

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: JONES, IAN

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 3 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: IAN JONES

Date: 25/01/2018

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

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I am a fire fighter based at Wimbledon Fire Station within Red Watch. I have worked in this role based here for the past twenty six years.

This is my statement regarding my involvement in a large fire at Grenfell Tower, W11 on the 14th June 2017.

In this statement I will mention the following people, some of whom I know by name and others I will try to describe. My colleagues on the night; Watch Manager MCKAY, and Firefighters STEWART, EARLE and PEACOCK. I will also make specific mention of one casualty I aided out of the tower. I will describe him as an older male of what appeared to be south American descent. I have since seen him on the news. On the 14th June 2017 I was working our first night shift having started at 2000 hours. Between 0000 hours and 0100 hours we heard something on the radio regarding Grenfell Tower. I can't specifically remember what was said but we were aware that this fire was in existence. We had been at a call and went back to the station and heard that other fire engines had attending Grenfell and realised that something big was happening. At around 0430 hours our fire engine was mobilised. I was on the pump ladder engine; call sign H341, accompanied by Watch Manager MCKAY, Fire fighters STEWART, EARLE and PEACOCK. Fire fighter EARLE was driving. I didn't know much about what we were attending at this point however we were aware that we were attending a forty pump relief which is unprecedented. So we knew it was going to be big.

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It took us roughly twenty five minutes to travel to the tower arriving there at approximately 0500 hours. I remember as we approached, it was a summer morning so it had begun to get lighter but I could see the tower was still alight and flames were visibly coming out of a number of flats. I thought that it was going to be a big job and was aware of how tough it would be. We pulled up and parked on Elgin Crescent which is approximately a five minute walk to the tower. We took our standard breathing apparatus (BA) with us and went to the breathing apparatus holding area. Once there we were provided with an extended duration breathing apparatus (EDBA) set and task to make it up. Once we had all completed this we report to the officer in charge of BA marshalling. We were initially then told to hold there and awaiting further instruction. Approximately forty five minutes later we were task to report to another BA holding area that was situated at the back of the building. We then waited here another forty five minutes at which point we were order to report to the base of the tower. We made our way there aided by police officers carrying riot shields to protect us from the falling debris. At this stage the debris wasn't constantly falling but I was very aware that I needed to be careful; the officers with the riot shields were definitely necessary. There was also the obstacle of already fallen debris to move around. Once at the base of the tower we waited for approximately fifteen minutes until we were told to report to the entry control officer for briefing and committing. Once there we essentially waited in a queue and whatever number of fire fighters was required was sent up from the queue. Firefighter EARLE went up before us with another team of Firefighters and I was in a team of four made up of myself, Watch Manager MCKAY and Firefighters PEACOCK and STEWART. Our team was order to the tenth floor and tasked to find a branch and continue firefighting up through the floors.

We made our way up, with me at the rear, and reached the eighth floor; where we were held up by other crews on the stairwell in front of us. The stairwell was approximately six foot in width and if less congested people should pass each other easily. Firefighter PEACOCK was tasked with going back down the stairs to inform the Entry Control Officer that no other teams should be committed due to the already busy conditions in the stairwell. At this point there was a constant stream of water falling down on us as a hose further up had burst; it was like standing under a water fall. Once Firefighter PEACOCK returned and the team in front of us had made their way down past us we continued up and stepped over a large deceased casualty on the tenth floor. We were aware this casualty was here as others had mentioned it and that some had tried to move the casualty but they were too heavy. I could not describe this casualty other

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than a large casualty. At this point visibility was very poor.

We continued up to what I believe was the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. Here Firefighter STEWART picked up the Branch Hose which was already set up and we enter the lobby of the floor. The lobby of the floor was the hottest situation I have ever been in. The stairwell hadn't been too bad but the lobby was almost unbearable. We had to pretty much crawl on all fours as it was too hot to stand. Firefighter STEWART on entry the floor from the stairwell fired a jet at the left hand side flat furthest away. The jet knocked the remainder of the door off its hinges, this created some helpful light and cool air. We look into this flat and there was nothing remaining of it the fire damage was very extensive and all that was left was debris. We then tried to enter the flat next to this flat. Firefighter STEWART forced his way in, as there was bedding behind the door and fired a jet into the flat. Once more water was fired into the flat we searched it and nothing was found. The fire damage in this flat was minimal, the bath was still full of water, only some smoke.

We then moved onto the next flat which was flat 82, again this flat had bedding behind the door. Once water had been fired into the flat we entered and on entering turned ninety degrees to the right and saw two rooms within the flat were alight. Firefighter STEWART began trying to extinguish these fires. Ongoing around the corner we ran out of hose so I left the flat and went outside to the lobby to manage the hose. Having done this and returned a few minutes later Firefighter STEWART informed me there was a live casualty within the flat. I got the casualty, who at this point had been brought out of what room he had been in and was stood in the corridor and I reassured him before assisting him out to the stairwell. Then accompanied by Watch Manager MCKAY we started to assist the casualty down the stairs. After descending one flight of stairs Watch Manager MCKAY informed me he was returning to the flat to make sure the other team members were ok. Firefighter PEACOCK then came and assisted me in taking the casualty down the stairs to the lobby area where we handed the male over to another crew. Following this we exited the building and went to rest and rehydrate. I was exhausted again I don't think I have ever been this tired from an in service job. I was really breathing hard. I had just gone down eleven flights of stairs with a male who was partially sighted and with loads and loads of hose and a casualty on the tenth I had to almost lift his feet at every step.

After about one and a half hours we were told to report to the BA marshalling area for further committing. We then waited there for a further hour before being told we could stand down at around

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1345 hours. On being relieved we went to Paddington Fire Station initially before returning to Wimbledon to complete our notes.

I have never been to Grenfell Tower before or fought a high rise tower block fire. I have however received training in fighting fires in high rise blocks. Also regarding Training I have been EDBA training since 2006.

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