

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: BROOKS, GARY

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

---

This statement (consisting of 8 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: G BROOKS

Date: 15/01/2018

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

---

This statement is my recollection of the events and my actions on the morning of Wednesday 14 June 2017 at a fire in Grenfell Tower on The Lancaster West Estate between the hours of 04:00 and 15:00.

I am Gary BROOKS and I have been a Fire Fighter for 28 years. I joined the London Fire Brigade in 1990 and my first posting was at Addington Fire Station. I then moved to Beckenham Fire Station as a motor driver, before moving to Wandsworth in 2000 as a Leading Fire Fighter. In 2002 I went into BA - breathing apparatus - real fire training as an instructor and Watch Manager. I completed 7 1/2 years' in training in various departments before moving to Dowgate Fire Station. I have been to other stations since then and for the past 2 months I have been back at Addington Fire Station in the role of Watch Manager (B) on Red Watch.

In the fire service there are different authorities ranging from Fire Fighter, Crew Manager, Crew Manager Plus who can ride in charge of an appliance if the Watch Manager is off. There are Watch Managers (A) who are in charge of one appliance stations and Watch Manager (B) who are in charge of multi appliance stations ranging from two appliances and up to even 5 appliances which Croydon have.

On the night of 13 June 2017 I was rostered a night duty on from 20:00 to 09:30 in the role of Watch Manager (B) at Addington Fire Station. Addington Station call sign is H26 and has two pumps H261 , a pump ladder which carries a 135 ladder (13.5 M ladder) and RTC - road traffic cutting equipment - and Pump H262 which carries a 9 metre ladder.

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

I arrived for work just before 20:00 and the crews that night would have had role call, then they would get assigned their roles and responsibilities and the pumps they would be riding. The drivers would do their regular checks and the crews would check the equipment carried on the pumps was all accounted for and working correctly along with the BA sets. The BA sets on our pumps are SDBA - standard duration breathing apparatus - these usually last for up to 30 minutes depending on the wearers physical condition and what they are doing.

On Pump 261 with me that night was Fire Fighter Dan MOORE the driver, Fire Fighter Mike YIANNI who is now at Battersea Fire Station, Fire Fighter Robert EVANS and Crew Manager Mike DENNY who is now at Woodside Fire Station. On Pump 262 was the Crew Manager Eamon SLEVIN, Fire Fighter Richard BEADLE who was the driver I think, Fire Fighter Brad STOCKHAM and Fire Fighter Craig MARTIN. Once the checks were all completed we would then have around an hour of training or lectures before crews would do their own activities.

The training for personnel is always ongoing and could range from practical sessions, power point presentations and policy notes. I cannot remember my last period of training but over the years I have completed many training exercises and I have never had any training needs and would say I am competent in my role. Later this month we have an exercise planned where our two appliances and another stations pump appliances will attend a scenario in a high rise and do a complete run through. If any FireFighter needs training in a specific area, it will be manufactured into this scenario and get them up to the level required. I can't remember the last high rise fire I attended but we do attend tower blocks on a regular basis. I went to a tower block last week to a fire alarm activation, it turned out to be nothing but the same procedure is adopted at high rise buildings.

The first pump arriving would set in the water and charge - fill - the dry riser and take over the firefighter lift, if the building had one as they need to meet safety guidelines. The dry riser is an empty pipe usually running from the basement up to the top floors with outlets we call branches on every floor sometimes every second floor. This pipe would be filled with water and when crews get to a particular floor they can connect their branches and a hose and have water available to them. A wet riser would already be filled with water and would act in the same way. The crews would also take in any other equipment required and set up an area called the bridgehead. The Brigehead is set up as a control point where BA crews would be committed and usually below the point of the fire. The second pump arriving would provide the

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

First Officer and BA crews and then go to the Bridghead and assess the situation and commit crews and resources where needed.

