

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: PARKER, JONATHAN

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 12 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 PARKER

Date: 05/03/2018

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

On MONDAY 29th JANUARY 2018 I was interviewed at WANDSWORTH Fire Station by Dc FOLEY and Dc WHITBY. The interview was recorded which commenced at 1011 hours and concluded at 1302 hours. Also present was Mr Nigel COX from the Fire Brigade Union. This is my statement I gave during the interview. I completed some notes after the incident in which I will speak about, I produce a copy them as my exhibit JCP/01 which I used to refresh my memory for the purposes of the interview. I also used a map to mark various points which I also produce as my exhibit JCP/02. Both these exhibits I handed to Dc FOLEY.

I am Mr Jonathan PARKER and I a Watch Manager (WM) at WANDSWORTH Fire station in the LONDON FIRE BRIGADE but am currently detached to UNION STREET. I make this statement in relation to a fire at GRENFELL TOWER, GRENFELL ROAD, W11 on WEDNESDAY 14th JUNE 2017. As a WM I look after a watch of nine (9) people, on an incident ground I would be charge of any incident of four (4) pumps or below, at larger incidents I could be in charge of a sector.

I have been in the service for almost twenty two (22) years. I was a Fire Fighter (FF) for 15 years before I went for promotion. I have been based at busy stations, SOHO for about twelve (12) years, CLAPHAM for a short while, BRIXTON for about five (5) years and at WANDSWORTH since. The rank structure is Fire Fighter, Crew Manager and then Watch Manager. In this time I have been involved in a number of high profile incidents and I am considered as competent.

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In my statement I will mention a number of people, CM Richard MCSHEE, FF John WRIGHT, FF Margaret ERRINGTON, FF Scott BELL. Watch Manager (WM) Mike DOWNDON, WM Jim BERRY, CM Richard MORRIS, Assistant Commissioner Andy ROE, DAC Pat GOULBOURNE.

On TUESDAY 13th JUNE 2017 I started work at 2000 hours on RED WATCH. That evening we had a flush crew, we had two on the OSU which is the Operational Support Unit, FF Kevin LEWIS and Chris COX a civilian, that's all he does is drive the OSU. The OSU delivers water and petrol to the fire ground. With me that evening on the Pump Ladder (PL) was CM Richard MCSHEE, FF John WRIGHT, FF Margaret ERRINGTON, FF Scott BELL, and one other who I can't remember. I was in charge of both appliances that night and both were deployed to GRENFELL TOWER.

At the start of the shift we had roll call just after 2000 hours, the fire fighters carried out their appliance checks, whilst they did that I went upstairs to log onto the computer. I looked for any training that needed to be done or if we needed finish anything off from the previous day. That night we had a fire fighting in basements lecture. Once everything was completed we had an evening meal together here at the station. At about 2330 hours I went to bed.

At about 0120 hours the bells went down. This is when we have a call to an incident, the lights come on and there is lots of noise. I went straight to the appliance, the driver and the watch room FF went down to the printer. I don't remember who the was driver that night. I had a duplicate on the appliance on a screen on the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT). There wasn't much information, perhaps the computer system wasn't working. I can't remember exactly what it said but I think it was a twenty (20) pump relief or 20 pump fire but I am sure it didn't tell us what we were going to, I think it just gave a road, I can't remember exactly which road but possibly something like LANCASTER PLACE maybe. One of the FF's used his phone to get us there and we still didn't know what we were going to. From my point of view it's good to know what you are going to so that I can think about what I am going to do on my way there, with this one I didn't know what we were going to. It is not unusual not knowing what you are going to, the system that we have is new but we have a lot of missed and returned calls, it didn't surprise me it wasn't working so well. I have no idea what route we took to get there, I was sat in the front passenger seat but as WM I often do not know as I will be looking at the screen on the MDT so normally before I know it we are there. We have our own radios and there is a main scheme radio as well but I don't remember any particular traffic on the radios when we were making our way. The MDT or call slip will tell you what radio channel you need to be on for the incident, there are two (2) channels that would be used, I believe we were instructed to be on channel four (4), the other channel which could be used is

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channel two (2). On the way to the incident ground I didn't use the radio as at that time there was no reason for me to do so.

