

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: WORLEY, JOE

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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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.WORLEY

Date: 27/11/2017

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

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I make this witness statement concerning the Grenfell Tower Fire.

In my statement I will make reference to Watch Manager TURCSI and Firefighters Simon GRANT, Gary MOORE and James POWER. I will also make reference to Watch Manager KIPLING.

In my witness statement I will describe the direction I made my way to Grenfell Tower when leaving the fire appliance. I will also describe by reference to sketch plans where I was in a holding area awaiting deployment and where I entered Grenfell Tower, I will also describe the tasks I was allocated within the Tower.

I am a Firefighter stationed at Park Royal Fire Station, my pay number is [REDACTED] 9A, I am attached to Red Watch. On the morning of the fire at Grenfell Tower, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, I was part of a crew of the pump/ladder call sign G291. I have been a Firefighter for just over 12 years. Between August 2016 and March 2017, I completed a career break. On 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017, my rank was and still remains Fire fighter.

Prior to attending this fire I was aware of Grenfell Tower. Between 2002 – 2003 I worked as a window cleaner for Precision Abseiling, a company specialising in working at height. I only cleaned windows at Grenfell Tower once, for about a week, I didn't like it, it was too high, but this provided me with sufficient knowledge of the height of the building and that it was a residential high rise block. I have

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never been on a Section 7(2) (d) familiarisation visit as a Firefighter to Grenfell Tower or the immediate area, but have been familiarisation visits in Ealing where I was previously posted and a couple in Park Royal. I have never worked or being posted to the Fire Safety Department.

I was not involved in the initial response to the fire at Flat 16 Grenfell Tower.

At the time of the 'shout', at approximately 01:15, I was in the lecture room at Park Royal Fire Station watching a film. I immediately got rigged, and left the fire station with the others in the Crew. The Officer in charge was Watch Manager Phil TURCSI, who was a Standby Officer that night from another fire station. Firefighter Gary MOORE was the driver and I was in the rear with Firefighters Simon GRANT, my BA partner and James POWER.

My role on the truck, which was a Mercedes Mark 2 Pump Ladder was 'BA Comms' responsible for Communications for a BA Crew and was sat behind Watch Manager TURCSI. On leaving the fire station I was aware of the location and distance from Grenfell Tower, I spoke with the driver before we left and he looked at the map. The truck is fitted with a Mobile Data Terminal, located in the front and is used by the Senior Officer riding in the front seat, I personally didn't use it, as I am in the rear of the appliance and firefighters do not have access to it in the back. When parked at an incident, any Firefighter can access the device but on the move that is not possible. I did not receive any information on my arrival from the Mobile Data Terminal, as I deployed immediately towards the building after collecting equipment from the appliance.

Our Crew went to Grenfell Tower running straight to West to East along the A40, turning right, past Westgate Shopping Centre on your right to a roundabout with a water tower at Shepherds Bush. Whilst on the A40 and making towards Grenfell Tower, I could see the sky was orange, before I actually saw the Tower.

When Grenfell Tower came to view, I saw the fire and thought that the top two/three floors were alight I cannot say if the who floors were alight. I have never seen a fire so ferocious or huge before, the whole sky was orange, it looked like an enormous fire. Seeing the extent of the fire woke me up and focused my mind, I immediately went into work mode, thinking what I was going to be dealing with. All three of us in the rear looked at each other and realised what was going down here. I wouldn't say I was nervous, I was ready for it, I could imagine the amount of people in the building, because of the time of night, I knew there would be a lot of people would have been in bed.

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Visibility on route looking at Grenfell Tower was clear, it was a hot clear night and from my position in the rear of the appliance, turning from the A40 I could see the Tower on fire. Some of my views from the truck were obstructed for example through the front window, but from the nearside my vision was clear.

