

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: BELTRAMI, ENRICO

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 9 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 BELTRAMI

Date: 29/12/2017

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

My name is Enrico Dennis BELTRAMI my date of birth is 10/02/1991 I am a Fire fighter based at Wembley Fire station on Red watch.

This statement is with regard to the building fire at GRENFELL TOWER W11 and my actions and the events I witnessed on the night of the 13th to the 14th of June 2017. Given voluntarily in an interview at Wembley fire station on 04/12/2017 to DC Rachel FOLEY and PC Suzie HARRIS. I am a Fire fighter under development which means I am currently and at the time of the incident still in a probationary period as a new Fire Fighter. In June 2017 I had been a Fire Fighter for ten months.

The people I will mention in my statement will be Watch Manager CLARK, Fire fighter DEVANI and Fire Fighter BOULTON. These were my crew mates on that evening and later in the Tower I worked with Watch Manager CARDY and Watch Manager DEAN.

The locations I will mention in this statement are the Watch room at WEMBLY fire station, SILCHESTER ROAD W11, the Command Unit at LATIMER ROAD W11, The Breathing Apparatus holding area a covered area near garages across from the tower, The Bridge Head on the third floor of GRENFELL TOWER, the staircase leading up to ninth floor in GRENFELL TOWER, the ninth floor of GRENFELL TOWER, the mezzanine floor of GRENFELL TOWER, The second location of the Bridge Head at GRENFELL TOWER which was located on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor and the Leisure centre.

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I started my shift that evening at 20:00Hrs originally I was assigned to Pump G302, A Fire engine which carries hoses and a pump and a ladder the call sign of the fire engine I would be in that evening. I had been in the office completing an evidence book which is part of my training. At approximately 00:30 I heard a call come out for a six pump fire which the command unit had been sent out to. The command unit is a Fire Engine which works as a control centre at incidents it will manage the radio traffic with regard to the incident, it manages resources, how many pumps are needed and fire survival guidance calls, where the officer in charge is. Fire survival guidance calls are calls from members of the public where they are trapped by the fire and cannot get out and the call will be kept open and guidance and advice will be given as well as asking for information about the fire

I saw the call slip for the fire and it said “six pump fire multiple calls” I went and showed the driver where to go and then returned to the Watch room. The next call that came out was at approximately 01:30hrs to the same location stating it was a twenty fire pump fire by which time I had been changed to another fire engine (pump) call sign G301 as G302 was off the road and as a new fire fighter It’s important to go to as many jobs as possible to gain experience. The term twenty pump fire means that number of fire engines required at the scene of the fire and this is normally decided by the officer in charge from the command unit at the scene.

I was riding in the back passenger seat next to Fire Fighter DEVANI. Fire Fighter BOULTON was driving and Watch manger CLARK was a long side him in the front. We left out the Fire station in G302 and we turned right on to HARROW ROAD and drove all the way down through HARLESDON to LATIMER ROAD and then turned right on to LADBROOKE GROVE, the roads where clear of traffic and the light visibility was good for the whole journey, We got there pretty quickly I thought.

On approach I could see the building from quite a long distance away and thought to myself “THIS SOMETHING DIFFERENT”, I could see the orange light of the fire between the buildings as we approached and thought to myself “NO WAY” apart from that I did not really know what to think I just wanted to get there and get the job done, I was thinking probably the same as everyone else there are people in there that need saving. I could hear the radio traffic but could not make out what was being said as there was just so much going on. I just wanted to get there and do something.

We tried to get to the foot of the tower but the road we turned into was closed due to road works I do not remember the name of this road. There was another pump coming the other way up the road and it looked

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like they had turned down there too not realising the road was closed. Firefighter BOULTON reversed the truck and I got out to direct him back.

Once Fire Fighter BOULTON had reversed the truck out of the closed road he turned right and then right again and we approached the fire by turning onto SILCHESTER ROAD I think, I wasn't really paying attention to where we were going as my attention was fixed on the tower.

