

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: CAMPBELL, GEOFFREY

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 15 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 CAMPBELL

Date: 21/01/2018

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

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This statement has been prepared from the information I gave during an audio recorded interview with DC Katie BENNETT and DC Heather RIGDEN on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 between 1029 hours and 1549hrs. This took place at PADDINGTON FIRE STATION. Also present was Fire Union Representative Barry SMITH.

This statement is in relation to my involvement as a Fire Fighter at GRENFELL TOWER FIRE 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE - 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017. In this statement I will mention my role and duties as a fire fighter during 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE, I will also mention other colleagues who I was with during this time.

I will be referring to GRENFELL TOWER and its layout thorough out my statement. During this interview I referred to two (2) maps of the area around GRENFELL TOWER and four (4) diagrams that I have drawn of the areas in GRENFELL TOWER itself, to indicate and help explain where I remembered things being on the night/early hours of the morning. I also referred to my notes I made on my return to PADDINGTON FIRE STATION on 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017 at approximately 1PM. I was asked to make contemporaneous notes as they were fresh in my mind. I have exhibited these seven (7) documents already in a statement prepared at the end of the interview: GDC/1-GDC/7.

I am currently a fire fighter under development at PADDINGTON fire station and am attached to PADDINGTON RED WATCH. I'm in development but hopefully I will be fully qualified in the next few months I have a few presentations that I have to give to help educate my peers and I have to do my

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2018

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driving course but in terms of practical elements I've signed off most of those. I have been at this station for 18 months My first day at training school was 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and then my first day as a fire fighter here at PADDINGTON was 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016, I spent three (3) months at training school.

The role of a fire fighter under development is like an apprenticeship. You gather evidence for eighteen (18) months - three (3) years. Once you have enough evidence it all gets submitted, if people above think you have all met all criteria, you will then be promoted to a fire fighter, similar to the probationary thing like police. My training was at PLASTOW, then went to a purpose training house at PARK ROYAL then was based at HARROW Fire Station for the last couple of weeks and within the last week of training you get posted. I got posted to Red Watch here at PADDINGTON area code A21 . I have attended a range of incidents, including the HIGH RISE fire at SHEHERDS BUSH, a fire in a pub involving a deep fat fryer and general firefighting incidents.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE I was riding fire appliance A212.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017 I started Work at about 2000hrs which is the time of the change of watch. The 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017 was my first night shift. The shift pattern is two days and two nights days start at 0930am and finish at 2000hrs, nights start at 2000hrs and finish at 0930hrs.

I think the call to GRENFELL TOWER came out at about 0115hrs on the 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017 but I can't be absolutely sure about the time. At 2000hrs I started to check the Breathing Apparatus (BA set, which I will describe later) I would have also have had something to eat at approximately 2015-2030 hrs It was a standard night and I think I was on a computer typing up some evidence, and was also watching some TV. I think I went to bed just before the bells went down at approximately 1230-0100hrs. The bells alert you of a call and it comes over the Tannoy system in the station. All the lights come on and people wake up. You are told of all the machines that need to go out. I think at this stage it was only pump appliance (fire engine) A212 that got called out. The call comes out on a print from the tele- printer in the watch room. It is normally the driver that goes to the printer and tears it off. The print will have a description of incident and the address to attend. We had a full red watch on that night, I think there was seventeen (17) fire fighters on.

I then went to straight to the back of truck and put my fire gear on. This consisted of my Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) which consisted of leggings, tunic, a flash hood helmet, gloves fire safety boots and my work wear underneath. I also had my equipment on the outside which I shall describe later,

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including my breathing apparatus (BA) but I wasn't wearing this in the pump. You are not supposed to wear your Breathing Apparatus in the truck but I already had my shoulder harness on, it is like a backpack with a shoulder strap and a waist strap. I had a face mask on around my neck. I was ready to go, I just needed to release BA from the clip when I arrived. It is procedure not to wear BA in the truck. I will describe BA in greater detail in this statement.

I was riding the Pump appliance that night call sign A212. The pump I was riding carried the following equipment - a nine (9) metre ladder, a combi tool, to cut open cars, tool boxes, sand, axes, sledge hammers, a light weight portable pump used for FF pumping out floods A Breathing Apparatus (BA) board. This monitors the tally so someone can monitor the air in the BA. The BA is the Breathing Apparatus it is like what you see firefighters (FF) wear on the TV. You wear a face mask with a cylinder on your back with air in. This enables us to breathe in the fires we go into. My BA set was set Number 351 which was positioned on the back of the pump. A tally is like a computer chip that communicates with the telemetry module in the BA Bodyguard, this monitors your breathing rate and how much air you are using and how long you have left to leave the building. The Tally communicates off the BA board and informs the fire fighter (FF) who is watching it to see who is using the air and who needs to withdraw. The fire fighters(FF) on the ground monitor the tally. Pump A212 also carries, a Radiation detection equipment, step blocks, Personal floatation kits which are lifejackets, Traffic cones, Short extension ladder, hose ramps, buckets and spades. It also carries ten (10) length of seventy (70) MM of hose and four (4) length of forty (40) MM of hose. There is a hose reel on each side which is permanently connected. The pump also carries one thousand four hundred (1400) litres of water and has four (4) Breathing Apparatus (BA) and five (5) spare cylinders for the BA. At the change of watch you are given your riding position in the pump by the officer in charge and that position should have a BA set. You are then required at the change of watch to test the set for no leaks, whether it has enough air and that it is in a servable condition, including that the safety line is working, this is the cable. We also have cable cutters in these sets to assist us if the cables get tangles whilst we are firefighting.

We left shortly after the call came out, think it was me time after 0115hrs I think we left with ninety (90) seconds of receiving the call. There is a countdown clock and I had all my kit on within ninety (90) seconds after the alert. I think A212 was the only pump that went out at this stage and the Turn Table Ladder (TL) was mobilised here at PADDINGTON but I am not completely sure as we driving out of PADDINGTON.