On entering Latimer Road we were unable to drive down it, as the road was shut by some type of road works. I remember we had to reverse the appliance and drove to take an alternative way round, I can't exactly remember what road we parked in, there was a lot of congestion. We parked the truck as close as we could behind another fire engine. DC HOBBS has provided a map of the area of Grenfell Tower and I have indicated on it the route we took, where the obstruction was and where we parked, I produce this as Exhibit JOW/1.

Whilst the road we deployed from had vehicles parked, sufficient room was available to remove equipment, with approximately a 2-metre gap either side to operate in. The appliance did not move for the duration of my time at the incident and was moved when we were stood down. I would estimate that I arrived with my colleagues at Grenfell Tower about 10 minutes after we got rigged and left the Fire Station, so arriving at 01:25am. I never attended the fire at Flat 16 at Grenfell Tower earlier.

When we get a fire call it comes out to the Station on a printer. I can't remember if this call was 15 or 20 pump fire. The information received includes, what machines are being mobilised, the map reference, location and the type of incident. One pump/ladder, call sign G291 was sent from Park Royal Fire Station to this fire.

At the time of the initial call I was not informed verbally that the fire had moved or was moving to the exterior of the tower. Information containing this detail is not provided to Firefighters at the Fire Station when the call comes in, neither was I informed on my arrival that the fire had, or was moving to the exterior. From my own observations, on my arrival when I was approaching the Tower I could see that the fire was spreading on the outside of the building, basically you couldn't miss it, by just looking up you could see that it had spread and was continuing to spread.

When we parked up and went towards the Tower from the direction of Treadgold Street, I could see the right side of the building was on fire. I remember seeing a turntable ladder with the ladder extended full height to the right hand side exterior of the building putting water onto the Tower to a height of about 30 meters, debris was falling from the building. The firefighter on the ladder was using a water jet, he was a

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very brave man. Eventually he came down, there was no way he could impact on the fire alone on the right hand side of the Tower.

Firefighting on the exterior of the building was very difficult. It was devastating how the fire was engulfing the whole building, it spread so quickly, the fire spread and flames got bigger and bigger.

From my previous window cleaning experience at Grenfell Tower, I knew that it was approximately 75 meters height. I recall seeing that the Tower on the right hand side from about the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, where the firefighter was on the extended ladder on the Turntable to the top of the building was all on fire. I never saw what was happening at the rear of the Tower only the front and right hand sides of the building.

The fire was terrible, how it engulfed the building, it spread so quickly, I don't think it gave anyone a chance to get out. I did see the fire spread to a degree. It started to come around to the front from the right. I wasn't physically watching how it was progressing to see how it was spreading to, but you could see the fire was getting bigger and bigger.

On my arrival, we parked approximately 100 - 150 meters from Grenfell Tower and were only 20 – 30 seconds from deploying from the truck to the Tower on foot. Together with Firefighter GRANT, my BA partner, we donned our BA and made our way jogging past the fire engines and we found ourselves in a BA Holding Area for BA Teams. We took a TIC (Thermal Imaging Camera) and we grabbed two Branches (nozzles for end of hose) with us. Nobody instructed us to go towards to Tower, it was instinct to go there. On some jobs you receive orders where to go and what to do, on this job I knew we would be needed at the Tower. We didn't have to receive instructions to make towards the Tower on our arrival.

I do not know where or what Watch Manager TURSCI was deployed on. Firefighter MOORE was helping the main Breathing Apparatus Main Control assisting Watch Manager Dan KIPLING. Fire fighter POWER is trained in the use of Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) and was also deployed at the Breathing Apparatus Main Control.

We remained in the BA Holding Area, which a covered area below a mezzanine keeping us safe from the debris, there is an entrance onto the third level from the upper mezzanine level. We hung around there for 10-15 minutes and were then told to move to the left of the building onto another area that was grassed. All the BA Crews that had assembled were there because of the falling debris from the building, it was a safer position to wait for deployment.

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As our Senior Officers were not committing us at that stage, I removed my BA and tried to help some casualty handling by other Firefighters who were bringing out casualties along a main alley way to where we were waiting, we were just more manpower to help take the people to the Ambulance Service. The alleyway was quite congested at that time.