The first time I had seen the fire on the journey towards it to when I arrived at the scene the fire had spread so quickly the from the fourth floor and had nearly reached the top of one side of the building you could see it traveling up as well as across the building, it was insane the speed it was spreading.

On arrival at SILCHESTER ROAD there were a few fire trucks parked there and was not moved at all during my time at the incident, I think the journey from WEMBLEY FIRE STATION to SILCHESTER ROAD took approximately fifteen minutes, we got there pretty quickly, As we arrived I could see a lot of people everywhere some on phones and some crying, some using their phones to film the building, I did not speak to any of them and they did not speak to me, everyone's attention was focused on the tower. I got out of the truck with Watch manager CLARKE, to get instruction from the command unit. Fire Fighters DEVANI and BOULTON stayed on the truck. There was quite a lot of radio traffic so we went to get instruction and where told to get our breathing apparatus known as a SDBA Set this is a standard compressed air cylinder kit that we are all trained to use. It is meant to give a maximum of thirty one minutes breathing time but this is dependent on the environment you are in, stress and rates of breathing, age and fitness. It straps to you with harness bracket and waist strap like a back pack with a single cylinder and it is fairly heavy after a while of wearing it, it also has a bodyguard on it which tells you the breathing time you have in your cylinder and it is how you would send out a distress signal, it also has a whistle on it that sounds if you are running out of air. There are two types of breathing apparatus that Fire Fighters use which is the standard duration breathing apparatus that I was wearing.

The other kind is called EDBA which is an extended Breathing apparatus which has double cylinder and gives you more breathing time, I am not trained to use the extended breathing time apparatus yet and I am not sure how much extra breathing time you get on this apparatus. I had tested my breathing apparatus when I first came on duty and filled it to 300 bar. We collected our sets from the truck and I went with my crew towards the tower we all had our breathing apparatus and Fire fighter DEVANI had the TIC

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(thermal imaging camera) and the long line which is a long length of rope measuring 31 metres long, and went towards the tower.

We walked up SILCHESTER ROAD it was busy and there were lots of people on the street as they were when I first arrived, crying and on the phone to relatives and taking pictures of the tower with their mobile phones again no one spoke to us and we did not speak to any members of the public. Police had arrived by now and I saw them trying to cordon off the road and move people back from the tower. When the crew got to the Breathing apparatus holding area we waited for further instruction. The person in charge there I did not know his name or rank but he had a white helmet on. He told us "GO BACK TO YOUR TRUCKS AND GET AS MUCH HOSE AND YOU CAN", so we ran back to G301 and took all the hoses we had the two types of hose on our truck where both twenty three metres long and one was forty five millimetres wide diameter and the other was bigger at 70 millimetres wide. The crew and I took the hoses back to the breathing apparatus holding area.

The second instruction was "GET AS MUCH BREAKING IN GEAR AS YOU CAN, AXES, ENFORCERS, CROWSFOOT ANYTHING YOU CAN". All the fire fighters waiting went to all trucks and emptied them of equipment more or less and then brought everything back to the holding area, We had enforcers sledge hammers and axes anything that was of use was taken from all the parked up fire trucks and this took myself and the other Fire Fighters a large group I don't remember how many Who were waiting to be committed to the tower helping approximately five minutes to unload and put in the Breathing apparatus holding area.

At this point I could see debris starting to fall from the building as it burned and it had started to fall on to the ALP Ariel ladder platform, this is a fire appliance with an extra-long ladder with a cage for Fire fighters to stand in with a monitor in the cage it has it's has own dedicated pump which is the fire appliance it is on and I think the monitor shows the amount of water in the pump and the hose although I am not too sure. We had instruction to move the hoses out the way of the ALP so it could be moved away from the falling debris that happened quite quickly. The debris I saw falling from the building was mainly the cladding and later I also saw a sofa and a table come down after I had been in the building, I don't know how that happened. I know it was cladding as I used to do labour work before joining the fire service and cladding is anything you can cover a building with and as it burned you could see it peeling off from the outside of the building. We are also taught in Fire training school about sandwich boards

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which is a type of cladding. It was dark at this point so I did not notice any smoke and I was more fixated on the fire to notice the smoke coming from it.