On the night of 13 June 2017 I don't remember being called to any incidents until the early hours of the morning being 14 June 2017. It was around 4:00am all the lights came on and I was alerted to the station tannoy system announcing pump ladder H261 to turn out. I went to the watch room with some of my crew and took the call slip off of the printer. The call slip is printed on A4 paper and normally only about half a page but this call slip was at least 2 to 3 pages of A4 paper maybe longer. It was long and we had to read it a couple of times to confirm where and what we were going to. The call slip would give us the location and what we were going to and on this message we were going a fire at Grenfell Tower, Lancaster West Estate, W11-ITG. We were instructed to attend a rendezvous point in Ladbroke Grove as a pump relief to 20 pumps from a 40 pump fire. In my 28 years I have never been to a 20 pump relief and it took a moment to read, then I thought wow a 40 pump fire that's big. There were multiple FSG - fire survival guidance calls - to persons trapped on the call slip along with other appliances that had been called to attend. I updated the rest of my crew as to what we were going to and where and we set off.

Our route took us through Croydon, Sutton, Merton and North across the river. Rob Evans used to work at Chelsea and Fulham so he knew the route once we crossed the river. I was sitting in the front passenger seat and in front of me is the radio.

This would be on Channel 2 as it's the South Channel and we didn't change it to channel 4 being the North Channel until we crossed the river. Channel 2 was quiet with a few messages being broadcast. Once we changed to Channel 4 the radio traffic was busy, you could hear there was a lot going on. I also have access to the MDT - mobile data terminal- this is currently updating us and located on the MDT you also have access to the ORD - operational risk data - If you were going to a call on our ground the ORD would give you access to any possible risks and information of the location and premises you were going to. I didn't look at the ORD that night as there were already 40 pumps at the fire and no point me even reading it.

There is also a map book within the MDT however it's not great, it doesn't rotate when you turn left or right, so you could be going North but the map would show South. The map also tends to zoom out so you can't read the roads. We had no route cards as we were not from the area we were going to; you normally have route cards for your area. The MDT is useful and stores valuable information and policy

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

notes but the maps let you down they are not reliable. On that night I had the atlas in the front with me but we had someone with local knowledge with us so we managed to get there.

We eventually arrived at the rendezvous point in Ladbroke Grove at about 5:00am and updated our arrival on the MDT to status 3. We were guided by the police to park up near the Command Unit that was also in Ladbroke Grove. Ladbroke Grove is a two-way single lane road with cars parked up on either side and very big houses mostly converted into flats. There were other fire appliances already parked up and more arriving behind us. I remember seeing an ALP - aerial ladder platform - and a water tender ladder machine from Leatherhead in Surrey drive past us. There were lots of BA crews walking towards the Command Unit. I have never been to this area before and I had no knowledge of The Grenfell Tower.

I went to the Command Unit and handed in my nominal role board with all our crew and pump details to the Watch Manager. The Command Unit role is to facilitate the command structure and they would establish a link between the first officer dealing with the incident and collate information, send messages and remind you of policies etc. The Command Unit would normally attend four or more pump fires, persons reported trapped, collapse structures, there are a number of incidents they would come to. I don't know who was in charge of the Command Unit but I was told to gather my crew with their BA sets and to reassemble back here. I returned to my crew and told them to kit up and we would reassemble at the Command Unit. We all kitted up with BA sets ready and although it's unusual for me to kit up, I was quite happy thinking I would get to wear a BA set for a change. It's been a while and I wouldn't normally wear a BA set due me being the Watch Manager. My role on our ground would normally be in the control structure and I would make the decisions as to what we are going to do and send messages until the Station Manager turns up and we would work together.

We all assembled at the Command Unit along with another Watch Manager and multiple Fire Fighters from other stations all wearing BA sets. I can't say how many Fire Fighters there were but with a 20 pump relief with 4 riders on each, that's a minimum of 80 Fire Fighters.

We were told that if we walk the short distance to the corner of Ladbroke Grove and look left you will see the tower. We all walked to the corner and as I looked left I could only see the top half of the Grenfell Tower, the lower half of the tower was obscured by the houses and flats. The two sides I could see I now know were the back and the side overlooking the College. There was extensive fire damage to the building on all floors with several small fires burning within the flats on the higher floors. The whole top

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:



half of the building was scorched with thick grey black smoke which would come from what we call an unclean burn. It's a lot of carbon and products of combustion not being burnt by the fire coming out. The flames were bright orange and yellow and had been burning for a while. It was now after 5:00am and the sky was dusk and getting lighter. The tower was very very badly damaged, there were no windows left in the upper floors. It looked as if nothing was left on any of the floors that we could see. We were getting really frustrated because we had been at the Command Unit holding area for at least 4 hours waiting to be deployed. Some of my crew were listening in on their radios and hearing what was going on and any updates, I don't turn mine on until I needed to as the battery life isn't great.