After that the Senior Officer said he wanted BA Wearers, so I put back on my BA set and went back down the alleyway to a door down had been broken down on the left hand, because there was so much debris coming down at the front entrance, this gave us access to the Holding Area that was on the Ground Floor. We were tasked, not under air at that time to make our way to the Holding Area. Police with Riot Shields escorted us, with the shields above our heads so we would not get hit by debris. The Entry Control was on the Ground floor, this is where we hand in our tallies and go under air, where we are tasked. The Tally when handed over at Entry Control ensures that those in command know how many firefighters with BA have entered the Tower.

On entering the Ground Floor, we were in the queue waiting to go into the Tower and it came to our turn. The Senior Officer wanted us to be a crew of 4 and we were tasked with going to the 18<sup>th</sup> floor to rescue a family of 4 in flat 153, my partner and myself were teamed up with two firefighters from Northolt. We were just about to go under air and out, we had our masks on and we were told by a Senior Officer that we weren't going in.

There was some confusion about the reason why, and it was like Chinese Whispers, we were told that everyone was coming out of the building, I don't know if it came from above. In any event we didn't leave the building. We took our BA masks off, and we stayed in line. We waited there, the lobby was getting quite smoke filled as there was smoke coming in from the lobby. We then got detailed a task to help an EDBA crew. Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus contains two cylinders. I am trained in the use of Single Duration Breathing Apparatus, which has a single cylinder.

Our task was to carry hose to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor and they were going to plug into the dry riser, meaning that we would use up our air quicker carrying hoses than wearer of EDBA equipment, who would have longer duration, because of the additional cylinder they carry to remain in the Tower. I grabbed a length of 45 mm hose as did my colleague Firefighter GRANT. We did discuss taking two hoses each, but the Officer said take only take one each. Walking up 12 floors with equipment in BA would be hard work and use up our supply more quickly.

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We made our way up the staircase it was quite dark and didn't feel that hot to start with. We passed a few crews on the way up and we let them know we were there, what we were doing and where we were going. When we got up to where we believe was the 12<sup>th</sup> floor I put the hose down, but there was hose on nearly every floor, so taking the hoses up to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor wasn't probably required.

Other crews were working on the floors above and below and every time the door from the stairwell to the lobby opened the whole of the stairwell filled with smoke, the conditions were quite poor but it was not too hot. We opened the door on the 12<sup>th</sup> and tried to find the dry riser, but it was extremely hot. We had a look for the dry riser but could find it, it was too hot and smokey on the lobby to do the task, so withdrew.

We met some other crews in the stairwell and asked if they needed any assistance on the floor above, they said they didn't. I looked at my gauge, which tells us our pressure in the tank, it was close to our turnaround time, meaning that we would need to leave the Tower, or risk running out of air. We made our way out of the building back down the stairs to BA Control. I collected my tally and debriefed to the Senior Officer, but there was nothing to report, apart from the conditions we had come up in the Tower and the fact that we could locate the dry riser, I closed down my BA set.

I exited the building to the Holding Area on the grassed area, took our sets off had some water. After that a Senior Officer said he only required EDBA wearers so I wasn't required or tasked with re-entering the Tower again. We took our BA to the fire truck and then went to the BA Main Control where a lot of firefighters were. I helped on the Main BA Controllers rounding up some Firefighters as a Senior Officer had asked me to do. They were tasked with changing batteries on BA equipment, things that no one wanted to do. All the Firefighters wanted to be deployed on rescue or firefighting and Firefighters were queue jumping, with BA to get tasked, to the extent that we went backwards in the queue.

On route to the Tower I could hear the sound of the fire engine pumps working and maybe things falling from the Tower. I didn't hear screaming or anything else, I was too far away. I did not smell anything untoward, just a fire smell. As far as other firefighters in attendance, I'm new to Red Watch and don't know a lot of the guys, I saw a couple of firefighters from Wembley I recognised. I understand that North Kensington were the initial crew in attendance, but only heard that afterwards through hearsay.