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The pump varies as to how many Fire Fighters it carries on board but on that night it carried five (5) of us, the Crew Manager (CM) was CM GALLAHER who was sitting in the front passenger seat, The driver was fire fighter (FF) KEANE, FF BETTINSON was sat on the opposite side to me. FF WOLFENDEN was in the middle in the rear seat, I sat behind the CM in the rear left hand seat on the passenger side. On the pump we talked about where we were going and what we were going to. This is called on arrival tactics, we would also plan what to do when we get off the truck. I remember that the CM said that the Tip Sheet (print out of the call) said something about fire on the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) floor, he read it out and told us what we were going to so we had some description in our heads to what we were going to and how to plan it. I was talking to the FF in the back of the pump about grabbing as much hose as we could when we got there, I think that instruction came from CM GALLAGHER.

I remember that the tip sheet said something about a high rise, I didn't know the area. I can't remember where they said it was but think someone said something about the forth (4<sup>th</sup> floor). So I was thinking what I would need to collect from the pump once I got there. I was thinking High Rise but it wasn't on my ground and I didn't know anything about the area. I then thought of the High Rise procedure. I was thinking what I needed to get off of the truck. If it is deemed a High Rise Fire there is a certain procedure for firefighters to adhere to. For example the search sector should be above the fire floor. The fire sector which is the fire floor needs to be two (2) floors below and the lobby sector needs to be two (2) floors below the fire floor. It is all done in compartments I didn't know where the fire floor was until I got to GRENFELL TOWER I was thinking that I needed to grab a hose and some breaking in gear from the pump when we arrived. I thought that I would carry as much equipment as possible so I could make it easier for those firefighters (FF) already there and what I would need to help cover the water jets which are larger hoses.

I think we arrived at GRENFELL TOWER at 0125hrs, now being the 14<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017. I am not familiar of the stations ground as haven't been here that long. I can't be certain of the route we took in the pump. I didn't see much as I was on the back. I knew that we were travelling west. Once I am off our stations ground I am lost, I'm not originally from LONDON, I know this stations ground ok but have only been here for eighteen (18) months I think we headed west out of the fire station, I was a bit lost when we approached LADBROKE GROVE.

I could see trees and houses going fast really quickly whilst I was in the truck. When approaching the tower I saw flames coming out of the tower. I was looking out of the left hand window and occasionally

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looking through front window looking forward about sixty (60) cm see at the front. I saw the Tower for spilt second on my side, we must been approaching from NORTH EAST as I saw it out of my window, between the bank of trees and another block of flats I was like f\*\*\*ing hell boys we have got something here, flames were coming out of the building. Straight away I thought of the SHEPHERDS BUSH fire which I worked on. On that occasion the fire went up and outside of the building. I said that the fire was outside the building and that we needed to get our shit together. I saw the brightness of the flames but didn't count the floors as to where the flames were coming from. I just assumed that was where we were going. I can't remember the side that I saw the flames coming out of window, but it must have been from the original fire compartment. Flames were just punching out of the windows I just saw flames coming out of the building. I must have seen them from the north east side. The boys in the truck didn't see it, I think it was just me who saw flames punching out the side. As we drove along WESTBOURNE PARK towards GRENFELL I could still see flames from the building very briefly I can't remember what side, but there were other buildings in the way. I said to the guys that the building is punching out flames, and that we needed to get our BA sets on.

When I saw the fire, it was a calm night was a very warm evening, it had been warm all day. The Tower was couple of a hundred meters away from the truck, it was pitch black outside which made it easier to see flames.

The journey from PADDINGTON took eight (8) - ten (10) mins. As previously stated I think we arrived at 0125- 0126hrs I can't remember street name - I have shown the position of A212 on the one of the maps.

The map shows route I took from truck to the TOWER as soon as I got off and got the equipment I put a bit of a jog on to get to the TOWER I noticed other FIRE ENGINES, officers wearing white helmets which consists of Watch Managers and above. I did see some residents walking around, they appeared to look stressed. I didn't pay much attention my main focus was to get to the building with as much equipment as I could carry. Once I got out of the truck I noticed flames coming out of side of the building, they came out of an angle. Trees obscured my view but flames were punching out of the North East side of the building. Again I thought F\*\*\*ing hell the flames are climbing out of the side of the building. I saw Firefighters running around setting up hoses and branches. Flames were coming out north east side of the building, I think they were on the fourth (4th) side of the building, I wasn't counting. I can't remember what equipment I saw, I noticed North KENSINGTON Pump under the covered area to the TOWER.

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Once we arrived I got straight off the truck and within four (4) seconds I got the lockers on the truck open and got the hoses out. I took two (2) lengths of forty five (45) MM hose from the truck. I noticed that flames were coming out of the side of the building. I think FF WOLENDEN and FF BETTINSON were behind me. I entered through the covered Area into GRENFELL TOWER I thought because I was wearing a BA set the best place for me to report was ENTRY CONTROL that's why I went straight there, into the lobby area and dropped the hoses. There were already loads of fire fighters on the second (2nd) floor lobby area. The Normal Practice is of you are in BA you should go to the ENTRY CONTROL. So then Commander knows what resources he has got. There is no point in hanging around. I was reporting for duty at the BRIDGEHEAD. The Bridgehead is positioned at least two levels below the fire floor and it is where the Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Point is located.

I went inside the TOWER with the hoses. I think I entered through a big glass door, I think a resident let me in, I can't remember. I went into the covered area in the TOWER. When we first went into the tower, as walked into the building and dropped my hose, there was a family of people coming down the stairs from the mezzanine level to the ground floor. They came through the glass door in the foyer, a lady and two girls and a lady. They said "where do we go?" The Mum didn't speak very good English but I communicated with the younger daughter. I said "Is this all of you?" to which she replied "yes." I said to her "Just make sure you stay outside the building. Don't under any circumstances go back to your house. We directed them outside. They were coming down by themselves. They were Islamic looking, as the Mum had a head dress on. The two girls were in their early teens I didn't speak to any other residents.