I then returned with the rest of the crew to the holding area where the person in charge whose name I did not know was allowing groups of five or six crews at a time across to the tower entrance, another person who I think was a safety officer told us when to run across to the base of the tower in order to avoid falling debris, I picked up a large axe in the holding area and took it with me, By this point we had all put our breathing apparatus on. We stayed close to the side of the building as we crossed to the front doors of GRENFELL TOWER to avoid anything falling on us from above.

We went through the front door of the tower and into the lobby area I could see some smoke at this point but it was very faint and visibility was good. We then went up to the Mezzanine floor. Watch manager CLARK and another manager there told everyone to sit down and rest up before we went up the tower. We waited in a line and I saw lots of casualties coming out of the building with Fire Fighters some were walking I heard lots of people coughing and some were being carried out unconscious, I could not tell you what anyone looked like or what they were wearing as their clothes and faces were all covered in smoke, I do remember one man came out walking with what I think was his family a female and a child and he had blood coming from his nose, I don't remember anything about the people being carried out unconscious apart from one that I knew was a kid I could not tell you the age and they had clothing on but I cannot remember what clothes they were. I was thinking at this point I just wanted to get up there and save people, I had complete faith in the building as I knew the staircase was a concrete stair case and would not burn.

There was now about fifteen to twenty Firefighters in the mezzanine area of the tower waiting to go up to the Bridgehead. The Bridgehead is an area situated two floors below the fire and where the entry control board is situated. The entry control board is where the firefighters entering the buildings breathing apparatus is monitored. You hand in your Tally there. A tally is an oblong piece of plastic with a key which activates the bodyguard which is part of the breathing apparatus it records the individual number of the breathing apparatus set and the wearers name and the time the wearer enters an incident wearing their breathing apparatus and what time they should report back to the entry control board and is activated when the tally is inserted in to the control board, it allows a telemetry connection between the entry control board and the breathing apparatus set, collecting it back when you leave the incident tells the operator of the entry control you have left and are no longer using your breathing apparatus this happens

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when you collect your tally when leaving the area of the fire, If you are low on oxygen a warning whistle will go off and the entry control board will know and you can also communicate to the entry control board if you are in distress.

The crew joined a queue of other Fire fighters waiting to enter, a watch manager was there and I do not know his name, he was very calm and instructed everyone to rest up again before going up to the Bridgehead.

At this point the Bridgehead was at the third floor, The Bridgehead is a location two clear floors below the fire floor and it is the entry control point for Fire crews with breathing apparatus. There is also an entry control board, this is a board that provides two way data communication between breathing apparatus wearers and the entry control officer and monitors who is in the tower and the status of their breathing apparatus and can calculate in minutes how much breathing time each wearer has left in the tanks they are wearing. The entry Control board can also tell firefighters to evacuate on mass of a building or in a certain area if it has become dangerous in one certain area of the fire. The entry control officer is the rank of a watch manager but I did not know his name, When you hand in your Tally he will use a chart to manually calculate how long you can spend in the fire and when your ten minute warning is, this warning tells you when you are low on air and should be thinking about your route out of whatever area you are in. At this point the entry control officer was in contact with the Watch managers on the mezzanine floor telling them when to send more people up. The Bridge head is where operations essentially begin for a high rise and is also a safety area you come back to it can be moved if it becomes compromised in any way.