I didn't speak with anyone on my arrival but Firefighter GRANT asked someone, possibly a Senior Officer with a white helmet where he wanted us to wait, there were few Officers there at that point. At

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that time firefighting activities were limited to the Turntable Ladder, hoses providing water the ladder were on the ground, there may have been firefighting operations on the mezzanine level, but I could not see if this was the case from where I was. I did not plan any firefighting activities myself.

Whilst in the Holding Area there were 30-40 firefighters with us and we waited about 20 minutes to half an hour before we were tasked, we were at the back of the queue for deployment. I have indicated on exhibit JOW/2, the position I was first deployed in on arrival at the Tower and the Holding Area where with other Firefighters in the BA we waited. Whilst waiting I could see that the fire was working its way around the front. I can't remember if it was top or the bottom, or which area was coming around first.

The reason we got moved was because of falling debris coming down on to the front entrance and it was too dangerous to remain where we were. I thought the building was going to come down, I don't know how many people thought that but my colleague Simon GRANT thought the same, when I got inside the building awaiting to go under air that was my initial fear. Senior Officers must also have thought the same, it must have crossed their minds. I recall speaking to Firefighter GRANT about the stability of the building, I didn't know what the building was constructed with, but the risk of the building collapsing was on my mind. All Firefighters carry a whistle and the BA equipment has a button, if whistles are blown or you receive information on you BA set, you leave the building. I did not hear a whistle at this fire and to my understanding Firefighters did not evacuate.

I heard lots of shouting going on but didn't hear screaming by anyone. Firefighters were saying 'make room everyone out of the way'. It was quite smokey in the Ground Floor Lobby, smoke was coming in the front doors. Most of us had fire hoods on to stop us breathing in the smoke. There was lots of smoke coming from the outside of the building into the Lobby. There was the smell of fire smoke, it was strong, to the extent that it hit the back of your throat. The fire itself didn't come down as far as I thought in relation to the building, it didn't engulf the bottom floors of the building, but smoke was coming into the lobby.

I felt scared as I thought the building would collapse, my main concern was I thought the building was coming down. I did not hear any fire alarms going off in the lobby, I did not hear any fire alarms in the stairwell. I could not smell anything once in the stairwell with my BA on. Once you got in the stairwell it was quite eerie. You couldn't hear much, you could hear crews when you got to the floors that crews were working on. There were no windows in the areas I was deployed in and door opening was confined

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to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor where the door from the stairwell was opened to try and access the lobby to connect to the dry riser.

For the task that I was allocated to locate the dry riser on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, I was unable to find it due to the heat on the floor and the visibility. Not having access to a water supply on the floor meant that we were unable to fight the fire or protect ourselves. I was not aware of a smoke management system in the Tower. I do not know if the fire doors in the Tower are self-closing, we had no water supply to penetrate the fire. I made a decision to leave the Tower with Firefighter GRANT taking into account my level of air in my BA and what we would need to leave without running out and what we had been tasked to do. I was in the building for between 50 minutes and 1 hour. I could not fire fight without water, I left the Tower with Firefighter GRANT, I cannot remember passing anyone on the way down the stairs. I did not speak with any occupiers of flats in the block. When I left the incident firefighting operations were still in progress. I did not use a Thermal Imaging Camera, Firefighter GRANT was in possession of one. I was not wearing a body camera.

We were told that we were leaving the site about 11am, we rounded up our crew and went to Paddington Fire Station for a de brief where I was asked to write down a statement. We were taken one by one to see a Councillor, to have a talk and a chat, I was in there for probably 15 minutes. I was asked if I was ok, I was. We left Paddington Fire Station and returned to Park Royal Fire Station on Status 7, meaning that we could not be redeployed on calls. Our uniforms may have been contaminated with the effects of the fire and were replaced. We spoke about the fire for weeks, which helped.

