or more. Their role is to take over messaging and resource management from the appliance drivers. This frees up resources for fire fighters to undertake other jobs. They also request extra resources, send informative messages and collate information. They have a central log of everyone that attends that incident. This will include who they are, who's in charge, who are the sector commanders, who are the safety officers etc.

I saw the Tower from close to where the Command Unit was positioned. There was a period of time, no more than five to ten minutes where we were waiting. We were stood by a corner and had line of sight due to the height of GRENFELL TOWER. On my first view, it was a fully developed fire and it was still going. It was relatively light because it was summer time with a mornings light. The Tower wasn't glowing as such but I could see fully developed fire on multiple floors. It was frightening. It was obvious it was being fed and getting plenty of oxygen. I believe the fire started on the forth floor. Once it had breached that window it looked like it had gone up one side of the building using the cladding as a ladder. I couldn't see all of the Tower because of the distance and other buildings. I could see the top third, maybe half of the Tower and everything I could see was more or less on fire. I could also see smoke which I believe as blowing away from us. I was viewing it from the East side so I think it as blowing

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West. I stood gaping, taking it all in. It was brand new to us. Although it had been going for several hours already we had only been mobilised an hour before hand and this was our first glimpse of it.

My thoughts were for the people involved. I knew immediately there would be many many fatalities. This was because of the time of the call. Most people would have been at home asleep. I was thinking about what we could do. It was the biggest fire any of us had seen in our careers. It was what we train for but I thought 'is it too big? How good can we be? What is expected of us? What are we going to do with this?'. I wanted to get it there, do my bit and tackle it floor by floor, get stuck in. Also, at that point I wasn't actually completely sure that they were committing fire fighters. This was because the fire was still burning so strongly in a high rise building. The Brigade will always weigh up risk verses reward. If there are saveable lives, we will commit. However, if you get to a point where there's a fully developed fire that has flashed over we won't commit fire fighters. I had questions as to if I would actually be committed inside the building to do our jobs or whether we would stand outside and squirt it from there. This would be called 'surround and drown' which is an unofficial slang term commonly used by Firefighters. There was also shock so there was a lot going on inside my head.

Soon after, within 15 minutes the call went out for more Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) wearers. I first worked as a Firefighter at EDMONTON Fire station for five and a half years which is FRU station (fire rescue unit). It does not carry water and its priority is to respond to 'Road Traffic Accidents', water rescue, train derailments and other emergencies. They carry specialist equipment to deal with those sorts of incidents over and above what an ordinary pump ladder would carry. Part of the provision of F.I.U. is that all crews are EDBA trained. So I picked up that qualification at EDMONTON Fire station before I transferred to BROMLEY which is not a F.I.U. station. I was the only one at BROMLEY who was EDBA qualified. I believe there was a call that went out on the radio but also an officer from the Command Unit came along. He made his way down the street shouting out at which point I said "YEAH, I'M EDBA". I was separated from my crew at that point as I was the only one with EDBA training. He asked me to follow him. We walked back to the command unit together. He asked me who I was and where I was from. A note was made that I was a BROMLEY Firefighter. I was pooled with crew manager DENNY who is also EDBA, FIU qualified. They needed firefighters with 'longer wears' to ingress into the building further. 'Longer wears' simply means able to stay rigged up to air from our cylinders for longer. Beyond certain floors by the time you had climbed up it would almost be time to

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start coming down for standard wearers. We walked through an alley way and past the leisure centre to get closer to the Tower.

There was a green where everyone was mustering. At any one time there was probably one hundred firefighters rigged and ready to go. This area was a mixture of firefighters. Not everyone had been given a BA (breathing apparatus) set. They were waiting to be tasked for any job going. From this position I could see pretty much the entirety of the tower except for the ground floor. I was probably fifty or sixty meters away from the Tower at that point. Circumstances had not really changed. The fire was still going well and was on multiple levels from the maybe the sixth floor up. Multiple seats of fire across the entirety of the Tower it seemed. My radio was on and I was receiving communications clearly. There was constant radio traffic.