It wasn't until we turned the corner at STONELEIGH STREET that I saw what we were going to. From the look of the fire I thought it was scaffolding alight, the plastic covering, something like that. I believe we arrived at about 0140 hours, where we parked up in STONELEIGH STREET, the only reason we parked there was because it was grid locked with fire engines so we just parked in the middle of the road, with cars parked either side of the road. I don't know how much further we could have parked to GRENFELL TOWER if those appliances hadn't been there but we were not actually that far away, we were maybe a block away, a couple of minutes' walk. I can only describe the roads as being congested. I don't recall any residents there at this point, just FF's, I was more focused on getting to the tower. The weather was dry and it was a warm summers evening, it was early hours in the morning so it was dark. Our appliance remained there until we left the incident.

I told the crews to gather whatever they could, Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets, breaking in equipment gear and as many hoses and branches as they could carry. I carried some breaking in gear, I didn't have a BA set that night as there were so many of us. It's not completely unusual for this to happen, if we are all on duty and the FF's are sent out, I don't have a set as there are no enough sets to go around so I would be the obvious one not to have one.

We approached the tower from the SOUTH side, along STONELEIGH STREET and into GRENFELL ROAD, I could see the EAST side was on fire from about the 4th floor up, all the way up. It seemed fairly obvious that you could see it spread, you see it on scaffolding which is why I thought it was scaffolding, but this was visibly moving round the tower, I could see it spreading as I walking up to the tower. The wind was blowing from the EAST, when I got closer it was obvious it was the cladding alight and not the scaffolding as I had originally thought because what was falling down around us was bits of cladding. With all that I could see my initial thoughts were resources, to get as many resources there, to get water onto it, I thought of Dynamic Risk assessments, whatever we do we have to do it safely. There was now radio traffic on the hand held radio's asking for more resources, plenty of that so really it was matter of getting the crews there.

It took us a couple of minutes to walk to the tower. We made our way to the front of the SOUTH side. There were a lot of fire engines around, leading up to the tower it was clear that whatever was going on, it was catastrophic, there was lots of screaming from both inside and outside the tower. The area around the SOUTH side at the foyer was very busy with falling debris, burning debris so that was a dangerous area

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to be in. The debris was burning foam and metal surrounds, metal brackets that were holding the cladding in. It seemed like celotex which is compact foam, when it was falling it was quite light, the bigger bits and the brackets were a concern. We placed sentries who were telling people when it was clear to go and in out of the building, so they were looking up above. The debris that I did see falling was all alight and of variable sizes. It was also a matter of not wanting the fire to spread from the ground up as well. As it was falling, the way the wind was blowing it was swirling it around on the WEST side and it was fairly close to the base of the tower and the NORTH side as well, so the covering jets were placed around and directed at putting that out. Either myself or the driver of our appliance handed in our nominal role board at the Command Unit (CU), for some reason I can't remember if it was me or not but I would normally do it as a matter of course. The nominal role board is a list of everyone that is on that appliance so if something was to go to wrong you have a list of who is there. Likewise if everyone was withdrawn, they would check the nominal role board and call off names.

