

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: MCCONOCHIE, JACKIE

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

Occupation: LFB STATION MANAGER

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This statement (consisting of 9 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: J MCCONOCHIE

Date: 10/05/2018

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

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I have been asked to make a statement in relation to my involvement at the Grenfell Tower fire on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017. DC Lou JONES and DC Suzie HARRIS have spoken to me. Notes were taken of what I said and this is a full version of those. My role at the incident was loggist for the Incident Commander (IC) Andrew ROE and the log I produced I exhibit as exhibit reference JAM/1. I also utilised a map to record some points on, this I produce as exhibit reference JAM/2. Also included in. I have been supported through this statement by DAC Jane PHILPOTT.

I have about 29 years-service within the London Fire Brigade (LFB), having joined in June/July 1989. I went to Southwark Training Centre where I completed the five-month training programme. On completion of this, I was posted to Heston Fire Station on White Watch as a fire fighter (FF). Within four years, I became driver. I spent six to seven years at Heston. Whilst there I took Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) training and got Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA), technical rescue skills and road traffic collisions (RTC's). I then moved to Euston Fire Station where I remained for five years. I then became a training instructor at Southwark Training Centre teaching recruits and I specialised in RTC's and technical fire behaviour for three years. I took promotion to become a Crew Manager and moved to Croydon in 2004. After eighteen months (now mid 2005), I went to Southwark with BA and the real fire training team. I again moved into incident management training from 2006-2007. I moved to Lambeth as a Watch Manager (WM) on promotion for a year before moving to Tooting for a year then to Fire Investigation for a couple of years. I came out of FI in 2014 moving to Wimbledon Fire Station as a WM

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for six months and was then promoted to Station manager (SM) in 2015 at Wandsworth Fire Station. I was there for two years before moving to Surbiton and New Malden as SM. At the time of Grenfell Tower, I was based at Wandsworth Fire Station. I am considered competent in my role.

With regards to my training, I am a hazmat officer and also Officer of the day. This means I can work in the Control Centre where I would be responsible for dealing with an issues coming into the Brigade. This can be anything from the heating system breaking down at a fire station to setting up the Brigade Co-ordination Centre (BCC) for a large incident. I would also brief any senior officers on issues. I would be the cover overnight for LFB and then feedback to the appropriate personnel at a more decent time. When I was promoted a couple of years ago, I volunteered to for this role because you had to know a lot and have an understanding of how to manage the issues. It is good experience. In order to do this, you have to conduct some training, which entails shadowing someone who has done it for a while four to five times. A Hazmat officer is trained to be a hazardous materials chemical expert. To achieve this, you have to complete a 3-week residential course. The training involves a variety of scenario-based practicals, decision-making ones and spillages. All of these are assessed, which you must pass. It is a course you have to apply for and be interviewed for. On successful completion of the course you can then be mobilised to incidents involving cylinders, chemical spills, six pumps and above and any incident involving environmental issues.

Regular training for LFB staff can be achieved in a number of ways. Babcock's deliver training to FF's at Park Royal and additionally they do a 2-day BA and fire behaviour-training course. This is scheduled by the training team. At the fire station, we have a borough-training plan, which covers our local risks. This is core training and 24% of a FF's day should be spent on training in core skills, BA, working at height and technical rescues. The WM's have overall responsibility to implement that training plan and ensure all personnel are trained. I, as a SM, monitor that by auditing on the first Monday or Wednesday of every month. I can look at the station diary to see what training has been completed but I sometimes watch FF's training in the yard. I speak to my WM's and meet with them regularly where we discuss performance. Amongst these training sessions high rise (HR) procedures are also covered. Babcock will feedback on any individuals who need additional training or have done something incorrectly following one of their courses. If this occurs, then the FF can be taken off the run and spoken to assess whether they are safe on the run or not and a training plan to address the underperformance. Training plans can be put in place if FF's, teams, equipment or procedures have not performed well at an incident as well. After an incident

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the crew have a debrief with the WM or SM where they will review the performance both individually and as a team. This is quite a formal process called PRO Performance Review of Operations.