There was lots of debris which appeared to be the external fabric of the building coming apart. There was cladding, foam insulation, glass falling away as it was burning through. The pieces ranged from the size of my hand up to the size of a large desk, maybe two meters by two meters. There was a great big piece of cladding, I assume it was foam insulation because it did not fall with terminal velocity. It kind of drifted down smouldering. It was constant. Outside the ground floor was absolutely littered with this debris. One of the first things the Brigade do at any building fire is to isolate the gas and electric. I assumed it had been done. It did cross my mind. It was an assumption that it had been isolated based on the facts that as the fire was fully developed and had been going for hours by this point. Also water supplies crossed my mind. We were drawing a massive amount of water so another concern was if we had sufficient water to fight it.

Other EDBA trained firefighters and I were kettled into a holding area and given an Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus sets. There were Watch Managers and Crew Managers all around. On taking the breathing apparatus I carried out an 'A' test on it which was fine so I was ready to be committed. Any time we take over a breathing apparatus set, ordinarily at a change of watch you do an 'A' test which is essentially checking the quality, safety and capability of that breathing apparatus set. It's a brand new BA set to me. I don't know the operational history of it so every firefighter will check a BA set for its operational readiness. You check that it turns on and off, that there are no leaks, that it has sufficient air for you to be committed into a fire. You put the face mask on and turn the BA cylinder on. There is a first breath button, which is fitted with a non-return valve, which holds the air in the hose. You strap up the face mask so you are essentially wearing a sealed mask over your face. You then breath in and then turn

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the cylinder off and complete a 'breath down'. This is where you suck the mask down onto your face to check the rubber seal. Although they are positive pressure you do not want to be exposed to an irrespirable atmosphere like smoke and fire gases. This is all to make sure there are no leaks or faults or anything that could compromise your safety if and when you are committed into a fire.

We were told to wait in the green area in front of the Leisure Centre until we were needed. A Watch Manager then started pooling BA resources. I don't know his name. There were officers there from all over London. We were told to make our way to a secondary pooling area which was made up of BA wearers only. This second pooling area was at the base of the North side of the Tower and consisted of EDBA and SDBA (Standard Duration Breathing apparatus) firefighters. I waited in this area for approximately half an hour.

It must have been about seven am but I can't be sure as I wasn't wearing a watch but It was light outside. There was debris falling from the building. It wasn't coming down that heavily but you would hear constant bangs as cladding and parts of the fabric of the building hit the ground. It was sporadic, every few seconds you would hear something hitting the ground. I didn't really look up. We were in transit mode as soon as we were mobilised. They were taking us in two's. You would have one fire fighter with a police officer holding a shield above us. I remember I grabbed the officers belt, kept my head down and we didn't run but moved quickly into the building. You didn't want to get stuck out there. That was the only point we were really vulnerable to what was coming down. Luckily most of it was falling several feet away from the building due to the heat and pressure. So we tucked right into the building where it was relatively safe but you still didn't want to hang about there. This did make initial access slow waiting for police escorts and being taken in two by two. There was debris on the floor. It didn't obstruct us but you had to be aware of it as there were plenty of trip hazards. The kids play park adjacent to the building and that was absolutely littered with debris, It wasn't piled up it was just everywhere. Every square foot had something on it, cladding, insulation, glass and people possessions that might have been blown out. I saw a leg that had come away from a torso which we passed on the way in. It was an Afro-Caribbean and it had been sheared off cleanly at the groin area. I remember being shocked but also fascinated that it looked like a surgical cut, it was that clean, Initially I looked for the body and couldn't see it. An hour or so later on the way out of the Tower I saw a forensic team working on a body or examining a body minus a leg that was deceased when we came out of the Tower.

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As soon as we came through the lobby we parted ways with the police officers. We proceeded to some offices that were to the left on the ground floor. There was water cascading down the stairwells and a burst hose spilling out water. The entire floor was under an inch of water. This was from burst hose lengths, open ending lengths of hose and all the jets that had been used on different floors running down the stairwell and pooling in the lobby area. From there we were told to wait in a room. I believe it was a generic room with a kitchenette and a toilet off of it. It could have been a waiting room or prayer room. There were lots of moulded plastic chairs. That was the next mustering area and there were probably fifteen fire fighters in there. There were seats but because of the Breathing Apparatus many were electing to stand as its difficult to sit with a BA set on your back. Essential we were in there to clear a path for communications and equipment that was coming in from outside of the building. We were out of the way from human traffic.