The main entrance was a big glass door, again I can't remember if it was open or closed. I used one of my door wedges to wedge it open as we needed it open. The Lobby was clear at that stage, as we got there at the early stages of the fire. Before I got to the second (2nd) floor, I dropped the two (2) length of hose at the side of the wall inside the lobby. There was another glass door to the stairwell, please see my diagram relating to the layout of the lobby which I have exhibited. There was another entrance way that lead out to another bigger lobby. I think this was the first (1st) BA holding area that I went to, again I refer to my diagram. It was like another entrance, like a passage way. The ground level was like a communal waiting area, this was where the Breathing Apparatus (BA) area was. The stairs then went up to mezzanine level. If you were to look down into lobby area you would see the Mezzanine level on the second (2nd) floor. This was where the initial BA entry control level was. It has to be two (2) clear floors from fire level, the fire was on the forth (4<sup>th</sup>) floor. The Lobby area was fairly clear, it had hoses (a few were mine) and

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residents were self-evacuating. There was no smoke, no clutter no water on the floor. I spent a few minutes in there. I heard WM O'KEEFE from the Mezzanine level on his radio saying we needed branches (nozzles on the end of the hoses which connects the water). I thought that there was enough guys up there. I thought I would go for a run around and try and find some FF branches from the trucks, but there weren't any. There were about ten (10) Firefighters in the lobby at that stage, wearing yellow helmets, this means that they are either firefighters or crew managers.

At some point I can't remember exactly when I saw GM GALLAGHER and we checked the lifts, to see if the firefighting lift shaft was working. One of the doors was open and it was Choco-block full of smoke. It couldn't be used I think that there were two (2) lift shafts, and I don't know how many firefighting lifts there were in GRENFELL. Normally it works by switching the lift to a FF lift by using a special drop key that turns it into a Fire control lift which, it comes down to the lobby. Once in fire control setting it needs a person to hold the button. There was no point trying to use the fire control lift as smoke was bursting out. The whole lift was comprised because of the smoke and there wasn't any air in it. I remembered smoke pouring out. I can't remember if CM Ben GALLAGHER put the drop key in or just pushed button. I thought it would be best to use the stairs.

I still had my BA set on my back, I then looked for more equipment out of the building as requested by WM O'KEEFE and came back out to try and scramble as much equipment as I could from the truck but our truck was empty. The hose needed a branch which is the nozzle that goes around the end of the hose to create the jet of water out of the hose.

Whilst I was outside I saw my CM who is my governor, he is called Steve COLLINS. He saw me and stated that he needed a deluge tip for the ground monitor. This is needed so that water can be shot up in the air like a massive water fountain. It gets set up to the machine, I am not sure which one it got set up to. It can shoot a jet of water at thirty (30) Metres in the air, at one thousand seven hundred (1700) litres a minute. The Deluge Tip was in the left hand middle locker of the truck. I ran to a machine not sure which one and gave it to him and he set up the ground monitor.

I then went back into the LOOBY area of the TWB then the Mezzanine level to be committed and queued up, awaiting to be sent in. You would always go into a building as a pair. I was paired up with FF Steve MILLS who I call MILLSEY he also works at PADDINGTON. We then received our brief from Watch Manager (WM) O'KEEFE. He was the BRIDGEHEADCOMMANDER I think he was a WM at

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2018

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KENSINGTON as I have seen him before at incidents. We were on the second (2) floor. He instructed us that there was a fire survival guidance call FSGC from flat One seven five (175) on the twentieth (20th) floor. A FSGC is when someone calls the fire brigade and they stay on phone with the operations call handler who can then give them fire survival guidance. For example they will ask how hot it is in the room, and whether the caller has difficulty breathing. The information gets passed to the BRIDGE END COMMANDER who will then give the firefighters a brief regarding the FSGC. Our brief was that there was a lady that was in distress that needed rescuing and needed us to go up and take care of her until the fire was out via the stairwell.

We wasn't told about anything about the condition of the fire at that stage. We was now wearing our Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus - This is what enables us to breathe when we are firefighting. A Cylinder is attached on your back which has three hundred (300) bar of air pressure. That will give you around thirty four (34) minutes of working duration. The air pressure goes down the harder you work, or the quicker you work. EDBA is Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus, this is what the fire Rescue Unit (FRU) carries. It consists of Two (2) cylinders, it still has three hundred (300) bar of air pressure but gives you a longer time of forty five (45) minutes I know that PADDINGTON has a FRU.

We then put our Tally (which is a yellow object that connects to our Body Guard, it records the name of the wearer, the pressure of the set and detects as to when you should leave the building) onto the Ba Entry Control Board. This is an electronic board like a white board. You write the time and the time that you were committed to the job. This was situated in the Lobby area and this gets manned by a firefighter.

We started to head up the stairwell FF MILLS was in front of me. I was carrying the hose. We need to carry fire fighter media if we were going beyond the fire floor we also needed a branch (this gets attached to the end of the hose to skirt out water) that's what would save our lives if we were to open a door with flames punching out. We would then the close door, go back down the building to plug the hose into the dry rising main. This is a hollow pipe that runs up the middle of the building I am not sure if there are dry risers on every floor on GRENFELL I didn't plug mine in as got to the point where we had to turn around and come back.