There was cover by the SOUTH side which is where we took our briefing and then I went to the WEST side. Whilst it didn't really compute what was going on I realised that something was up. Here we met Watch Manager (WM) Mike DOWNDON who is the guvnor at NORTH KENSINGTON Fire Station and this is pretty much the last I saw of my crews. Mike at this point was the Incident Commander, he deployed me to WEST side of the tower with a loud hailer to try and stop people from jumping, I believe Mike handed me the loud hailer because I didn't go and get one. I took a FF from BATTERSEA with me, I can't remember his name. We walked along the ramp from the SOUTH side which was pretty much covered, towards the playground into a safe area. The debris was falling on the SOUTH side, at this point the WEST side wasn't too bad. It was only the two (2) of us on the WEST side, I gave the FF the loud hailer and asked him to stop people jumping whilst I tried and get more resources around there. The FF was using the loud hailer but people around us were encouraging people to jump for some reason and we were trying to discourage them. At that time we would have expected that we could go in and get them out, which was not unreasonable for us to do. On the WEST side people were hanging out of the windows and the smoke was being blown through the building it seemed, lots of thick black smoke was coming out of lots of levels. The fire hadn't reached some of those levels but the smoke had so people were hanging out of the windows. On the SOUTH side, someone was tying bed linen together trying to get themselves out. We were trying to discourage them from climbing out.

The conversations with residents was all one way from us because they were too high up for us to hear what they were saying. There were no residents on the lower floors, they were all on floor ten (10) or

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above. I could hear noises but I couldn't hear what they were saying because of the distance, the noise around us and lots of people were shouting and screaming. We were saying crews would get to them, to stay where they were, we would come and get them, don't jump. I think people have a misconception that we had things that would save you if you jump out of buildings, I think they thought that if they did jump we would be able to rescue them, catch them in a blanket type scenario, or blow up something. I can't recall specifically what they were saying. It did worry me, they were encouraging people to jump, it was also taking up a lot of my time, with stopping with them from trying to get in, encouraging people not to jump. There was only one flat number I remember being mentioned by a member of the public, he kept coming back to me. The one I do remember is flat 113 or flat 114, a gentleman who was on the telephone, he was saying that his brother and his family were in there, that they were trapped, that there was thick black smoke coming through and they wanted us to go and rescue them. I don't know who that male was, I can describe him as in his mid-30's, Middle Eastern ethnic appearance, that's all I can remember. I can't remember his exact words he was saying on the phone but it was on the lines that they were coming to get you. I did later have a look when I was in the FSG and 113 or 114 had been circled. There was lots going on, lots of people dashing in and out but I managed to find a GM who was going into the bridgehead, I asked him to pass on flat 113 or 114 and he confirmed that he would pass that information on, I don't know who that GM was, I have never seen him before.

Because I was at the base of the tower I was coughing a lot and was for most of the night. I was coughing more than I would do any other job, I stopped coughing when we left the scene so no lasting effects.

There was a strange smell, there is a normal smell of fire which is quite particular but this was an acrid sort of smell, it's acidic and catches you in the throat, I can only put this down to the cladding although I haven't had any previous experience of cladding burning before. I haven't experienced that same acrid smell previously either. I may have been speaking to the public in total for about 15-20 minutes.

It was fairly dynamic and I wasn't getting anything from the other officers around there. I could see I wasn't going to get what I needed as they were trying to get what they needed also. I then decided to go to the Command Unit (CU), it was around GRENFELL ROAD junction with BOMORE ROAD. It is not unusual for it to be away from the incident. Experience tells you where it would be so I found it easily, it was within a minutes' walk. The CU is essentially a big van with Command Unit written on the sides. It is run by a couple of WM's, they are a driver and a team leader. The CU will assist in running an incident, they will have lots of information, they will take over as the incident command vehicle so all messages will go via them, any requests, the more protracted the incident then a CU will attend, there is a Pre-