There was no smell when we were on the ground floor. Smoke rises and bearing in mind our bridgehead was on the fourth floor where we had set up operations meant the current fire must have been above this. For the most part we were in clean air. When I did get a smell of the smoke there was nothing really untoward, nothing unexpected at least. I waited there for about twenty minutes until we were called up. We were put into a crew of four. Every ten, fifteen minutes or so a call would go out saying "WE NEED ANOTHER FOUR WEARERS". I waited my turn until I was called up and needed. The call came out over the radio for wearers and we were committed from that side room. From there we came back out of that room back into the lobby area and turned left. We were given a generic brief on the lobby area to make our way up to the bridgehead which was on the fourth floor of GRENFELL TOWER and were instructed that we would be given a brief and mobilised further from there.

We made our way up to the first floor which was like a mezzanine floor. It was all open and you could still see it from the lobby. We walked along the mezzanine into the proper stairwell. From there we ascended another three flights up to the fourth floor to a small lobby area. We were not under air at this point. You could tell it had been involved in the fire earlier. There were blackened walls and everything you would expect from a fire. There was a BA board set up there as an entry control point and an officer in charge. We made it known to this officer that we had just come up from the lobby and that we were a fresh crew. There were several firefighters waiting to be mobilized. In total there were six to eight people there. There may have been fine wisps of smoke here but nothing major that I recall. You didn't need to

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be under air. We were told to standby for a few minutes while they were dealing with crews already committed.

We were in a crew of four. I was committed into the incident with Crew Manager Michael DENNY along with two firefighters I believe were from CHELSEA who I had never met before. I do not know their names. Crew Manager DENNY was making the decisions albeit within the brief which we were all given. I believe we were given a brief by Watch Manager VYDALINGUM who had made himself available along with Crew Manager CHESSUN. The brief was to 'start up', get under air and make our way in transit mode up to the eleventh floor and assist a crew that was already up there firefighting. From that point we were to progress further up if we could and continue fire firefighting. The onus at that point was on firefighting rather than rescue. Obviously had there been anyone, the priority would have been getting people out but the brief was to assist the crew that was already in there, firefight and push on as much as we could. The assumption was that every other floor up to that had been cleared. We were also made aware that we would encounter a deceased person around the ninth floor on the stairwell as forewarning. We were told there was nothing we could do and to leave her in situ. It's not nice, especially when you are under air to turn a corner and see a dead body. It puts a bolt shock through your body if you're not expecting it. Even if you are expecting it, it's still shocking. We did buddy checks which you do with your partner whenever you go into a fire. You check your partner is fully rigged and with no exposed skin. We reported to the Entry Control Officer and handed our 'tallies' in. When you pull the 'tally key' out of the bodyguard on the BA set it arms the set. By 'arm' I mean it puts it into a state of readiness whereby if you stopped moving for a period of time it will go into a pre alarm and then an alarm. You need to take the key out. It also allows the Entry Control Officer to monitor individuals. It's a link between the bridgehead and the committed firefighters. It tells them how much air individuals have, at what rate they are breathing air down and how long they have before they need to come out.

We made our way up to the eleventh floor. I was walking frequently looking at where I was placing my feet. The going was very tough. The stairwell was very narrow maybe three feet wide. Visibility wasn't great. It was not total darkness but there was a lot of smoke and fire gases hanging in the air. It was light outside but it wasn't filtering in. It was gloomy. The electrics and lighting were out and it wasn't yet fully light outside yet as it was still relatively early in the morning. There were also multiple lengths of hose laid up the stairwells. There was more hose than there was exposed stairwell. There were probably a dozen separate lengths of 70mm hose. One missed step and you could turn or break an ankle. I was

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holding onto the railing with my left hand. It was quite an effort to get up there. It was hard and slow going. I don't know how long it took us but it was probably seven to eight minutes to get up there. It was a conscious effort not to trip over and lose my footing bearing in mind we were making forward progress with heavy EDBA sets on our backs, which I believe weigh about 22 kilos, plus all your fire kit. There was also the water cascading down the stairs so it was like walking up a riverbed conscious of slipping and tripping.