At 9:00am the Watch Manager running the RVP told me to assemble my crew and to head to the Command Unit at the incident ground for further instructions. We followed the directions given and after about 5 minutes we arrived at the tower with the College being on our right. The closer you got to the tower the more you could see, the whole tower from the 4th or 5th floors all the way to the top on all four sides were completely destroyed by the fire. I don't know how many floors the Grenfell Tower had but there was nothing left on the outside of the building and it looked like a skeleton shell. There were pockets of fire visibly burning in the flats, it was completely destroyed. I saw the two machines from Surrey, they were both on the grass area by the college. The ALP was extended up and in working position and providing water on the tower from the jets.

We walked around the back of the tower and under a walkway near the park leading into a court yard where we assembled along with a lot of other crews waiting to be committed into the tower. There was a HP - hydraulic platform - parked up under the walkway, not sure why it was there, or if it had been used. We never found the second Command Unit and all the crews were following each other and joining the back of the queue. There were Station Managers and Group Managers all outside the tower ushering everyone around to the holding area. Once in the holding area we remained with a lot of other crews and were in single file along the wall on the right hand side and moving forward. As you neared the archway it opened up and a big group of firefighters in BA sets were waiting there. When you were called to enter the tower you would be assisted with the help of police with riot shields held above your head as you ran into the ground floor lobby.

The area at the base of the tower was littered with burning debris continuously falling from the tower, among this were pieces of burning cladding, twisted pieces of metal and falling debris. I was in the queue for a few minutes when a Watch Manager who had been walking up and down the queue came up to me

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

and told me to drop my BA set off as he couldn't use me as a wearer and they needed a Watch Manager to report to the Bridge Head to take over the committing of BA crews. I took my BA set off and placed it at the back of the holding area and re-joined the Watch Manager whose name I don't know.

I went to the front of the queue and as I faced the front of the tower I had the college to my left and the grass area was going around the back of the building and a high wall to the right. There was a plastic or glass canopy above the main door and with the assistance of a police officer holding a riot shield above my head to protect me from the falling debris we ran into the building.

As I entered the main lobby area through the right hand door, I did not hear any fire alarms sounding or see any sprinklers. I wasn't aware of any smoke management systems in place and the smoke seemed to be venting itself. I could see about 6 other fire fighters in the lobby area. To my right through another door was the atrium area and the lifts. The lifts were not being used and I saw a large open staircase going up to my right with lots of water running down like a waterfall. I turned right and started to walk up the stairs, the first part being glass fronted. After climbing two flights of stairs to the top, there was a door leading to a normal staircase case which I took to the 4th floor where the Bridgehead was. The Bridgehead would always be 2 floors below the fire and crews with BA sets would be committed from here. As I walked up the stairs the walls were getting warmer, there was visible smoke and it was starting to get a bit darker. I reached the 4th floor and as I walked out into the lobby area which was the Bridgehead it was absolute confusion and chaos.

I arrived there about 9:15 to 9:30 and there were lots of Senior Officers of all ranks. Group Managers, Station Managers, there was also another Watch Manager there. I could hear a lot of shouting going on, decisions were being made others over ruling those decisions. There was a Group Manager who I don't know, he was making his own decisions. Tim FROST the Group Manager who was running the Bridgehead told me that he wanted me to brief the crews for committing and what floors they were going to and what their task would be. His actual brief to me was that the FSG calls had stopped now and no more people were being rescued. He also mentioned our protocols had gone out the window as did our health and safety policy. We have a policy procedure as to the wearing of BA sets. If a firefighter wears the EDBA - extended duration breathing apparatus - they would only be allowed to be committed once, unless absolutely necessary, but shouldn't really be used again. SDBA - standard duration breathing apparatus - wearers should only be allowed to wear twice. His brief to me was that I would have firefighters coming to me wearing EDBA that have already been committed 3 times already maybe even

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

4 times. If they are fit enough and well enough and you think they are okay, then let them go, you won't stop them from doing their job in cases like this.