Returning from my Career Break in August 2016, I was initially removed from the run for two weeks in order that I could receive some re-training. This included both Computer Based Training and a practical skills in relation to High Rise Fires, BA Control. I am assessed as a Competent Firefighter. Prior to going on my career break in August 2016, I attended a very realistic exercise in Acton. The exercise was done in a residential tower block awaiting demolition, 10 stories high and comprising of 5 flats on each floor. Operating in real time, part of the building was caught on fire to provide realism to the exercise, my role was to provide a link between Fire Survival Guidance calls and Senior Officers. I was not aware of any prepared plan for firefighting in Grenfell Tower or for a fire when compartmentation failed. I was not aware if there was a fire lift in the building, if there was I would not have used it for fear of collapse of the building or being trapped myself.

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The single stairwell is the only means to escape and I did not see any sprinkler system in the building. A major problem was that from the time I went under air and fitted my BA the communications failed, I had no means to contact the BA Control to update them on the situation or to receive information from them. The only person I could communicate with was my colleague Firefighter GRANT, by speaking with him through my face mask. I do not know if the dry riser was charged on my arrival or during the incident. The fact that I had been tasked with attaching a hose to the dry riser on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor indicated that an attempt would be made to supply water to this floor.

The only safety measure I saw was that doors from the stairwell to the lobby was closed and the door was opened to try and locate the dry riser, I opened the door. Access into the building was difficult because of debris falling from the tower. Access into the building itself was made more difficult from where I entered as there was only one main entrance door, there was some congestion in the roads due to the volume of fire appliances and other emergency vehicles. I was not aware of risks about cladding panels. A rising main provides a 10 bar pressure into a dry riser that has two hose connections each floor to draw water to fight a fire, water is supplied from fire hydrants, by hose to a fire engine, which provides the pumping capacity to service the dry riser.

I do not know who the Incident Commander was or where he was during the time I was at the incident. A Senior Officer, who I do not know, came into the lobby and told us firefighters to do what we could to save lives. This Officer was more senior than the one who deployed us.

My understanding of 'stay put policy' is that it provides advice to persons who cannot escape from of a property in the event of fire. I do not know who made the decision to 'stay put' on the night, nor can I provide any information relating to decisions. How decisions were recorded and how Senior Officers decided to deploy firefighters or tackle the fire is not within my knowledge.

My understanding of the Role of a Command Unit is that it is a specialist vehicle managed by 2 Watch Managers equipped with phones and maps. The Command Unit is for the use of Senior Officers at an incident. I cannot assist concerning the chain of command at the Grenfell Tower fire and how it changed or may have changed as time went on.

Although I did not see them, look outs are deployed at Sector Commander Rank on each elevation to look for spread of fire on external walls at Major Fires. I do not know of the LFB provide for training this role. I did not see fire precautions, with the exception of doors from the stairwell to floors. I never noticed

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anything specific during the fire to the external windows, the fire was engulfing the building, I had no reason to look specifically at the windows, and there were none in the stairwell. I only saw a Turntable Ladder actually fighting the fire with extended ladder and water.

As I have said previously, fire spread was moving across the whole of the building from the side I could see on my arrival and awaiting deployment in the BA Holding Area, once inside the Tower I could not see the exterior so cannot comment on fire spread. I wasn't watching all the time, after about 15 minutes from arriving the fire was moving to the front from the side of the building, within one and a half hours all four elevations were alight. The behaviour of the fire did not prompt any decision by me, I was being directed by Senior Officers of what to do. The plan was to get the persons out, we couldn't fight it externally and we couldn't connect to a dry riser.

In my opinion, the water supply was inadequate, there was only one means of fire escape. Sprinklers or a Fire Suppression System would have helped us to fight the fire. I was not injured, suffered or witnessed any near miss to other firefighters, however, accessing the building had to be done with the assistance of Police with Riot Shields over our heads. I had no first aid from the LAS or LFB or my GP.

The whole job was massive, it's biggest tallest fire I have ever attended, with no water I felt inadequate and couldn't do much, and firefighters were very brave that night.

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