I believe on the 9th floor stairwell we came across a deceased lady. We made every effort to step around and not disturb the body and progressed past her. She took up the majority of the stairwell. I believe she was positioned on the middle landing between the eighth and ninth floors. She wasn't on a floor itself but on a turnaround point. It took every effort to clamber over her as although we knew she was dead you have a respect for the dead. We didn't want to trample on her if we didn't have too. It took quite a bit of effort to grab hold of the railings and pull myself around her without disturbing the body.

On making it up to the eleventh floor we met up with the other crew who were getting low on air. There was no door, the actual landing was all open plan. I think there were three or four flats on each floor. We carried out a quick change over with the other crew on the landing itself. They were literally coming out as we arrived and I took over the hose from them. They pointed out a flat and said "THERE IS STILL FIRE IN THAT FLAT". I believe the other flats on the floor had been searched and cleared by other crews.

As we came out of the stairwell we turned right and there was a flat directly in front of us. CREW Manager DENNY and myself committed into this flat and fought the fire in there. There had been a full fire in there and there were still spots of fire. We got six or eight feet into the main room and started firefighting from there. I was holding the branch and extinguished the fire using a 70mm jet. The flow from the branch was good. I believe the other crew had been in there. The door was already open. We did not have to try and gain entry. When I exited the flat I believe the fire in there was all out. I think the two Firefighters from CHELSEA were still in the lobby, probably doing hose management to assist us. We had been on this floor for no more than fifteen minutes. Back out on the landing we made the decision to progress up one floor to see if we could fight any fire there and clear the twelve floor area. We made this decision because of our generic brief. In addition to backing up the previous crew we were to push forward as much as possible, so we were carrying out the second part of the brief systematically clearing floor by floor. On the eleventh floor I remember looking out of a picture window, casement style. I made

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a point of not wanting to go anywhere near it because potentially the whole thing could fall out eighty to a hundred feet up but it appeared to be holding.

We pulled the hose back out from the flat on the eleventh floor and made an effort to work it up the stairwell to the twelve but it was continually getting snagged. We couldn't pull it round. There were dozens and dozens of length of hose all laid out. We couldn't unravel it as it was all knotted. It was actually plugged in to a riser on a lower floor, probably the tenth. So working it up two at least two stairwells just wasn't happening. We tried sending one firefighter down a half level to try and work the hose around the stairwell but it was trapped under other hose. We tried for three or four minutes but we were conscious there is only a finite amount of air in the cylinder. We soon realised we were wasting too much time. It was easier to discard that hose and set in a fresh hose into the 'dry riser' and bolt that out from the eleventh floor which is what we did in the end. You get 'dry risers' and 'wet risers'. A 'wet riser' is a length of pipe connected to a water tank with a pumping system and it is normally triggered when a central fire alarm system is set off. Sometimes the water tank is on the roof so you get what we call a 'falling main' to get head pressure. Other times there will be a tank and pump in the basement or lobby area within a plant room. The pump will prime water and fill the main. This is essentially what we do on a 'dry riser' which is just an empty pipe which we have augment from outside. So you would site an appliance outside, set into a hydrant and physically plug your hose directly into the inlet valves of the riser.

We found a dry riser and set another length of hose into that. I believe previous crews had taken hose in and left lengths of hose 'Dutch rolled', which is rolled up, on most of the floors so it was just a case of grabbing the hose, bowling it out and putting a branch on it. Myself and Crew Manager DENNY set this in to the dry riser which was in a corner on the main landing. It was adjacent to the front door of the flat we had been into. When you plug the hose into a dry riser there is a valve which you turn on. You hear a hiss which is escaping air being pushed out as water is coming up the pipe. You can feel that and I remember saying to Crew Manager DENNY "IS IT FULLY OPEN?" because the hose was soft. A charged hose should be rock hard. We worked the new hose up to the floor above. Crew Manager DENNY stayed on the eleventh floor. You must always have a partner. We split into two crews of two because we felt that was a more optimal way of using our limited resources. I then progressed to the twelve with a female Firefighter from CHELSEA.