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Determined Attendance (PDA) when a CU would attend and that is a four (4) pump or above fire. I have been on the CU on previous incidents but I have not actually been CU staff. Any incident, you would go to the CU straight away. On my exhibit JCP/02 I marked the map with the letters CU where I believed the command unit to be situated. I knocked on the door and it opened, it was very busy but the Commissioner was there, she came outside with a Group Manager (GM). I asked the Commissioner if she knew if there were any resources that I could get round to the WEST side and an aerial in particular, the GM answered for her and said I had to deal with whatever I had, the aerial was broken down, they tried to get one from other counties, so he said he would give me resources when he could but for now deal with what I had. I made my way back to the WEST side when I became a bit inundated with residents, they wanted to tell me as much information as they wanted to and I was trying to get that information whilst I was trying to stop them from going into the tower. A lot of the younger ones were volunteering themselves to go in. I had to explain to them that the more time I spend stopping them from going in the less time I had to do my job. I managed to get hold of some police officers because I just had to get members of the public away into a safe area. I asked them to get any relevant information from the public about people inside the flats and to keep people back from the hazardous area. We were on the WEST side by some railings, people were jumping over the railings trying to get in so the police were trying to move people away. All of them were fairly vocal with lots of shouting and screaming.

We managed to get a couple of ladders, off the appliance that later on was pumping to the covering jets, we were just doing what we could with the ladders. We put a 135 meter ladder up against the side of the building. We also put up a 9 meter ladder up against the windows, this ladder stayed where we put it. We put these up in case anyone from the lower floors could use them to get out, they were there if needed but they were not used. There was another WM from RICHMOND, WM Jim BERRY who was assisting me with the ladders. I marked on my exhibit JCP/02 the numbers 9 and 135 where I believe we put the ladders up. The 135m ladder was needed to be repositioned so myself, Jim and other FF's lifted it onto the ramp to other crews in case people wanted to get down from there. The 135m ladder is cumbersome but we needed to get it up there so between us we lifted it up to the ramp. Near the 9m ladder was positioned on the WEST side is where some FF's broke through the glass panels and locked glass doors to make a new entrance/exit because at the entrance and lobby there was a lot of stuff coming down. On the SOUTH side it had become too dangerous to let the crews and casualties in and out of there. More and more people were gathering. I asked a couple of drivers, in their opinion if we could put some aerial ladders or pumping appliances there as it seemed fairly tight with bollards, they believed we could.

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There was a Station Manager (SM) from Liverpool again I don't know who he was, he said as soon as the resources arrived he would put them there, although the LFB doesn't have an aerial ladder. We were just using what we had, just thinking of things and how best to do it with what we had.

That's when I set up the covering jet with crews from TOOTING. I marked on my exhibit JCP/02 the letters CJ where I believed I set up the covering jet. This was on a flat roof on the NORTH side, I set up 70 mil jet which is the largest hose we carry on the appliance, it has a branch on the end, there was an appliance sited around the WEST side which supplied it with water. It is set up to prevent fire from spreading. You can either tie it off or manually operate it, this one was manually operated as it was far enough away for it not to be a hazard so it was ok for people to stay there. The FF's on the covering jet were putting out the falling debris on fire. Also, they could monitor what was going on that side. It was being operated by CM Richard MORRIS and his crew. I also set up a ground monitor which was placed between the NORTH and WEST corner. On my exhibit JCP/02 I marked the letters GM of where this was set up. A ground monitor is simply a nozzle that sits on the floor with a hose connected to it and it projects large amounts of water onto the building. It doesn't need a fire fighter with it, you weigh it down with something. It didn't take very much time at all to set up both the covering jet and the ground monitor. This was to try and stop the spread of fire coming round from the NORTH side. Both the covering jet and the ground monitor is something you would do at most fires, so I would always ask for them to be set up. The water pressure was good with a good flow but we were not using much water around that side, the water was coming from an appliance plugged into a fire hydrant.