With regards to specific HR training - Borough training plans should relate to the risks in your borough. For example, in Surbiton we only have a couple of HR builds but somewhere like Wandsworth has hundreds of HR builds. This would mean that HR training would be more prevalent for Wandsworth. That said, HR training is part of your bread and butter. We have completed a lot of training over recent years; we also had Back to Basics, which covered this, a lot as well. We come together as a group of fire stations to train on the HR procedure and every FF is given an electronic test and a practical drill to see if they meet the correct standards. Anyone who does not pass would have to do it again and look at why they failed. Again there a number of means of training for this: we have Ops News, which comes out quarterly; one of those was all about HR. There have been a number of changes to HR procedures, which are conveyed to staff. Practically, every fire station has a HR training tower, which is utilised in practical scenarios.

Alongside training of HR buildings, we have the 7(2) (d) visits. This is where fire fighters attend certain premises to gather as much information about it as possible. This information is then transferred onto our ORD database but I have to check the information going on the ORD and sign it off before it is available on the mobile data terminal (MDT). Nothing goes on there without the SM knowing. The visits gather information about that risk but also the crews and watch officer get to familiarise themselves with the premises and associated hazards, the risks, who is in there, where the nearest water supply is, is there a lift and if so which are fire lifts, where the dry rising main is, where the hydrant is, whether there are outlets on every floor, if not which floors, what actions are taken locally in the event of a fire; lots of things like that get ascertained. Once the information is on the ORD anyone attending that building can access the information using the Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) in the fire appliances. All HR buildings are visited. We have a premises risk database, which identifies the buildings of risk. It has a matrix, which calculates the risk level. A 7(2) (d) visit could be carried out low-level housing or buildings, which are of a complicated layout, for example this could include, old people's homes, sheltered housing, any premises where chemicals are present, any premises, which has oxygen cylinders, hospitals, schools, train stations. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, I was at home. I was on call and I remember my pager going off at about 1.30am. I think the message said something along the lines of, 'mobilise to Grenfell Tower, the address and it was a fifteen pump fire.' As I got dressed, I turned my airwave radio on. It was full of traffic regarding the incident. I realised quite quickly that this was an unusual incident and something

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else. There were a lot of Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls being received by Control. It is also unusual for the pumps to be straight at fifteen pumps. There was so much activity on the radio from control. I tried to call them but I did not get through; I tried a couple of times to get through with no luck. I eventually booked H335 (my call sign) as status 2 which means I am travelling to the incident. Due to it being so busy on the radio, I did not want to go through the normal process of who was doing what at the scene. I got in my lease car and went to incident; I travelled on blue lights. My car has a built in satnav on which I entered the postcode for Grenfell Tower. I went along the A3, along Roehampton Lane and after this, I have no idea of my route; I just followed the satnav. I have never been to Grenfell Tower before, nor do I have any knowledge of it previously. It took about 35 minutes to arrive but I cannot tell you what time it was when I got there. The roads had been reasonably clear up to the area nearer Grenfell Tower. On arrival, I entered via Sirdar Road because I could not get any closer. I parked in a side road called Mary Place. Fire appliances were blocking the roads leading to the tower. There were lots of people in the street, some of which were holding phones up recording the scene. I rigged in my fire kit whilst listening to the traffic on the radio. There was no chance to book in with Control as I arrived. I walked down Sirdar Road and turned right into Grenfell Road. At this point, the Tower was in front of me. I approached from the South side of the Tower.

It was a light from top to bottom; I have never seen anything like it before in my entire career. Both the South and East sides were full of flames. There was a Turntable Ladder (TL) at the bottom of the Tower on the East side, which was being housed at the time. This means the ladder was coming back down. There was burning debris just raining down on this TL and the area around it. You could hear it crashing down onto the appliance. All the debris were big and still alight. I could not believe what I was seeing. I was stood right by the Tower at the top of Grenfell Road. I could just see big bits of burnt, black material coming off on fire. I was actually thinking, 'shit.' I cannot phrase it any other way. It was raining down, lots and lots of it coming off the Tower. I know now it was the cladding coming off but at the time, I did not know what it was. HR buildings are not designed to behave like that. That Tower was crumbling in front of you. When a fire is in a HR flat, you can see whether it has vented or breached from the flames coming out, you can see which floor it is on. Grenfell Tower was nothing like that. It was of such a magnitude and completely on fire. I was trying to compute what the hell was going on. It was a site I did not expect to see.