There was a distinct layer of smoke the further you went up. The fourth (4th) floor was full of smoke it was a dark acrid brown colour and the further you went up the blacker and blacker it got. It was smoky and murky, there was not much lighting. I only had my torch for light. It was congested in the thin

Signature: G CAMPBELL  
2018

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stairwell, and the movement was very slow going. The stairwell was thin and narrow I had to hunch myself up when people came passed. It was one (1) - one (1) and a half metres in width, it was not fit for purpose. It was very crowded at this stage and very smoky. As we were travelling up the stairs I was trying to do some land marking, this is looking for floor numbers, and counting the floors that were travelling up to. Some walls had floor numbers on. You could see that the light fitting had been fitted directly under where the floor numbers where, the floor numbers were obscured by the light fittings. Some firefighters had written the floor numbers with their gloves. But because of the soot from the fire this would only last for a while. I think I counted up to floor ten (10) but then I lost count. My main intention was to get to floor twenty (20). At one point after all the congestion it was just myself and MILLSY. I think during the congestion we stopped about four (4) -five (5)times in the stairwells, I think this was up to floors three (3) till eleven (11). We would wait for people in front of us to move, it was like a procession at times. I couldn't describe anyone I just had a knowledge of their presence. I think these people were about a foot in distance away from me, I could just make out the fire fighters helmets I stuck to my brief, when I saw residents come down I would let the other firefighters pass. I think I saw seven (7) - eight (8) firefighters coming down. It was congested by the doors to the lobby as I think they had single doorways where people were trying to get out. Once we made it passed congestion we made a bit of headway. I was carrying a hose and MILLSY had the branch. That's when I noticed MILLSY's air was low, we had been in the TOWER for ten (10) - fifteen (15) minutes. That when we both checked our air.

By the time got to the fourteenth (14) or fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) floor I could only see only Steve MILLS and myself. We then checked our BA sets and Steve MILLS was operating on one hundred and fifty (150) bar, so if we kept going to the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) the risk was either both of us would run out of air. So we had a chat on the stairwell and there was no way we would have made it up to the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) floor without causing other fire fighter (FF) to come and rescue us. You will always work on the lowest reading as you always operate as a crew and MILLSYS's reading was the lowest. At that stage we had a chat and decided that we were going to head back down. In training school we are told that you have to remember what job you are doing but you also have to remember that you have to have enough air to get yourself out of the situation. You need to be mindful of the job you are doing but need enough air to get out. MILLSY was down to half way so we needed to get out. Part of me thought about continuing on. We had no idea about the fire developing on the outside. If we did continue on the little air that we had and no radio communications it could have been a firefighter emergency so I had to think logically about what to

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2018

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do and the whole situation. I thought I had to go back down and give enough Information to the BOROUGH COMMANDER about what we had done.

The normal procedure is that when you are low on air you use your radio to tell control and then press a button on your BA set's bodyguard to tell them that you are coming out. However they had no way of knowing where we were because the radio communications weren't working.

It was safer to come down as may have run out of air before got to bottom. I was sweating in my kit due to all the smoke I went through. I was warm but not unbearably hot, the smoke just got thicker the further we went up. I wasn't out of breath and wasn't panicking. The Standard Duration Breathing Set weighs fifteen and a half (15 ½) Kilos and I think the PPE weights then, so you are carrying an extra twenty five (25) kilos of weight on you.

I then tried to contact the BRIDGEHEAD thorough radio communication but my radio communications were not working. I wanted to get through to Entry control, either to the entry control officer, the communications officer or the Bridge Head Commander to tell them that we were coming down as was low on air and couldn't make it to the twentieth (20) floor and an EDBA crew was needed to do this I tried to get through to communications on two separate occasions, I called up stating my call sign and waited for acknowledgement but there was nothing. The radio communications were dreadful, I think because there were so many firefighters trying to get through. The building was like a concrete box this must have affected the signal range. As when I was getting to the lower floors I could hear more radio traffic. In my experience high volume of radio traffic can affect the radios stopping you from being able to communicate to control. Water can also affect the radios from working properly.

My radio is a hand held radio similar to a Walkie-Talkie. It is personal issue and after each shift I leave it in my locker. It was fully charged. I was on channel six (6) as that was the designated channel for BA wearers, whilst we were on route to the scene we were on channel one (1). The breathing apparatus has a device called a Body Guard attached to it. It has a voluntary withdrawal button on the RH side of it. It has an LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) screen and it will tell you how much air pressure you have and calculates how much time you roughly have left until you run out of air, then the warning buzzer will go off. Once it reaches eighty four (84) Bar pressure it will signal that you need to leave the building. By pressing the voluntary withdrawal button Entry control will know that you are voluntarily withdrawing from the scene. However I just couldn't get through to control via the radio. That's when we came down.

Signature: G CAMPBELL  
2018

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As we were traveling down I saw PADDINGTON'S EDBA crew who were part of the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU). They were coming up as we were coming down. I think this was on the tenth (10) floor. I think CM WIGLEY was in charge and then behind him was FF (Firefighter) ROBERTS, FF HARRIS, FF GILLAN AND FF GONZALEZ. In training school we get told to share information to other crew members that we meet on the job. I said that they needed to go the twentieth floor (20<sup>th</sup>) as we couldn't make it and that MILLSEY was running out of air as well as myself so we had to go back down and couldn't complete our brief. I don't remember what their brief was, but I was informed after that they had to go to the top floor to set up a safe working platform using rescue gear and at some stage fight fire from the roof. I saw them for less than a minute and couldn't remember the full conversation, I think I mentioned about the FSGC and a woman was in flat one seven five (175), and that we couldn't make it to the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) floor.

On way down the stair well was congested again with FF. The visibility was now worse and it was getting hotter when we were travelling down. I wasn't aware of the fire at this stage or of any fires on the floors as that wasn't my brief. The heat wasn't unbearable as I have been in hotter fires but it wasn't comfortable. I wouldn't have liked to have just worn a tee shirt as I think that my skin might have blistered. The heat got hotter as you got closer to the fire floor or where the bulk of the congestion was. We decided to pull into one of the lobbies off the stairwell. I thought that because we never made our brief to the twentieth (20) floor I thought that maybe we could get someone out of this lobby. The floor lobbies had separate doors which led into the flats I think on about on the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) floor I am not completely sure, there was wispy smoke around the top parts of the ceiling, which wasn't too bad for visibility. One of the doors were open. As you came out of the stairwell and do a right go passed the lifts doors and around to the left there was a one bedroom apartment I think. The door was open I did a quick sweep and yelled out "is anybody home, is anybody home" I got no answer and from that ascertained that whoever was in there had left in such a hurry and were gone as they left the door open. MILLSEY went in further in the flat compared to what I did.