The crews would be briefed and what they are now looking for are casualties and to put any fires out, they would take with them a branch to connect to the dry riser and a hose. They would work around the left wall and through the flats and extinguish any fires and clear that floor. If they came across any casualties, they were to assess the casualty for signs of life and if they are deceased to make a note of where they are and report the full details of where that person was back to the Bridgehead. That was my briefing to give the crews committing into the building. I had a BAECO - Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Officer - and they would have a telemetry board ECB - Entry Control Board - actually I had two BAECO that day. The BAECO is responsible for managing the ECB. The officer would monitor the remaining time available to the BA wearers and alert the officer in charge if the wearer did not return to the BAECO in the allotted time. The BAECO would place the BA tally (a yellow tag that activates and deactivates the BA set. It identifies the set number and who the wearer is) from the BA sets into the telemetry board. As we were committing both EDBA and SDBA I had two ECB running, one for each. Details of where the crews were going would be recorded on the ECB. The ECB could have up to 10 crews at a time recorded on the board, they would be in pairs and upon their return they would be wiped off and a new pair added. It was decided that EDBA wearers would go up to the higher floors and try to extinguish the fires and the SDBA wearers would follow up behind and put out any pockets of fire and noting where any casualties were. Thermal imaging cameras could be used in heavy smoke filled rooms to see where the heat sources are so you could fight the fire, however it does have its limitations.

The Bridgehead was becoming very chaotic as it was only a small lobby area and people were packed in. I decided that from where I was standing against the wall, the stairway entrance was to my right and the lifts across in front of me to the left. Behind me were two flats, we got into one flat on the right and put EDBA crews in there whilst they were waiting to be committed. The flat on my left was also broken into and we put the SDBA crews in there, this freed up space in the lobby area. I remember seeing the front room window in this flat had completely melted and a discussion began as to how easily fire could get into the flats if it had travelled up the outside. I personally went into each flat and briefed the crews and when they were called forward they would come to the BAECO and their details were put onto the ECB. They would then be committed to the floor they were assigned to and carry out their task. Once the task was completed or their turnaround time was due they would return to me and tell me what they saw or

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

what they did and I would pass that information to the Bridgehead who would then decide the next course of action needed.

While I was on the Bridgehead I was joined by Station Manager Sam KAZMANLI, I know he used to be at Soho. He was doing what they learnt from the fire at Lakanal House, he was writing the details given to us from the firefighters on the wall in china graph pencil. The details such as what floor numbers, what flat numbers, what floors they had cleared, what floors still had fires burning, where they saw casualty's and details like that. If he didn't get all the information recorded, he would wait until I was finished and personally check and confirm with the firefighter that what he had written was correct. I couldn't give an exact number but I committed a lot of crews into the building that day. I wasn't personally told but there had been problems with the radio communications and my communications to the crews were all verbal.

All the time I was on the bridgehead it was located on the 4th floor, we had committed EDBA crews up to as far as the 7 & 8 floors. The main issue being reported back to us was that there was so much hose and equipment on the stairs it was a struggle to walk up and down safely. With the stairway being so narrow crews couldn't even walk side by side. I don't know the exact time but I made a suggestion to Group Manager Tim FROST on the bridgehead to let's stop committing crews and start to take the hoses out from the floors that didn't need it. There were open ends with just running water spilling everywhere and so many hoses were laid out and it was unsafe. We put crews in without BA and started getting all the hoses and equipment out from the stairs. From that point on we started committing crews again, they would take in a hose and branch and plug into the dry riser on the floor they were working on. Once they had finished on that floor and the hose and branch were not required, they would shut off the dry riser and bring the hose and branch back down with them to the bridgehead and that way keeping the stairs clear. This tactic worked and continued throughout the whole time I was on the bridgehead right up until I was released at about 15:00. During my time on the bridgehead I didn't see any casualties being brought down. The only reports of casualties that were made back to me were about deceased persons and their locations. We did receive information from the crews that in some of the flats the gas pipes had ruptured and they were unable to extinguish the fires and move on.

The gas board had arrived and they shut off the gas supply but we still had reports of gas in the pipes. The gas board apparently dug up the gas pipe and capped it off completely. The fire service has a stay put policy and we recommend unless a fire is in your flat then you should stay put as you would be safer and this is the advice you would be given. If the Incident Commander on ground level believes that the

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

protocol is not suitable for that incident, then it could be changed. I don't know of any occasion where that has happened or whether it was changed at Grenfell Tower. Flats are designed to keep the fire contained within the premises. I do remember a very large overweight deceased male in the stairwell, I'm not sure of the exact floor or the time but it was reported back to us by the crews that he was in the way and would have to be moved for safety reasons. A crew of 4 were tasked to go up into the stairway and to remove that person from the stairway and into the lobby area.