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I managed to book in with Control when I heard another officer / appliance booking in via the radio; when I heard they had been acknowledged I got in there as well and booked status 3. This means on scene at the incident and my status was received by Control.

I turned right going around the corner and saw Command Unit 7 (CU7), which I believed, was on Bomore Road. I opened the door to the unit and discovered it was the FSG CU. They directed me to the other CU, which was CU8, the main Control CU. This was situated on Dulford Street, I believe. On my way to CU8, a male approached me. He was middle aged, with dark hair, a thin moustache, a long, brown robe on. He said something like 'my wife is in there; she can't get out'. He may have said she was on the eighth floor but his English was poor. I took him back to the FSG CU and told them he had FSG information, I left him there. I then went to CU8. There were lots of people about but I did not talk to anyone. I arrived at CU8 where I handed my board in. It was noisy and busy on this unit. I stood in the doorway of the CU and waited for an opportunity to step in. I could see that Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) O'LOUGHLIN was in charge at time. He acknowledged me.

DAC Andy O'LOUGHLIN tasked me with being Sector Command, Command Support. He wanted to get a map up for the Incident Ground (IG) on the white board so I could start plotting where things were and what was going on. We needed to record where the sectors were, get the cordons in place, plot where the fires were, who was up in the Tower, who the Sector Commanders were in each sector, lots of things like that. There was still lots of activity on the radio. WM Pete JOHNSON was preparing an informative message to go out to control. DAC Lee DRAWBRIDGE arrived and he tasked with dealing with FSG by DAC O'LOUGHLIN, so he went off to CU7. DAC O'LOUGHLIN asked me to organise getting Silver for the LAS and Police to the CU. I stuck my head out of the CU8 door where I saw some police officers, FF's, members of public and LAS staff. I asked who the police officer who their senior officer was and requested they ask for their attendance at the CU. I then asked the same of the Las officer. I had only been there for about 10 minutes by this point. I started to map out what we had and what we knew. There were reports coming in of people apparently being on the roof so WM JOHNSON was trying to arrange for heli-teli to have a look. Mark KENT FIELD and another officer who I did not know were also present on the CU.

I poked my head out of the CU quite a few times to organise things. I remember on one of these occasions I saw the same male in robes I had seen on the way to the CU. He was outside CU8. When he saw me, he took my arm. He repeated what he had said about his wife being in the Tower. I told him that we had

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already spoken and tasked another FF to take him back to the FSG CU and to ensure his information was passed on. That FF who took the male away became a bit of a runner for me really.

AC ROE arrived at the CU and took over from DAC Andy O'LOUGHLIN as the incident Commander (IC). He told me to stop my current role and he tasked me as his loggist, to record all decisions and minutes for the Tactical Command Group (TCG) meetings. I commenced that role immediately.

Everything that happened, minutes of meetings, FF's going missing etc. information coming into the unit with progress reports, i.e. which floors the FF's were at, what they were intending to do in the Tower - all of this and more was logged. Any decisions made by AC Andy ROE were recorded. I was on his shoulder the entire time we were at the incident. The log is a record of the whole incident and not just decisions. I wrote these using a pen and paper but when I left the incident, I went home and typed up the handwritten notes. The original handwritten notes were given to Charlie PUGSLEY from the Fire Investigation team (FIT).

We were trying to get some of the appliances away and relieved. The FF's were black with smoke and looked exhausted. I remember telling one of them to go and have a shower when they get back to feel better but they were pretty bad really. I noticed Brian O'KEEFE sitting outside the command unit leaning against the wall with a few other FF's I threw him some water and a mars bar.