As I entered the flat I saw the main living area, I didn't sweep the whole apartment I just kept on shouting and announced that we were LONDON FIRE BRIGADE I just went into the first room (please see the diagram of the layout). I noticed a picture of a family on the desk top. I think the photograph was of a mother and daughter. I think the mother was a black African lady and was in her forties (40) I think the daughter was a teenager. I wouldn't recognise the picture again I only gave it a quick glance. I also saw furniture and a small table with trinkets on I saw the reception room and stuck my head through the door.

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2018

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I think this was the box room and saw coats hanging up. That was the room were you first walk into. All the lights were on, the residents must have just left. The doors were also open inside the flat. The condition in the flat was a bit better compared to the lobby. I think I was in there for forty seconds (40) - one (1) minute I walked out whilst MILLSEY was still in there. No one made themselves known to us I assumed that they had left and left the door open.

I then knocked on two other flat doors (which shown on route diagram). I knocked and waited, on opposite side. We then did a gage check and went back down as we were running out of air and decided we needed to leave as soon as possible.

We then kept going down the stairwell and then I think we got to about the fourth (4th) floor. It was congested with FF and was busy. As we came out of the lobby we came straight out down to the stairs 'visibility was still bad and it was very smoky. I just put my arm on wall and counted the steps, it's called safe movement. There were lights but is was murky. I held onto the bannister and then knew how to step down. I didn't hold onto it all the time. In training we are taught to do everything blind folded.

We met another crew of two (2) FF I first saw their backs I didn't know who they were, they had Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus with yellow cylinders on their backs They were evacuating a casualty that had mobility issues. I think she was a female. I couldn't really describe her apart from she had a females build, she wasn't slim but was slightly larger. She had mousey brown hair and was about five (5) foot seven (7). She couldn't walk and her feet were dragging along the stairs, they were hitting the stairs I tried to help out, but we caused more of a hindrance so we let the FF continue with rescue. I was behind them and lifted her feet up to help her down the stairs but I was getting in the way. I thought that if the FF were to fall over they would go face first as they had one arm over each shoulder and were doing a good job but they took up the whole of the stairwell and were causing congestion. So I went upstairs and got her wheelchair from another FF who had just thrown it out of the door I think we were on the forth (4) or fifth (5) floor. I grabbed it and folded it up. I took it down through the lobby, I handed it to the FF in the lobby.

I then went back to Entry control on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) floor, closed down my BA set, and got my tally out of the board. Myself and MILLSEY gave a quick debrief to WM O'KEEFE and advised him the best way to get to twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) floor was with Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) as our standard breathing apparatus only got us up to about the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) floor. I think MILLSEY did most of the

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talking. We also mentioned that we tried to help with a casualty but just got in the way. In a normal situation you would have a debrief, a chat with other FF and a drink. However this wasn't a normal situation. I then said to MILLSEY that this was going tits up and we needed to go back to our truck and do a Fire Ground A Test and get ourselves back up here. We then closed down. We took our face mask off and purged the air which was left,

The Body guard should then read as zero. I then went across to the FF who is covering the Entry Control Board, provided them with my name and took my Tally out of the board and plugged it back into my Body Guard. You have to purge the air to zero so that you are logged off of system probably.

The Mezzanine level was now total mayhem. I think at this point I had been in the Tower for about half an hour. As we had no air left in our tanks we needed to do a Fire Ground A Test. As I came down the stairs into the lobby I noticed more hoses and more FF's lining up outside the covered area. As I made my way out of the main entrance the whole area was lit up due to the fire. The whole area looked like it had been lit up by a stadium light, I could see orange flames from the building. I now saw fire all the way up the building, I didn't count the floors As I looked up I thought something had gone wrong, the flames had now gone up dramatically. You don't expect a building to burn like that, I thought Jesus Christ something has gone wrong here. I think the fire started in the North East side of the building now it had gone up and covered the East Side of the TOWER.

We then went out back to our truck A212, I think it was parked about two hundred (200) metres away from the entrance of the building. I think I walked under the covered area but I can't remember that much. At this point I was sweating in my PPE kit. I think I saw a few of Red Watch doing a fire Ground A Test. I think it was Jim CUTHBERT and Graeme SHAW, they must have come out a similar time as to what we did. I did a Fire Ground A Test at 0225am I made a note of the time. I did this on the road and you don't need to be connected to Pump to do this This got recorded on china-graph on the side of the engine. It took about five (5) minute. This gets logged back at the station. A Fire Ground A Test is where you take the old cylinder off and put a new one on. Three hundred (300) bar of pressure in the cylinder should give you thirty four (34) minutes of working time. We then filled our air tanks up so could go back into the building. My cylinder of air was almost empty. I took my old cylinder off and got a new cylinder and connected it to a backing plate. I tested that the body guard was working. So when you breathe down with the mask on you check that there are no leaks, and that the face mask and body guard are working. You

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then breathe in enough air to make sure it is working. This has a safeguard that has a sensor on it. FF

Steve MILLS was with me at this point.

I then noticed loads of people which included residents I asked for water as I had lost fluid. You can get cramps and a raised temperature once a you have just been in a fire. Normally you would have a sit down, and a rest before you would go back into a burning building. I took my tunic off as lost a lot of fluid and wanted to get my temperature down. The residents asked loads of questions for example if I went in there, is everyone ok. I didn't respond. We just asked them for some water. Most ran back and bought loads of bottled water back out. I think this took us about ten (10) minutes, I knew I lost fluid, I drank about a litre of water but I wasn't tired. I was aware that MILLSEY had ran out of air, fire fighters use air differently, he was a bigger human being compared to me so he uses up his air quicker.