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The journey between the eleventh and twelve floor was arduous and frustrating. We progressed up the single stairwell to the turn around, the half landing point between the floors when I discovered another deceased body. We use terminology in the Brigade 'apparently dead' but he was very obviously dead. I paused by the body for a few seconds were by it was immediately obvious that he was dead so we continued as we had on the ninth floor as we had with the lady. We made every effort not to disturb the body. We continued past him carefully pulling the hose round.

We got up to the landing on the twelve floor. It was all open plan, there were no doors or anything. You came of the stairs and the lobby area was in front of me. We pushed forward eight or ten feet but the heat was oppressive it forced us down onto our hands and knees. At that point, everything was on fire. Fixtures that had been on the ceilings and walls was now on the floor and on fire. There was a neutral plain, which is an over pressure of smoke that descends and you can see a visible change. It's like a horizon. You have clearer cooler air underneath thick dark fire gases on top. The neutral plain was about five or six feet high. We were beneath that because we were on our hands and knees.

The heat was extreme and there was insufficient water in the hose. There was no sufficient weight of attack to push the over pressure back. I opened the branch up and there was very little water pressure. It was literally just spitting out and was insufficient to deal with the fire adequately. This may have been due to the nature of risers what with so many people plugged in with multiple jets working at the same time. It was all coming from one street main so we were probably overrunning the supply. We were also relatively high so it was fighting gravity. We had no weight of attack to force back the fire. It was very frustrating. I've never understood though why I had not experienced the same problem on the eleventh floor. I'd set the branch to 230 litres per minute which is standard for an internal jet reaction both times but on this occasion I was getting less than 10 percent of what I would have expected. We were probably up there for three or four minutes but the heat was debilitating. I personally started to feel myself lose consciousness at this point. I was getting faint so we descended back down two or three stairs about two feet lower down. It was immediately cooler with cooler air. We gathered ourselves, made one last ditch effort to progress and moved forward again. But again we had almost no water, conditions were no better or worse. We had essentially made no effect at all. At this point we decided to abort, turn around and make our way back to the eleventh floor. We had been beaten back by the heat and lack of water. We returned to the eleventh and met the Crew Manager DENNY and the other Firefighter. We did a gauge check and a decision was made quickly that we were relatively low on air. We still had some

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minutes but there wasn't much we could do and we had to allow air for the journey down to the bridgehead. This was not easy with the wet floor, numerous hoses and the weight of our BA kits. The fire was all out on the eleventh floor and we didn't have enough water to make any kind of impact on the twelve. So the decision was made as a crew that having been up there for twenty or twenty-five minutes, that we would landmark the hose and make our way back down to the bridgehead.

Upon returning to the Bridgehead we closed down and purged our sets of air and collected our tally's from the Entry Control Officer (ECO). We gave a quick de-brief to the officer in charge. I did not go back into GRENFELL TOWER after that. While inside the Tower I do not recall any fire alarms or sprinkler systems. There was nothing unfamiliar about the smell of the fire inside the building. There were no noises beyond the normal sound of crackling that fire makes. As things decompose through heat they tend to break down and you get a crackling sound. There was nothing that made me believe we were in any imminent danger of the building collapsing or anything like that. The structural integrity of the building didn't come into question in my mind while I was in there. I was aware that there was a fire lift but it was not accessed by us. We were briefed to make our way up by foot using the stairwell.

We had several burst hose lengths while I was in there and there was a problem with radio communications within the building as well. There was a lot of frustration. Everyone in my crew and other people I spoke to had a good idea of their own brief but I think wider communications broke down a bit because of the capabilities of the communication within the building. There were limitations. I did not try to submit any messages, that would have primarily fallen to Crew Manager DENNY. I was not aware of any smoke management system' in place. The one egress route for all of the residents was completely smoke logged and imagine was hell on earth. There was no partitioning of the fire. Once the fire was in the lobby area it was free to travel. I believe within our crew we did take up a thermal imaging camera but I personally didn't use one or say for sure if it was used. No one was wearing a body camera.