As the relief officers arrived, we would look at the board and see who needed to get away and who could replace them. AC ROE handed over to AC Dominic ELLIS as IC but I cannot recall what time this was. Time just seemed to vanish. We did an Incident Ground walk round. The male who was relieving me (I do not recall his name) came as well; he took over logging from there. AC ROE gave a hand over and showed everyone where everything was. This was things like where the entrances were to the Tower, where the BA staging area was, the Tenants Management Offices were. We walked round the periphery. After the walk, we all went back to the CU where AC ROE instructed me to get away and he thanked me for my assistance.

The scene by now was daylight. The Tower still had pockets of fire but it was not like it was before. A lot of the fires were out but the outside was black, mangled and twisted. Another Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) from another brigade was plying water onto the Tower. The whole thing was burnt. There was still dropping debris but not as much as earlier. The debris was all burnt still but less frequent.

I left the scene at 1330hrs and went back to my car, which was still in situ. I had been back to the car at one point during the incident, for headache tablets for the Commissioner Dany COTTON. Someone tried to give me pop and crisps, people were asking to do a piece for the camera but I said no and kept

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walking. People just wanted to give you stuff, food, and drinks. I got to the car and drove home. I was numb. I was exhausted and just shell-shocked from the whole incident. It was unreal and horrendous.

There were so many people in that Tower that we could not get them out.

I have been asked to explain a couple of things, which I shall do now:

The Stay put policy is a policy whereby residents are advised to remain in their flat if there is a fire in the building, as long as they are not affected by the smoke or fire. They are usually safer to remain where they are. The stay put policy is there for that building so it would be in place from the off, it is not something is decided to be put in place at the time. It can be on the ORD whether the stay put policy is appropriate or not.

Compartments should be a concrete box and fire should not breach that for 1-2 hours. On that night, the Stay Put Policy would have been in place at Grenfell Tower. The IC makes the decision with officer of the watch at Control whether to remove it. For Grenfell Tower, it was AC Andy ROE and the Officer of the Watch, who I believe at the time, was Alex NORMAN, who discussed this and removed it.

Decision-making - The speed of decisions were dependant on what they related to. If something needed doing now, then the decision was made and it was actioned immediately. Some decisions were made to ensure things were covered later, for example, we ordered all the Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) the Brigade had. This hopefully meant we would not run out and could keep committing crews into the Tower.

The chain of command was DAC Andy O'LOUGHLIN when I arrived. AC Andy ROE took over from him. Commissioner Dany COTTON took on the role of monitoring officer. AC Dom ELLIS then took over from AC ROE.

I spent the majority of my time on the CU. When I did go out I could see that there was an ALP, and a branch on the walkway all fighting the fire externally. Because of my position, I did not witness any injuries or near misses. I did not suffer any injuries myself.

This incident was unprecedented. No one has attended an incident like that. All our learnings do not cover this and went right out of the window because they had to. Grenfell Tower did not behave, as it should have done. Everything we did in attendance there will be looked at, but that building should not have done what it did. You can only plan for what we know or are taught. None of us has ever experienced that. When a fire breaches a compartment, it may go up, down or sideways but it would move at a rate that you would be able to control and react to. Grenfell Tower moved at a rate that was unimaginable. No building should behave like that.

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I have submitted my decision log to the GRENFELL enquiry and LFB and this is my record of the incident as I recorded it and whilst the log is my record of what I recorded at the time.

I can expand on some of the entries in the log but do not recall actual discussions of what the actual wordings of any conversations.

The first entry in the log is at

02:47 when the hand over was done between AC Andy ROE and DAC Andy O'LOUGHLIN and I have logged that the first survival guidance advice was being changed, I have logged that AC ROW recorded the decision to deviate from Fire survival guidance I do not recall

Any discussion about this decision it was made and fed back to the fire sector.