I do recall that at some point, I'm not sure of the time, there was a suggestion to move the bridgehead from the 4th floor up to the 7th floor. This decision was made by officers of higher ranks than me as it was deemed that the fires were all out up until the 9th floor and the bridgehead would still be two floors below the fire. This decision was made due to the BA crews being committed under air from the 4th floor but due to the time available to them they were only getting to the same floors as other crews and having to turnaround and come back down. By moving the bridgehead up to the 7th floor, we could commit crews up to the higher floors in the building. The Group Manager came over to us and told us we are moving up to the 7th floor, we gathered all the equipment and all the EDBA and SDBA crews moved up to the 7th floor. This decision to move the bridgehead would have gone through the chain of command and also via the Command Unit that we were moving.

When we were walking up the stairs I noticed they were clear of hoses and equipment and there were no casualties or obstructions. The lighting was not very good and most of us used our own personal torches to see. I could smell smoke but not visibly see it and the walls were smoke damaged all the way up to the 7th floor. After we arrived on the 7th floor the bridgehead was set up and the BA crews were held in the nearby flats the same as on the 4th floor. It wasn't too long after we set up the bridgehead on the 7th floor that I was with a Station Manager and we both agreed that it was getting rather warm where we were. I couldn't leave the ECB so he decided he would go and have a walk around. He came back and reported to Group Manager Tim Frost, that we have to move the bridgehead back down as there was a fire on the 6th floor. We had only been there about 10 to 15 minutes so we had to gather all the equipment up and all the BA crews were told to relocate back down to the 4th floor. The bridgehead remained here and we continued as before up until I was relieved.

My relief was another Watch Manager who I don't know. I gave him the briefing that I had been given and I showed him the two ECB and fully updated him as to where crews were within the building. He was

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

**OFFICIAL**

shown where the EDBA and SDBA crews were holding up and what their brief would be. Once he was fully updated I was released from the bridgehead at about 15:00.

I went down to the ground floor and left the tower by the same entrance that I originally came in with the overhead canopy. Everyone seemed to be going in and out of this door with the assistance of police and their shields protecting them from falling debris. It was mid- afternoon and daylight and I was looking for my crew and I found Mike DENNY. I had seen Mike a couple of times as he is an EDBA wearer and I had committed him into the building a couple of times when I was on the bridgehead. The rest of my crew were gathered by the grass area near to the college and the refreshment area, they had all done what they needed to do and once they were finished they had to wait for me. I sat with my crew for a while and had refreshments and I briefed Group Manager Jamie JENKINS and Steve NORMAN as they would be taking over the bridgehead.

The tower only had whispers of smoke coming from it. There were small pockets of fire throughout the building, there was no structure to the building. Some of the floors higher up you could see right through to the other side. There were no windows or cladding and the tower very extensively damaged throughout.

We booked out with the Command Unit and returned to our appliance which was where we had left it and returned to Addington between 4 and 5 o'clock. There was a message sent via the printer that crews that had been at the Grenfell Tower fire had to complete an attached document and make notes of their role at the tower. This would then be emailed to Charlie PUDSEY. I think I made my notes the next day, I can't be sure. We were also told that we could stand down until midnight as the day shift, Blue Watch, would stay on and do overtime if required. I did hear that by later that day crews had got all the way through the building and up to the top floors. I couldn't say at what time the fire was declared completely out. I know crews were still going there for up to a week after the fire but I never returned. I didn't watch the news or any reports about the tower and I didn't want to know anymore. In all the years I have been a firefighter I have never seen a fire like this one.

Throughout the time I was at Grenfell Tower I never received any injuries or had any near misses. What I was aware of was that we were exhausting our EDBA crews as some were entering the tower more than once. When I was released from the bridgehead and left the tower, there were a lot of crews that had been

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL**

Statement of: BROOKS, GARY

Form MG11(T)

Page 11 of 11

sitting around for at least 6 hours with sets waiting to go in and not used. Our resources were not used to the fullest.

I have signed a copy of my original notes and these are my exhibit GB/1 with a seal number of MPSZ13185865.

Signature: G BROOKS  
2018

Signature witnessed by:

**OFFICIAL**