I went back to marshalling area and there were a lot more fire fighters waiting to go in with BA sets I think I took the same route as before. Initially the BA holding area was under the covered area. Now the whole side of the tower was on fire. Bits started to fall off the side. Bits of steel, foam, aluminium, and cladding were falling down off the side of the building. As I was in the covered BA holding area I noticed that more FF were going in. The holding area had moved to the lobby on the ground floor, it was like a communal kitchen area. I got inside the Building through a tiny area, it was like a small opening, and it was the entry point to the communal area. I was at the back of the queue and orders were given for BA wearers to come forward but was told to be careful of the falling debris as it was dangerous I don't know what time I got back in the Tower, at a guess I think it might have been three (3am). I think it was waiting in the holding area of twenty (20) – thirty (30) minutes. At that point Danny COTTON turned up who is the Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade with two (2) other Deputy Assistant Commissioners and they gave us a bit of a pep talk. I am not sure who spoke but we were told that that this was a job that no one had ever seen before and the main job was to look after your number two (2) and get as many people out as you can and look after yourselves. I think that there were about forty (40) FF listening to this talk, The BA holding area was then moved. So in pairs we went out through a tiny opening and took the shortest route as possible to walk across passed a playground and a wall to the other side where the train tracks were. I noticed that there was a jet (hose) in the playground, it never moved the whole time I was there. (Please see on the map the route I took). A lot of debris was landing on the walkway. There was now a small opening into the building. It wasn't a window it was just an opening, it was like a lockable thin doorway. (Diagram shows the small opening).

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I went into the lobby area, which was situated on the ground floor of the tower. I think I was waiting for twenty (20) minutes. I noticed people were coming out with casualties from the stairs. We were then asked to evacuate the building at two (2) at a time and wait, as at that time the sides of the building were falling off and it's was more dangerous for us to be coming in and out. The idea was to have the Breathing Apparatus (BA) marshalling area in a safe area. We waited in area for about hour (please see the map I have exhibited). I then noticed police were there with riot shields, helping ferrying people I and out. I am not sure who but someone in the fire brigade called for FFS who already had worn BA to get a riot shield to help people ferry people in and out. I then got a riot shield and was now at the front of the queue, but before I ferried anyone out a Crew Manager CM in a white helmet that stated that he needed Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) wearers. He stated that it was a priority for anyone with an EDBA qualification to go to main control area and pick up an EDBA set. I didn't know who had given the order as I have only been in this role for eighteen (18) months but I knew he had a white helmet on. I have got a qualification to use EDBA, firefighters who work at Fire Rescue Units will use the EDBA sets I think that there are eight (8) or nine (9) FRU, these include CHELSEA, BATTERSEA EUSTON, PADDINGTON AND WEMBLEY. You get taught to use it in a more controlled way, with more controlled working habits, as you are under the air for longer so you have the potential to lose more fluid. It made more sense for me to get an EDBA set I went around the area to look for a set. I didn't know where main control area was so I asked a few people. I got directed to the other side of tower where the fitness centre was I linked up with FF SHAW and FF MILLS I think we walked up STATION ROAD and up BRAMLEY ROAD. I think we went the long way round as we didn't know any other way. We didn't know where the area was set up, we walked passed a Command Unit. I wasn't sure where this was situated. We asked some FF the way and they pointed to the same way that we were going. I think it took five (5) - ten (10) minutes I picked up a set and a cylinder from main control area. I was next to a children's playground on other side of the building. I then walked back the same way. However we wasn't allowed to enter without a cylinder cover but they didn't have any at main control. So I walked around to other EDBA wearers who finished with their sets and took theirs. You couldn't go in without a cylinder cover as it is a safety device on the set. It has these straps to stop cable entanglement if your set gets caught up in cables you can get trapped, that's why you need a cylinder cover. I power marched back within five (5) minutes to the BA holding area and conducted another Fire Ground A Test at 0625hrs on the EDBA set. I filled out a book that came with the set, but don't know where it ended up, I dropped it on a pile on the floor, it is described as a salvage sheet which you can see on the diagram. The book will

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end up in the watch room My SDBA set log book was in the watch room at PADDINGTON. But the EDBA set was fresh out of packet, so I filled that book out by the holding area.

It was now getting lighter outside and there seemed to be more residents coming out. The whole Western side of the building was now alight. I think during this time I was waiting around for about two (2) or (4) hours I had a bit of a rest and had a bottle of coke and a packet of crisps as there were enough BA wearers.

I then went back to the holding area which is shown on the map with the following crew members from PADDINGTON, CM GALLAGHER FF SHAW and FF ROBERTS. We went to main holding area, being protected with police shields and we waited to be committed. At that stage there was now a bigger opening that had been made, there was a hole where it shouldn't be, it was like a larger window, it now had a bigger access to get in and out. We were then directed to go to the lift lobby on the ground floor and to wait with all the EDBA wearers.

I was then given my brief, by an officer in a white helmet on the lobby area just before the stairs. The task was to go the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) floor to continue Firefighting and to pick up a jet (hose) and a branch from other crew members and take it to the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) floor and continue firefighting. If the fire was under control on the eleventh floor (11<sup>th</sup>) then I was to go to the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) floor. I don't know who gave us that order. We didn't need any equipment as it was already up there. I tagged onto the other Firefighters from PADDINGTON, CM GALLAGHER and FF SHAW. We then gave our tallies in and went up to the stairwell which was now like a waterfall.

I got to the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) whilst I was progressing up the stairs there was so much water, it was like a waterfall and a river. The water was so loud I couldn't hear a thing. Water was coming down the stairs, that's how much water was being poured into the fire as we were going up. I think in the lobby there was a pump trying to pump out all the water. It was like a river and I was drenched from head to toe in the protected stairwell. Water was coming down the stairs like a waterfall, it was between my ankles and knees. This was making it difficult to go upstairs, the noise from the water was so loud. I noticed that a few of the hoses were all entangled. I think the noise was coming from the hoses that had burst as there was a lot of water pressure coming out of them. There were a few hoses entangled on the lower floors but it got worse as we travelled up to the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) floor. On the ninth (9) floor the hoses turned into huge entanglement, they were all bowed over each other. Visibility was quiet good as the main combustion