The fire was travelling round from the NORTH to the WEST so it was an easterly wind. I then heard a bit of a noise on the WEST side, I looked over and I saw the body of an elderly Asian male on the ground, he was in his 50's or 60's, wearing long greyish trousers and a jumper. I marked on my exhibit JCP/02 a letter B where I believe the body was when I saw him. A couple of FF's run over to him so I ran towards this male as well. I asked one of the FF's from BATTERSEA how he got there and he told me he had jumped. One of the FF's checked for a pulse which he did find one. I didn't see any major visible injuries, there wasn't a great deal of blood either, I have been to a number of people of who have jumped out of buildings and I can only describe him as being fairly soggy. Four (4) of us carried him to the grass area on the WEST side, on my exhibit JCP/02 I marked it with another letter B where I believe we moved him to. We had set up a casualty handling area and as we were carrying him over I realised that maybe it wasn't a good idea to put him next to them so we asked the ambulance staff and the FF's to move the walking casualties further away. We laid the male on the grass area, we didn't hang around so I can only presume

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the paramedics helped him. I didn't think he would survive from his injuries, I think his heart was just beating but not much else, I didn't do any casualty care myself.

The BA crews had bought down these casualties and were handing them to FF's on the ground to take out. Some of the casualties had visible injuries, they had burns to their arms, legs and faces, some with skin hanging off their legs. I do remember seeing a family, a mother and her children. Once the casualties were handed to the paramedics they were dealt with very quickly and whisked away. I have no idea of how long I had been there or what the time was at this point, the whole incident went so quickly I have no recollection of the time, what I can say is, it was still dark, being June it gets light at about 0430 hours, the whole incident seemed to go quickly. I assisted the walking casualties and carried some out. It was a case of a FF had bought them down, they would shout casualty and the nearest person to them would take the casualty out, I saw maybe ten (10) being bought out or assisted with. I did carry out a couple of lifeless bodies, I cannot say who they were or even describe them. Inside the ground floor there were just loads of FF's queuing up in the different areas. The casualties were taken to a casualty handling area where the ambulances were which was cordoned off, I believe it was on HURSTWAY WALK. The time I was there, there didn't seem to be enough Paramedics for the number of casualties that were coming but they may have been taking them somewhere else I don't know. There was a real problem with oxygen, a lack of it for FF's as I think most of it had been used on casualties and the FF's coming out needed oxygen for themselves. There wasn't enough of physical cylinders which is a resources issue. What we did have was being used on the casualties or they were empty.

The casualties were coming out of the building fairly quickly so we had a relay system going, of carrying people out. The police were there with their riot shields, along GRENFELL WALK area, gathered up along by the playground on the WEST side. I started to co-ordinate casualties coming out and FF's and WM's going in. I was sorting out fresh cylinders and oxygen into the bridgehead which I think was now on the ground floor, although I didn't have anything to do with the bridgehead. I took a riot shield myself and helped ferrying people which took a while. We literally had a queue of FF's and police officers, lined up along GRENFELL WALK. As and when equipment was need to go in or if people needed to come out you would go under cover of the shields. It would be one shield with two people, one in front and one behind you. Sentries had been set up using FF's to help when it was clear to go in and out. This worked well but there was so much debris and loads of hoses on the ground so you needed to watch where you were treading. I did this for a number of hours and it had changed to day light hours now but I don't have any idea of the time.

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After a while things started to slow down and less casualties were coming out so I was assigned to take over equipment. There were a lot of BA sets lying around and lots that had been used, they needed to be co-ordinated so I just tried to gather as many used sets that had been discarded and as many fresh cylinders as I could and get them fire ground tested again so that they could be used for crews going back in. I tried to muster as many FF's as I could to help me to do that, those who were not too exhausted and didn't have other jobs. There may have been an equipment dump but I didn't know where that was, but the FF's knew where to locate them, I don't know where they did find the sets. I was also trying to find the Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) wearers that hadn't worn to gather them so they could be committed. I was trying to gather as much as I could but I don't think I got very far. I set up an equipment dump on the grass area near to where I have marked a letter B above the word WEST on my exhibit CJP/02. Not long after I started co-ordinating this I was asked to assist with the FSG calls so I didn't see it through. EDBA is two (2) cylinders on your back, you have to be specifically trained to wear that, it just means you can go further into a building and lasts longer. One tank is Standard Breathing Apparatus (SDBA). The difference between the duration is not far off double but it depends on how hard you are working.