We would have left the Tower at approximately 8:15am. I took some wafer on board, changed the cylinder on my BA set. I readied another set by carrying out a 'A' test ready to go in again but I was not called upon. At that point I was essentially stood down. I found members of BOMLEY that were sitting in the main pooling area. We spent the rest of the time stood by ready to go but we were never called on. This was on the green area outside a leisure centre or gym which was the generic pooling area for all of the firefighters. We stayed there for hours and hours. I believe until about 3:30 - 4:00 in the afternoon. When we were stood down from the scene we were called into the gym. I believe it was an Assistant

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Divisional Officer (ADO), which is an old-fashioned term for a Station Manager, who had concerns about the red watch crews staffing for the oncoming shift. GRENFELL TOWER fire was on our first night duty and we incurred a lot of overtime fighting it. This was about four o'clock in the afternoon and we were actually due back at eight pm that night. There were concerns about having enough crews to provide fire cover to all of London that night. The decision was made by the ADO to send us away.

The appliance was still parked in the same spot. We were referred to PADDINGTON fire station to receive a quick debrief before heading back to BROMLEY. We were at PADDINGTON for around thirty minutes while they took names and booked us in, asking if everyone was fit and well or had any issues. At that point we were dismissed and made our way back to BROMLEY and went off shift at approximately six pm. I came back on for the next night shift two hours later at eight. It was a tough day. I was not redeployed to GRENFELL TOWER.

Ultimately, the officer in charge was Commissioner Dany COTTON, who I saw walking back towards the leisure centre but the incident would have been compartmentalised. I believe the Assistant Commissioner handled it for much of the time. There would have been different sections but I do not know who was in charge of my section at the time. I heard rumours that on the night the Brigade had contacted THAMES WATER to ramp up the pressure in the water main because we were struggling as oversubscribed. I believe the ramping up of water by the Water Authority to meet our demands resulted in the amount of burst hose lengths that we experienced. I personally witnessed four or five. I heard on the radios several calls of burst hose lengths. One burst right in front of my face. I had never seen anything like it. The hoses are tough DURALINE fire hose. DURALINE is a product name manufactured by ANGUS FIRE. It burst about a meter back from the coupling and it looked like someone had taken a giant pair of scissor and cut right through the hose. It popped under the sheer pressure going through the hose. I didn't receive any injuries. It like a tyre blowing. It gives you a shock. If it were to happen near a coupling which are metal it could easily cause an injury. I received counselling through the Brigade and spoke to professionals about our experiences but there was nothing physical that I needed to be referred for.

I did not view anything that on its own I had not viewed before. I've witnessed some pretty gruesome fire deaths. It was just the sheer volume of it, seeing so much. To see a dead body is a big deal and you usually only see one at an incident. To be confronted with multiple deaths takes an emotional hit. It's not

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just what I saw for myself, it was knowing a large number of people had died under those circumstances which is quite a heavy toll psychologically.

The deceased body on the ninth floor was a very large woman maybe in her thirties. I believe she was wearing night clothes, pyjama bottoms rather than a nightgown. I remember seeing her belly and her back but we didn't pause for long. I didn't look at her any more than I had too. I think she was predominantly lying on her back.

The deceased body on the turnaround point of the stairwell between the eleventh and twelve floor I believe was a male of Afro-Caribbean heritage, again maybe in his thirties. I remember he was lying face down with his bare back exposed. Either he had not been wearing bed clothes or they had been ripped or burnt off. I remember looking and seeing a badly burnt back. That was the first thing I saw which shocked me. It's not a pleasant death but you hope that if they do die they succumb to smoke rather than being physically burnt. This person had actually been in an environment that was literally so hot or on fire at some point that their skin on their back had melted. I believe he was wearing pyjama bottoms.

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