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material must have burnt through. The smoke was thinner and had been replaced by thousands of litres of water. A lot of the hoses and debris were tangled up in the stairwell. I met a crew wearing SDBA, trying to bring a casualty down the stairs but were struggling due to size of the casualty and the hose entanglement. I estimate that the casualty was one hundred and thirty (130) kilos in weight but could have been more, the body was overweight. I didn't know the crew members. It was like trying to drag a dead weight down the stairs. They appeared to be making good progress until they got entangled in the hose and couldn't get the casualty over the hoses. They kept working. They couldn't lift the hose as they were so heavy. That was what caused the congestion so the four (4) of us ducked into the doorway. The casualty was in horizontal position coming down, one (1) FF was at the feet end and one (1) FF was at the head end, with her arms underneath, the casualty was positioned face down. I didn't see the face but would say it was a woman from the hair. She had Curley black hair it was more of a girl's haircut. I didn't know what she was wearing. I don't think she had white skin she was slightly darker, she was covered by the flood of water. I didn't see her face. She was a large lady that took up the complete width of the stairwell, she was overweight and had large limbs. We first saw them on the flat part of the stairwell, they were making progress as they had gravity on their side before they got to the entangled hoses. There was no way that, that casualty would have fitted through the stairwell. The hoses were all tangled like bird nests and like a snake that had twizzled its body all around. I couldn't get passed the hoses, they were all knotted up, and one hose weights seventy (70) kilos so it was very heavy. I had to climb up and over the stairs, I pushed myself off of the bannister to push the hose back and launched myself to the stairs I could have put my foot on the back of the casualty but that would have been undignified and didn't want to do that. The body was flat, a leg was resting on the stair, on top of some hoses. But the hoses had now positioned themselves like an arc which were up to my chest. I had to climb over. The water pressure in the hoses had a mind of their own and they were moving all around. The hose was creating a barrier it was difficult for them to get through and impossible to get the casualty through. She was already on the floor, showing no signs of life. I could hear the FF yelling at each other but couldn't hear what they were saying as it was a loud with the water and burst hoses. Water was everywhere, it was like it was raining and that there was a waterfall. The hose could have got snagged and that's why they burst. At this point there was less smoke. At this point the FFS were low on air. I assume they stepped over the casualty. I ducked into doorway to give them space to work and leave it was now pitch black. I could see the floor marker on the wall. I couldn't hear Ben GALLAGHER I asked if we were going to continue to lift the casualty down. I tried to lift one of her arms but was so heavy I had no chance. I tried a little bit longer,

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Ben said we had to go. We tried to move the casualty but it was impossible, with the amount of hose tangled up on the stairwell. It was unbelievable like a birds nest and with the size of the casualty, we wouldn't move them. I think that this was on the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) floor. The casualty was situated on the turning point of the stairwell, we had to step over the casualty to press up to the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) floor to continue firefighting. That casualty was un-saveable it was obvious that they were dead, they were one hundred (100) percent dead. There was no advantage to bringing them down & we continued with our briefing, to the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) floor. I then catapulted myself over and tried to make way up to the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) floor it was still noisy.

When we regrouped on the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) floor there was still water everywhere as well as fire. I connected the branch and started putting water on the fire. The fire was everywhere on the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) floor. Every apartment was rubble. From the stairwell doorway to lobby, everything was black, sooty and filthy. The doors were open and I could see right through into the flats They had either been burnt out of kicked in. The doors were missing. When I looked in the flats I could see piles of rubble on fire, the fire was still going inside it was all black and sooty inside. All of the windows had popped out so fire had been ventilated. I looked through the door, next to the bin chute and noticed glowing bits of rubble. There were piles of glowing hot rubble in all the flats, there were no flames it was just glowing hot rubble in all flats, there were no flames it was just glowing. (Please see diagram) We continued to fire fight. I used the hose depending how far it stretched to. I looked in other flats all windows and noticed that all the windows had gone, this was from the left of the stairwell on the eastern side. I saw my crew using a branch to fight fire in the apartments. Even if there are no naked flames it is our job to still douse it in water. I was unsure as to where the hose was connected. CM Ben GALLAGHER asked me to send a message to Entry Control to tell them where we are and what we are doing. I tried twice using my personal radio but again couldn't get through. FF ROBERTS automatic distress signal had gone off, I think that was why we were relieved. The Body Guard has a movement sensor on it and if you don't move for fifteen (15) seconds it would start to beep. However we couldn't hear the alarm go off due to it being so loud with the water. Another crew came up and said that they were here to relieve us I passed to the branch to the crew, I didn't know them. I then told my crew that he had been relieved. I went back down passed the casualty again. The hose entanglement was still there along with the casualty who was face down. I vaulted myself over the bannister straight to the stairs to avoid the casualty. I think rest of crew did the same. I then went back to Entry Control which was now situated at the foot of the stairs. There was the same amount of smoke and water as before I was soaked through. I made it into BA Entry

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Control and closed down, which was the same procedure as before. I then went back to the main control area and dropped my set off. BA entry control, closed down, purged our air in lobby. I went back to main control area dropped off my set. I had no concept of time but think i was in the building on that occasion for twenty five (25) -thirty (30) minutes.

We came out of the building via a hole that had been punched in the wall on the ground floor. I noticed that the sun was now out I think it was approximately 0730-080hrs I saw that SURRY FIRE BRIGADE had brought their turn table ladder (please see on the map) this was on the grass area outside the TOWER I came out as quick as I could underneath the garages area and then turned left up towards the fitness/Leisure centre and dropped off our sets. Some guys took them off us I then wandered over to the Salvation Army tent to get some food and drink, I also had a bit of a rest. Our Governor advised us that it was time to go. I remembered that I had left my SDBA set and waved the guys down so I could collect it. We went back on truck which I think it was still parked in the same position we had left it. We then travelled back to came PADDINGTON I think it was about eleven (11) am in the morning. I don't really remember a lot when we got back, it's all a bit vague. I remember sitting in the court yard and had a cup of tea. We then had a de- brief and then I made my notes which I have exhibited. We were given a template as to how to write our notes I think they took me about half an hour to forty minutes to write them. I think I finished them early afternoon. I hadn't really processed as to what had just happened, I was tired and felt alright after it all, we were given counselling after the incident.