Whilst waiting I heard a call for a fire fighter emergency which is a firefighter in distress which was communicated through the entry control board this turned out to be a false alarm as the Fire fighter had forgotten to collect his tally the call was then cancelled. I was then committed to a team of three with my watch manager Watch Manager CLARK and another watch manager by the name of Watch Manager CARDY, I am not sure where the other members of my crew where at this point. We went up to the bridge head and handed in our Tally's.

We were told that there where people unaccounted for on the ninth floor by the entry control officer. The three of us did our final radio check and Watch Manager CLARK said that we would do a left hand wall search when we got to the ninth floor. This is a method of searching the fire brigade used when searching areas where visibility is low and provides a route out if you become disorientated as if you follow the left

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hand wall in when you turn round you follow the wall to the right the same wall to find your route out. I think the time I entered the tower was approximately 0255hrs 14th June 2017. I had my breathing apparatus on and I was holding a large axe which I had picked up on the way to the bridge head.

We had previously been told there were no floor numbers so as we climbed the stairs the smoke was getting progressively quicker the higher we climbed, although there was some visibility as I could see my gloves on my hands and the lighting was still on which really did help, I did not hear any alarms or see any sprinklers and it wasn't too hot. The smoke I would describe as light wispy smoke but it was everywhere, all around. On the way to the ninth floor I did not come across any casualties or Fire Fighters. By the fifth floor the smoke was starting to get thicker.

We shouted to each other floor numbers as we wanted to make sure we went to the right floor. On reaching the floor we all confirmed with each other we were on the ninth floor. We had been told in our brief that there was a hose on the ninth floor and it was connected to a rising main that brings water up from the ground floor, which is where the water pipe is and we connect the branch (hose) and is specifically for this use and there is one on every floor of a high rise building.

We were in the lobby area of the ninth floor and there was a door in front of us which was closed, someone, I don't remember who used the thermal imaging camera to identify where the hose was behind the door. Watch Manager CLARK went in and grabbed the hose. Watch manager CLARK went in to the hallway of the ninth floor with the hose after checking it had water There was a good supply from the dry riser, followed by Watch Manager CARDY and then myself and we moved on hands and knees up the hall way of the ninth floor keeping to the left hand wall as Watch manager CLARK had instructed, Watch Manager CLARK had the hose and was using water in what we call safety procedure which is using the water to cool the temperature down and try and reduce the amount of smoke I could hear the water pumping through the hose and Watch Manager CLARK saying he was doing safety procedures so we could hear and help him by lifting the hose and other Firefighters elsewhere in the building knew what was happening on the ninth floor. By this time the heat had risen and I have never felt anything so hot. We then came to the first flat door on the left I do not remember what the door was made off and the only thing I remember was that the handle was missing and I did not hear any noises coming from the other side of the door in fact it was very quiet, apart from us talking.

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Watch manager CLARK did what is called door Procedure, This is a procedure used by the fire brigade to minimise the risk to the Fire Fighters of the hazards behind the door such as smoke or other hazards, and it also involves checking which way the door opens and where the hinges are. Watch Manager CLARK asked me to try and get the door open as I was still holding the large axe I had picked up earlier. I looked at the Thermal imaging camera to identify where the hinges on the door where so I know where I was hitting the door which was at the point where the handle should have been, I stood up in the smoke and TIC was reading 1080. I tried hitting the door with the axe I hit it with the flat top of the head, it didn't open so I tried kicking it and then using my body weight to barge the door open. I tried to get through the door for approximately a minute and half although it felt longer, I think though in that heat and being trained to know the doors expand in heat it's very possible the flat could have been fully alight the other side of the door, I carried on trying to open the door until Watch Manager CLARK told me to stop and pulled me back down to my hands and knees.

The smoke was now so thick you could not see a thing it was pitch black and it was so hot I could feel the burning round my neck ears and down my back despite the protective clothing I was wearing. I had never experienced heat like it but I have had training on what to expect in conditions where the temperature is high and there is a lot of smoke and this was exactly what I had been taught to expect.

