

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: FRISBY, JASON

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 5 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 FRISBY

Date: 14/12/2017

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

I am making this statement in relation to my involvement with the fire at Grenfell Tower on the 14th June 2017. I have been spoken to by way of digital media with DC Ferdinand ROZARIO and DC Lou JONES. I understand this statement is a full written version of my notes and what we discussed. I referred to my contemporaneous notes during the interview and I exhibit these as exhibit reference JCF/1.

I have worked for the London Fire Brigade for 25 years. I started in 1992 when I was a fire-fighter at Clerkenwell Fire Station. I remained there about 8 years when I then completed a short spell at Stratford as a leading fire-fighter at the Command Unit. In 2005 I returned to Clerkenwell Fire Station as a leading fire-fighter. I was then made up to temporary sub officer. In 2005 I went to Plumstead as a Crew Manager (CM) where I stayed until 2007. I was promoted to Watch Manager (WM) A at Southwark Training Centre Rescue Skills section as an instructor for the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) until 2010. From here I went to Harold Hill Fire Station as an operational WM A. I then did a long period as a temporary WM B. This was between 2011-2014/2015, a period where the LFB didn't do a promotional round and I went to Leyton Fire Station, Hornchurch Fire Station and I completed 2 watches at Romford Fire Station before being promoted to WM B substantively at Romford in 2015. I was then posted to Islington Fire Station as a WM B in 2016 and then I was promoted to Station Manager (SM) at Holloway Fire Station. Within 3 months of that posting I moved to Islington Fire Station where I have remained. I am currently in development due to the fact I have recently been promoted. The process from development to competent can take 12-18 months.

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Throughout my service I have completed various training programmes/sessions. I have completed my own self-training recently because I have gone through the SM promotion process. This included incident management and incident command on exercises in preparation for this promotion. I have also completed training with fire crews at Islington Fire Station in the general management of high rise fires within the last 6 months.

I completed a Fire course within the last year and prior to my promotion. I also have previous experience of fighting high rise fires. I have attended incidents as a WM Incident Commander (IC) at flat fires in the 6 months prior to me becoming a SM. These would have involved single room fires and crews conducting the normal high rise procedure.

On the morning of the 14th June 2017 I got up about 5.30am, this was normal for a 24-hour shift commencing at 8am at Islington Fire Station. As I was getting ready I noticed an incident happening on Sky news. The incident was a major fire in a high rise building. My initial thought was it was happening in a different country, so I was largely taken aback when I realised not only was it in the UK but actually in West London. I knew I would potentially be getting involved with this incident at some point during the day. Knowing there was a major incident in progress and being aware that the number of officers attending would have reduced the remaining on duty rota to a minimum; I checked remotely to see how many officers were available still for any 'normal business'. Only 2 officers were available for the rest of London. I knew the Brigade would be struggling so as soon as I was in my car (call sign A30S) I called Control and informed them I was available. I also offered to assist if any other incidents arose in London and that I would be able to could cover these. I drove to Islington and arrived about 7.30am. My pager went off when I was in the appliance bay at Islington which alerted me to mobilise to Grenfell Tower, Lancaster West Estate, London W11 1TG. I contacted Control and informed them I was on route. I proceeded on blue lights in my own vehicle to Grenfell Tower. Traffic was chaos due to the A40 being closed so it took a while to get to the incident. The ordering was to the RVP at the junction of Elgin Crescent. I parked in Ladbroke Grove amongst lots of other appliances parked there awaiting deployment. I rigged in my fire gear and then I made my way to the Command Unit (CU) situated at Bomore Road, close to the junction with Grenfell Road. At this stage I had not physically seen the Tower for myself, only what I had seen on the news. As I arrived at the CU I handed my role board in and I aware the Chief Officer, Commissioner Dany COTTON was talking to some crews nearby. The Assistant Commissioner (AC) Andy Roe stepped off the CU. He said, "Hello Jason, I have a job for you." He invited me onto the unit. Another couple of officers arrived at roughly the same time. One of them I knew to be Group