I've never been to GRENFELL TOWER before. I have done a section seven (7) two (2)(d) familiarization visits to tower blocks on my station's ground, such as SHELDON SQUARE but it's not very similar to GRENFELL TOWER. The building is a lot more modern compared to GRENFELL TOWER and the layout is completely different. SHELDON SQUARE is also a much smaller building, with about only twelve (12) floors and it has more than one stairwell. The only similarity between this building and GRENFELL TOWER is that that are categorised as high-rise. However doing the familiarization visit did help me with some aspects at GRENFELL such as land marking and knowing your accessing and egress routes. On a section seven (7) two (2) (d) familiarization you have a template, which you work from, of information that is already available to the brigade about the premises. What I did on my visit to SHELDON SQUARE was make sure that all this information was current and if there were any changes, such as new contact phone numbers or any details on the premises, or any new firefighting fixtures or installations, I had to wrote it down and logged it. We would check the building

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for our reference point so that if there is an incident at the building we can bring up as information as we can get, which will come up on our computer screen on the truck.

I've never been posted to the fire and safety department. I can't comment on difficulties accessing parking at the building as I wasn't driving. I think there was a little bit congestion at one stage but we just got into the first space we can find. The roads around GRENFELL are very narrow and quite difficult to for the driver's navigate around.

I wasn't aware of any pre-prepared fighting plan for GRENFELL and I'm not aware of any prepared plan for when compartmentation fails, you just rely on your training. There is a training package that they give us on cladding panels and tell us that they can contribute to the fire spreading and that putting extinguishing media onto the fire will be difficult. When I saw the fire going up the side of the building I put two and two together that they weren't fire resistant panels which they obviously should have been. The spread of the fire via the cladding panel was not what I would expect. I've been told they can contribute to fire spread but not to that extent.

I wasn't given any information about the spread of the fire while I was at the scene but I could see for myself that it had already breached the compartment by the time I got there. There was also smoke but the main thing I could see was flames coming out the side of the building.

Once in GRENFELL TOWER I couldn't remember whether I heard any alarms sounding within the tower. I can't comment on the smoke management systems as that comes under the building. I assume that it wasn't working as when we went up onto the third (3) fourth (4) floor there was a neutral plane of smoke and you walked from good visibility into complete smoke. If it was adequately ventilated you would expect the smoke to be ventilated from the top. I don't think the flat that I went into had a door self-closer as the door was ajar. I didn't check for a door wedge but I don't think it did.

I didn't have a thermal imaging camera or body camera on and nor did MILLS. All we took up was a branch a length of 45mm hose. There weren't any sprinklers in the building but I couldn't tell whether it had a central alarm system or not. I can't remember if there any fire safety signs but there was a lot of soot on the walls.

There was only one means of escape from the fire in GRENFELL and that was the stairs I noticed that the dry riser was charged with water when I arrived. A designated appliance plugs into the dry rising main

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and it supplies water to that dry rising main. The dry rising main is a pipe that goes up the centre of the building and has outlets on every floor or on certain floors. When I was firefighting on my second wear, my EDBA wear, we were using a branch that was charged off of the rising main. I was given it when we got to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor to relieve the other crew. I'm not sure where the branch was plugged into the main, as I didn't actually plug into the main myself. I knew it was charged because as soon as someone hands you the branch you test it to check you've got a good flow of water and if it's got flow you know it's plugged in somewhere. I did very minimal firefighting with the branch but the flow of water seemed alright when I used it.

I didn't have any difficulty getting into the building other than from the debris that began falling later. The opening they made later was quite a thin entry door/access point so it was one person at a time. I have received training for high-rise buildings specifically by means of a computer training package and by doing drills at the station, and I have received training on dealing with compartment fires. We did this at training school, quite heavily. Since then I've had a two day BA refresher and a one day refresher but I can't remember when this was. We also carry out BA drills at station quite regularly. Compartment fire training applies with a high-rise fire.

In training they set fire to a specially designed room and you go in and practice your firefighting techniques, such as safe movement and branch techniques. It can't really prepare you for what happened that night. If it does breach the compartment and become ventilated, they do tell you the difference between a ventilated and a non-ventilated fire but there's no training that I can remember involving a fire going up the side of a building that quickly.

I have attended a High Rise Fire at SHEPHERDS BUSH it was the nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) of August. It was a really hot day so everyone had their windows open in that apartment block. I think the fire investigation unit found that it came from a tumble dryer or washing machine. The first flat caught fire and then it came out of the window, the fire ran up the side of the building to the next window, set fire to the curtains and burnt that flat out and just kept going up. It spread vertically but obviously it didn't go up as quickly as GRENFELL as the outside of the building was made of brick. I went in on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) floor of this building. It has just caught fire. The fire was over three or four floors but then put out.

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I don't know where the incident commander was or who it was. It probably changed about ten (10) times throughout the incident. I can only assume that at the end it was Danny COTTON as she did arrived so I assume she took over command of the whole incident with her staff.

My understanding of the stay put policy is that people are told to stay put if the fire's not directly affecting them because the building is supposed to be built to give at least an hour of protection with fire doors and the fire is supposed to be compartmentalised so if all the doors all stay dosed, everything inside that flat will burn itself within a certain amount of time. In this case that didn't happen because the fire spread to the outside of the building. I didn't think about the stay put policy when I first got there. It didn't cross my mind until later on when the fire had gone completely up the side of building when I didn't think it would work I would guess.

Depending on the size and complexity of an incident, anyone from a crew manager up to a borough commander can be in charge of an incident. I know that the command unit come and take over a job but I don't know the ins and outs of running a command unit or how it works.

In terms of structure within the LFB, the Commissioner is at the top, then the Assistant Commissioner, then Deputy Assistant Commissioner, after that I don't know. I know that my managers are the crew managers followed by the watch manager. Above them its station manager, then Borough Commander. The only thing I can think of that we were hampered by at the incident was the communication problems on the radios as I have already mentioned.

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