Due to the heat and effort I needed to try and open the door I was feeling a little dizzy I could feel the temperature getting hotter and the smoke getting thicker, this is where exact details of what happened become a little confused, I thought we got told to evacuate and our watch manger said "WE ARE LEAVING" we went in to the lobby area of the ninth floor through a door I think this was a self-closing fire door with a window in it but you could not see through the window because the smoke was so thick. We went through the door and it closed behind us. The stairs were the other side of the door and the door was doing its job, there was thick black smoke one side of the door and less in the stair area.

I thought I heard someone shout for help from the tenth floor, there was someone on the 10th floor I thought it was another crew at the time but it could have been Watch Manager CARDY I went up to the tenth floor and there was a quick exchange of words, I cannot remember what was said as I was still suffering from the effects of the heat and exhaustion of trying to get the flat door open on the ninth floor. I think someone handed over casualties to us and I think it was because they already had casualties with them that they were dealing with although I am not sure.

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I think they handed over two women and two children, The guvnor (Watch Manager CLARK) has picked up a child, a little girl, Watch manager CARDY has asked me to walk a lady out and then he has I think helped a child of eleven or twelve years old who was able to walk and seemed fine and not phased at all and another elderly female relative but that's all I remember about the casualties the Watch Mangers have escorted out.

The lady I was helping was understandably very hysterical and kept trying to go back up the stairs to one of her children who were in front and behind her with Match Managers CLARK and CARDY it was very hard to try and get her down the stairs but I kept saying to her "NEARLY THERE, NEARLY THERE". This is the only verbal communication I had with any member of the public or occupants of GRENFELL TOWER, the lady was disorientated and needed my support and help to get down the stairs. I would describe the casualty I escorted down the stairs, as a white women with tanned skin brown hair thirty to forty years old with a tattoo on her shoulder all though I cannot remember what the tattoo was, and I remember she was wearing a vest as that's how I saw the tattoo but that's all I can remember.

We reached the third floor I knew this because it had floor numbers from the third floor downwards and I went into the Bridgehead to inform them I had a casualty that I was going to take downstairs and there was no one there I was a little confused by this and the lady I had been helping had run ahead of me I then went down to the mezzanine floor and looked over the side and could see the lady I had been helping was now on the ground floor I went down stairs followed by Watch manager CARDY. I saw that Watch Manager CLARK had reached the ground floor, The bridge head had been moved to the ground floor so I went down to join him. By this point I was focused on getting my breathing apparatus mask off my face when I reached the Bridgehead but I was too weak so someone helped me take off my helmet and breathing apparatus mask, I still had the set on my back and was instructed to close my set down by the entry control manager this means releasing the last bit of air in the breathing apparatus so the tally can be collected and you stop registering on the entry control board, I was too weak to do this so had some help although I don't remember who helped me then I went into the new Breathing apparatus holding area, this was now a room next to the Bridgehead on the ground floor.

I sat down in the holding area and drank as much water as I could, there were other fire fighters there checking I was ok I was there for approximately what could have been ten minutes or half an hour I was to exhausted at the time and cannot remember how long it was. Whilst there I saw other Fire Fighters getting ready to be committed to the tower and leaving the holding area under police riot shields that

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police where holding above their heads to protect the firefighters from falling debris. One of my guvnors said "COME ON ITS TIME TO GO" and we left together under the protection of a police riot shield and that where my involvement with the building directly finished.