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Manager (GM) Andy CANE who works in the Operational Review Team (ORT). We all had a discussion about reintroducing safe systems of work as we were currently working outside of Brigade Policy and Procedures. On this occasion it appeared it had become necessary for our policies and standard operating procedures to be changed in order to achieve what we could in exceptional circumstances. It was the view of GM CANE that we should be aiming to return as close to normal operational procedures as soon as practicably possible. In order to achieve this it was decided to put a safety officer on the Bridge Head (BH); I was allocated this position. I was given a safety officer tabard and GM CANE escorted me to the BH for me to take up my position. GM CANE was concerned over the firefighters who had been up and down the Tower and who had been in there for quite some time. He wanted to ensure they were fit and well enough to keep going back into the Tower. Fire-fighters, being what they are, will want to keep being committed but we had to ensure they were physically fit enough to carry out their task. As GM Andy CANE escorted me to the Tower I got my first look of the incident. I could see fire was still present on a number of floors with smoke rising up the outside of the Tower. We walked down the road to Grenfell and turned left under a covered roadway, through a fenced off area and a railway arch round the corner. There was a line of fire-fighters waiting to be escorted into the Tower by Police with riot shields above their heads trying to prevent fire-fighters being hit by debris falling from the Tower. GM CANE and I cut the queue and were escorted in quickly by the police. This was not the main entrance but a side entrance. Once inside I noticed there was a large amount of water cascading down the stairs. I saw GM Pat GOULBOURNE, who I believe was in the process of handing over his role to another officer. This was at about 8.30am.

GM CANE briefed me on my duties which were to ensure any crews being committed into the Tower were fit and capable of undertaking the work required. This was necessary because most of the fire-fighters had already been committed at least once and crews were eager to do as much as possible to resolve this incident. There was every possibility that crews could become casualties themselves through heat, stress and fatigue. GM Julian SPOONER had been appointed as Sector Commander Safety for the incident and I was to report to him on all safety issues. I went to the Bridgehead (BH) on the 4th floor where I was introduced to GM John GRAHAM, the Sector Commander Fire and in charge of the BH. GM GRAHAM and I had a discussion about the current issues being faced by crews inside the tower and how we could progress with searching for casualties along with fire-fighting whilst ensuring crews were being safely committed into the upper floors.

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I remained to the BH and stairwell area for a number of hours. I ensured I asked each crew as they presented to us, 'Have you worn before?' 'Have you been in the Tower before?' 'Are you fit and well enough to go in?' I was also considering whether I felt they were fit and well to go in and achieve their task. This was down to my own professional judgement. I was not presented with anyone who could not or was not able to do their task. I had some crews who had not worn their BA set and some had who had; those who had I drilled down on their well-being. From then we all had a good working relationship which continued to build up over the next hour. We had good systems of working. There was a couple of Breathing Apparatus (BA) entry boards set up. One was for Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) and one for Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA).

The BH area got quite crowded so we set up a system of storing crews in the flats. Crews awaiting deployment from the BH would gather in a flat for a briefing before reporting to the Entry Control Officer (ECO) and committing to the fire floors. Several flats on the 4th floor were being used for holding and debriefing crews. One flat was used for SDBA crews, another for EDBA crews and a third for debriefing with SM Daniel ALIE. This system enabled a number of BA teams to be briefed at the same time and I carried out this task throughout my time at the BH. I detailed the current fire situation, what crews could expect when ascending floors, safety issues, what their tasks would be and checking the crews were fit and well to carry out their work. The briefings were the same for all crews with the exception of which floor number they would be working on. This was detailed to each crew as they reported to the ECO. Any crucial information received by SM ALIE following a crew debrief would be passed back to the BH.

Quite early on in my time at the BH I was informed that there was communication problems with the fire ground / BA radios not working on channel 6 and that channel 2 had been selected for us to use. This however, was also not working. I am aware that a repeater station was required to operate channel 2 and having seen no evidence that one was in use, I instructed BA communications to try using channel 3. This gave an improvement but was still problematic once crews ascended more than a couple of floors. Crews were made aware of the communication issues and were given tight briefings as to their working locations to enable alternative means of contact if communications failed. BA telemetry was improved by the deployment of a repeater and leaky feeder cable within the stairwell.

I continued the overseeing of the safety of crews going upstairs, the safety of landings, safety management area of the BH and the stairwells. I remember we got some lighting in the stairwell to make it safe. SDBA crews were deployed to tackle the lower floors, closest to the BH, whilst EDBA crews were used to push further up inside the Tower to the floors above where the SDBA crews were. This was

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with a view to commence fire- fighting in areas not accessed with extinguishing media prior to this point.

As a result, this method of deploying crews we were able to have fire-fighting taking place on multiple floors at the same time. At one point I believe we had up to 7 floors being worked on at one time.