02:55 I log a "quick and dirty" tactical meeting was to be arranged by this I mean a meeting with all relevant people involved in the incident and included the most senior officer for the police and the scene and the same for the ambulance service and other agencies that maybe at a the scene as a way of information sharing fast time and making decisions of what needs to be done and who will take ownership of it.

02:57 the positive pressure ventilation fans where requested and this would have been done via telephone call to the control centre in STRATFORD who would have communicated to the people trained to use it and getting it to the scene this would have been arranged by them

03:10 I recorded a possible Fire fighter emergency, I do not recall the details but this is when a Team has lost contact with the bridge head or some has not returned, I recorded "possible" which means it had not been established if this was the case or not but was looked in to

03:20 The Tactical co-ordination meeting was held and the full minuets of this are in my log.

03:39 GM Pat GOULBOURNE at the bridgehead made the decision to move the bridgehead down because the compromise was that the air on the fourth floor was no longer breathable.

A police officer also entered the command unit at that time I recorded his collar number as BS620 He informed the command unit staff that the building opposite GRENFELL TOWER was getting very hot and there was a concern of fire spread, Police territorial support group confirmed that the building had been evacuated there was no immediate risk to life.

04:03 I logged that the command support system went down, to clarify this entry, the command support unit holds all the information on the incident and this system completely froze at the time I logged

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04:06 I logged a sit rep which was AC ROES justification for continuing to send Fire crews into the building and the justification at that time was that the building was concrete but safety officers were briefed to withdraw should there be any concerns of building collapse

04:53 I made an entry that CU staff reported building plans should be in the fire box in the lobby of the building. I did not see the building plans in the command unit I was in and do not know where they were, They would have been useful at the entry control point in the building, I do not know if they were originally found in the fire box earlier in the incident or not.

05:27 I logged the Commissioner considered outer London crews all Herts EDBA. It was considered bringing in more Fire Fighters from outside of London and further discussed that Fire fighters from HERTFORDSHIRE are all trained to wear extended duration breathing apparatus as opposed to only some of the London Fire Fighters with the majority only trained to wear standard duration breathing apparatus.

I have also logged outer appliances to go to Sainsbury's to derv up- This meant the appliances parked on the outer edges of the incident and able to move where to go to the nearest Sainsbury's and refuel as we knew that the nearest Sainsbury's petrol station had fuel and as the engines closer to the fire had been pumping for a considerable amount of time without being refuelled.

05:32 John ALLEN the structural engineer advised that the building had two to four hours protection from the fire and did not at that point say he had concerns about the risk of total building collapse as long as the main columns of the building stayed in place but safety crews told to look out for this and reassess if this happened. John ALLEN'S opinion was used as justification to continue committing fire fighters into the building.

05:40 Tom GOODALL reported that it had been reported there was a person on the roof of the building feeding live to face book it was discussed the possibility of the person concerned being winced off by helicopter - further investigation showed that there was no one on the roof as believed at this time when I logged the entry. It was also reported back at this time that Fire Fighters were going passed the floors where the hoses and other firefighting media where available for known body recovery.

05:45 it was confirmed in the command unit that so far 56 people were being treated at the scene and in hospital and there were still 115 people unaccounted for.

06:22 An offer had been made by Surrey to the control and command centre of a 42 metre Ariel ladder platform which is longer than any the LFB have, I logged this as the offer from Surrey being accepted.

06:35 relief options were beginning to be put in place to get the earlier teams of 1 Fire fighters replaced.

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08:25 One person was rescued from the 11<sup>th</sup> floor

09:25 John ALLEN structural engineer wanted to make a bigger cordon, Andy ROE was not accepting this as he thought there would still be a possibility of live casualties and rescue efforts should continue.

John ALLEN was unable to say 100% that the building would not collapse and was offered the use of the Ariel ladder platform to take a look at the building from the outside and was also invited to attend the next tactical coordination meeting.

11:35 the handover to Dom ELLIS began and I have logged all the area that where discussed and walked through the scene of operations.

Before finishing my shift and leaving the scene

During the incident there were six tactical coordination meeting in which I recorded the full minutes with in my log

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