From there we went to a small green area where all the newly arrived Fire Fighters were waiting and me and my two Watch Managers sat down by a wall as we were all still exhausted. As I sat by the wall I had full view of Grenfell Tower and noticed again how quickly the fire was still spreading it was moving across the building so fast and there was debris still falling from the building and it was at that point I saw a table and a sofa fall from the building, the building was still burning and there was nothing we could do once I felt rested, I left the area and went to service my breathing apparatus set and put a new cylinder on it as whilst I thought it unlikely at that point as I saw that loads of fresh Fire Fighters had arrived, but there was always a chance I could be asked to go back in to the building. I then heard it had been decided to only allow Fire Fighters with extended breathing apparatus into the building. I am not trained in this yet so I knew I would not be going back in. By this time I was physically exhausted. I was with my guvnor and we then saw the Wembley crew and the pump was running and as the rest of the crew are EDBA users they were ready, we gave them information we thought would be useful I think it was mainly about the lay out of the building and then we left them to get new instruction from the command unit. I walked with my Guvnor to the Command unit in LATIMER ROAD and was instructed to accompany The command unit watch manager, I think his name was Watch Manager DEAN from Edmonton to LADBROOKE GROVE ROAD to get ready for the new twenty pump relief that was on its way, I don't know what time it was but it was starting to get light at this point.

I discussed with the Watch Manager the suitability of the road for the pumps and he asked if I knew any better location but the road was wide and some of the trucks has arrived already and there seemed no point in moving them as the pumps arrived I informed them what was happening and to get any equipment they needed and to rest and be ready, the new crews where already unloading their trucks I then managed the radio traffic for the watch manager from the command unit relaying messages to him, Then things seemed to slow down and I did not seem to be doing much as all the new crews that had arrived where waiting to be told to go down to the holding area, so the watch manager from the command unit told me to go back to my crew the time was approximately 0930hrs.

I walked back not really knowing where to go as there were lots of different areas when Fire Fighter's where resting and new Fire Fighters to the scene where waiting to go into the tower.

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I went to the main resting area that was outside the leisure centre and went in to the leisure centre to call my mum that was approximately between 0930hrs and 1000hrs to let her know I was ok, the rest of the crew went to help out a Kensington crew with their pump and when I finished my phone call they had returned back to the rest area I was waiting there for about an hour and half and we then left to go to Paddington Fire station the time was approximately 1100hrs The building was still burning when I left.

On arrival at PADDINGTON FIRE STATION all the Fire fighters there were given advise and counselling told what had to be included in the notes we were going write, I wrote my note's about the incident which I exhibit as exhibit no: EDB/1 Serial no;MPSZ13111611 and then returned to Wembley Fire station approximately 1700 or 1730.

Before attending the fire at GRENFELL TOWER I had never been there before for visits or to other incidents. I have not done any section 7(2)D familiarisation visits to GRENFELL TOWER or any similar Blocks of flats. I have never been posted to the fire safety department during my service. I did not attend the fire its early stages. I did not see any windows in the tower and therefore did not open any. The fire lift was out of action at the time I attended GRENFELL TOWER and I do no known about the smoke management system. I was trained in high rise tower block procedure in training school and we have regular lectures on it although I could not say when the last training was and I have never practised the procedure in a tower. I had not had any previous experience of fire fighting in a high rise block of flats prior to attending GRENFELL TOWER fire and was not aware of any pre-prepared firefighting plan for GRENFELL TOWER.

As a Firefighter I am aware of the risk of Cladding panels and was given training at training school and know there are toxins in the coating of a lot cladding panels and some of the plastic used in highly flammable. I was not involved in any decision making during this incident O [I] followed the instruction of Watch manger CLARKE and other Watch Managers at the scene. I do not think there were any other resources, training or equipment that could have stopped the fire once it caught alight that was it and there was no dealing with that fire. During the incident I did not receive any injuries or near misses and did not see any other fire fighters at the scene with injuries, I was not seen by medical staff at the scene of the fire and have not subsequently seen a GP or had help from the NHS.

This was the first major fire I had been during my service so everything about this fire is of note. The way I feel about the incident now is that it was terrible and should not have happened, it went up like a Roman

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candle and I feel bad that I could not have saved more people but everybody did their job well, I did what I could and I did everything right but you still feel guilty because a lot of people died. It should not have happened and was completely avoidable. But everyone was brilliant that day the police were brilliant the paramedics were brilliant.

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