On a couple of occasions GM SPOONER arrived with a crew and a Police Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) officer to move and relocate victims that were obstructing the stairs between floors. I was made aware this was happening and informed once this task had been completed.

I was aware that a structural engineer was escorted by a senior officer to view part of the building and the instructions to crews changed following this to limiting fire-fighting operations to working only in the stairwells and landing / lift lobby areas. They had to tackle fires in flats from these areas at the entrance door to each property. This was due to the concrete spalling which is caused by the heat of the fire.

As crews progressed to the upper floors it was noted that water pressure was limited and the view was that we may be overrunning the incoming supply by using the rising main simultaneously on a number of floors. There was a tangle of hose on the stairs from earlier fire-fighting operations and the decision was made to try and strip out as much of this hose as we could. We could then reinstate a new supply from the ground to about the 10th floor where a lightweight portable pump could be utilised to boost pressure for fire-fighting on the upper floors. There was a lot of water cascading down the stairs and at one point I recall officers had opened the lift shafts on the 4th floor to sweep water down there. I had to appoint a fire fighter to stand by the lift doors to prevent anyone falling down the shaft.

At some point there was a call for anyone with a mobile phone. This was due to someone from outside the Tower trying to send us pictures so we could see what we were dealing with. I had my mobile and I received the photographs from outside. Time just seemed to whizz by. GM John GRAHAM and I made a point a couple of times of going to see what the conditions were like for the crews on some of the floors. We got to the 11th floor without BA and the conditions were ok in the stairwell at this time. We ventured out on one or two of the floors. I could see that we still had issues with the gas supply still being on, boilers had come off the walls and flames coming out of pipes. It was very hot on the floors. The flats had suffered complete devastation and some burning materials were still alight which crews had to deal with. I had also passed a couple of casualties on the stairs. One was a large gentleman who I believe was moved but I had no involvement in that. Another was a female on stairs. She was bent over in a doubled over position. It was a bit of a shock because the stairs were dark and when I turned the corner and she was there.

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As we made progress the BH was relocated to the 7th floor. We implemented exactly the same system as we have on the 4th floor. We used the same flats for the same things so as not to cause any confusion. On each of the floors crews would leave their equipment laid out for the next crews to use. The hose would be set into the dry riser (DR) on most of the floors with a 45mm hose and a branch left in situ. When the next crews were detailed with their task they would go up and carry on tackling that floor. No fire-fighters went to a floor without fire-fighting media. If there was no equipment on a floor we had not committed to, then the crew would take the equipment from the lower floor and take it up with them, set that into a DR and continue with their task. They were all briefed about the gas fuelled fires and not to extinguish those. We worked as close to Brigade Policy on this as possible.

Fire-fighting continued to push up through the building and I am aware that one of the EDBA crews made it to the 23rd floor. When this crew returned they reported cracks had been observed to the stairwell walls. By this time GM Neil CHISHOLM had arrived and had taken charge of the BH. He was reviewing operations with a fresh set of eyes and expressed some concerns around risk verses benefit. We were still suffering water pressure issues and as a result a Bulk Media Advisor (BMA) was requested to assist in the resolution of this issue. When the BMA arrived he asked question, 'What pressure we were pumping from the ground pump?' This would normally be 10 bar. Operationally, if we required more pressure we should be able to increase it from the ground pump. Up to this stage we hadn't been told that fire crews couldn't tackle the fire, just that it would be better to have more pressure. A call was made to the driver of the ground pump to establish what bar we were working on. He stated it was at 5 bar. We all asked why and the BMA asked to increase it to 10. However, at this stage fire-fighting had coming to stop and it felt like operations had come to a bit of a lull DAC Rick OGDEN Operations Commander, GM Julian SPOONER and GM Neil CHISHOLM, and possibly a couple more officers held a meeting in one of the flats to discuss the direction of operations. I remained on the 7th floor landing by the BA EC. At this point I heard a noise which sounded like a door slamming and echoing down the stairwell. This noise happened several times over the next few minutes and seemed to be coming from the upper floors. It caused concerns at the BH and SM Neil GUYETT interrupted the senior officers meeting to report the noise. The instruction was given to issue a withdraw to the ground floor whilst the concerns were investigated. I made sure people started to go downstairs. I believe the senior officers went to have a look at the cracks for themselves, whilst they did this I ensured crews were going downstairs. I stopped at the 4th floor to inform the Fire Investigation officers we were withdrawing and they should leave with us. As they gathered some of the evidence and their equipment a more urgent call came from upstairs. This was from

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the senior officers shouting in the stairwell. I ensured that that all staff working on the 4th floor had now left and made my own way down to the ground floor. I was one of the last officers to leave the building along with DAC OGDEN, GM SPOONER and GM CHISHOLM. I was satisfied that all brigade personnel had left the building. I believe the time by now was between 1530-1630hrs. On the way out, I spoke to the ground pump operator who was now pumping at 10 bar. I said to him that he may as well knock that off because no one else was in there. He said they were running short on diesel. I think in his mind, in order to save diesel and enable pumping for longer he would reduce the pressure and because no one asked for more pressure he assumed all was ok. I do not believe it prevented fire-fighters from tackling the majority of the fire though.

From this point I made my way to a safe area away from the Tower. I went to the leisure centre for a short debrief by a senior officer and then took the opportunity to obtain refreshments from the Salvation Army vehicles. A role call was carried out and I remained at the incident until 1900hrs. We did not re commit into the Tower. This would have been the decision by the IC but I wasn't sure who the IC was at this time. I was informed I could leave the incident so I found my car and drove back to Islington Fire Station. I was on 24's so I carried on working. I eventually left there and went home but remained on call.

Prior to this incident have never been to or had any involvement with Grenfell Tower before. The nasty side of the fire had happened before I attended the scene. As I said earlier the first view I had of the Tower the outside of the fire had burnt everything and the fire was internal. It basically looked like it looks now. All the windows were out so smoke was not too bad because the breeze would have cleared it out. Grenfell Tower as a building did not perform as a concrete structure should have done. What I would have expected is the building to contain the fire within the flat of origin. There is the potentiality for the fire to come out of window and lick up to the next flat. We have experience of that from previous incidents and we would have had crews with covering jets watching out for that. However, no one could have expected the Tower to go up as it did and no one has experience of that extent and speed of travel. The fire should have been contained, we would have set the BH two floors below the fire and crews would have attacked the fire with a second crew as back up. It is unprecedented for fire spread to behave like that. This entire incident is beyond anything anyone in the Fire Brigade has seen before. I was thinking how has that been allowed to happen, it shouldn't be happening.'

If I could have had anything to assist that night I would say that sprinklers would have been useful; the building performing as it should; two exits would have proved beneficial — you could not pass freely in different directions on that stairwell; it was very small and dark. I believe there may have been a fire

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alarm sounding in the entry hall but that was it. We were using a couple of aerial appliances to tackle the fire. Surrey had offered us theirs because it is taller. We have our own aerial appliance but it only reaches 30-33m; Surreys' appliance reaches 40m.

With regards to SDBA and EDBA it is normal policy that if it is not needed again then we don't use it again. EDBA generally we would not use again. SDBA, providing crews are not over exerting themselves and have had enough rest, then another use is achievable. There were lots of fire-fighters there which ensured crews had rested. We only had one group who were quite late in exiting and were at their time of whistle. They came down on whistle but they were still under air. These were one of the last crews before we withdrew. I was asking whether we had made contact with this crew, had we pressed the button to inform them they needed to return to the BH, communications were still not working and I was about to ask another crew to go up but then I heard them on the stairs. At no stage was I concerned enough that I needed the emergency team.

Another part of our policy and procedure is the stay put' advice. This is the best advice we can give in high rise fires. As I explained earlier we would expect a fire to be contained in either a room or the flat or origin so unless the fire / smoke / heat is directly affected you, you will be safer in the place you are in. If the building performs how it should have been designed then it gives us plenty of time to get in and extinguish the fires. For years we have had fires in tower blocks and there have been fires in blocks that other residents have known nothing about because the building did what it was meant to. Although out advice is still to stay put, we can't force you to stay put. If you want to go, then you will go. Control would have been giving this advice on the Fire Survival Guidance calls. Control would then tell us where flat is and we make it a priority commit and carry out rescues. The results are then marked up and sent back to control so it has gone full circle. The stay put advice was not in place on my arrival on the 14th June 2017. The IC would have made this decision and logged either on the CU unit or in a decision log. The IC and officer of the watch at control would have discussed this but I am not aware of who these were at the time.

Throughout the incident I did not receive any injuries. I did not personally witness any fire-fighters suffering injuries but I am aware that one of my crew was hit by a falling person. I have not sought medical attention or counselling.

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