I noticed a couple of FF's had burns to their necks. I have been burnt in fires before so I recognised the burns, they were full depth. I dealt with them for a while making sure that they got to an ambulance. It is not unusual for FF's to get burns if debris is falling like that. Apart from the FF's with the burns on their necks, I didn't see any other FF of any rank with injuries. I was then asked by a Group Manager (GM) to take over the Fire Survivor Guidance calls (FSG), I think the time now was about 0600-0630 hours. He also asked another WM, CM Richard McSHEE and another CM who volunteered himself as he wanted to see for himself how it was all being done, to assist.

FSG is where there is a person trapped in a fire they phone control (999), control will ask them to stay on the line, control will then get hold of the fire ground via the radio's to either an appliance or a CU, we will assign a person to keep that link open. We will then try and direct our resources to that person, we will then let control know what we are doing and when we have done it so that can then be cancelled out, the calls are written down on a FSG form.

I went into the ground floor of the tower through the broken glass by the 9m ladder to the bottom of the stairs. It was on the corner of the NORTH EAST is where all the information was. When I went in there was loads of water coming down the stairs, it was ankle deep, lots of hose going in and out, it wasn't smoky down there. It didn't really have an impact on my job because once I was set up it was a matter of

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committing crews so I was just stood there and briefing FF's. Pat GOULBOURNE was in charge at this point, I don't know how long he had been in charge for, I think then he was a Deputy Assistant Commissioner and CM Richard McSHEE was the Entry Control Officer at the Bridgehead.

When FF's are committed into an incident wearing breathing apparatus, they have to start their BA in safe air, so they will take off their tally from their BA sets and plug it into the Entry Control Board, the two (2) will speak to each other, this will tell the Entry Control Officer how much they have and how much time they have left of air. The Bridgehead is set up for high rise buildings and normally it is two (2) floors below the floor of the fire as that is deemed as safe, if the fire was to drop a floor it wouldn't affect the Bridgehead or they would move the Bridgehead down. It's basically a safe area where you can set up operations. The Bridgehead and the ECO would be on the same floor as the idea is to save FF's going under air too early.

The WM before me, I don't know his name, an Irishman, was under a lot of pressure and he had written it all on the wall his own system, he tried to describe to me what the system was but it took a couple of briefs for me to decipher it all and who then needed rescuing. He was then whisked away by someone else so we worked with what we had. What was written on that wall were flat numbers all the way across, they weren't necessarily in chronological order because he would have written it down as he was getting the information. There was lots of jumping across and down. There were flat numbers and the numbers next it correlated to the number of people in that flat. I can't recall the exact system but I think if they were circled the flats hadn't been searched perhaps and crosses through the ones that had been searched. Everything above the 11th had not been written off but we were not sending anyone above the 11th at that time. When I took over I didn't have any FSG calls with control and there were no communications with control so from the point I took over I was just dealing with what was on the board. I didn't change the system on the wall because it was only the person on 11th floor that was left to be rescued or he had been deemed as a rescuable person, he was the last live FSG call. What we use to write on walls is a chinagraph pencil, it is like a crayon. It was probably written on the wall at the time because it was the most practical thing to do with all the information and the wall was the biggest thing there. We have used walls before, I would get members of the public to draw on walls of their flat if it is on fire yes I would use walls.

There was talk of a very large man who was blocking the way, I can't remember what floor, maybe the 6th. We sent BRIXTON's crew in to try and bring him down, I later found out it was a woman. The crew really struggled to get him down. Pat GOULBOURNE was co-ordinating crews to go up to the 11th floor

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to rescue the gentleman who was stuck in his flat up on the WEST side. I briefed the crews to go the 11th floor. I believe my brief to them was fairly basic because there were other FF's up there, communications were very poor, and the radios weren't working. It was a matter of getting them to the 11th floor, liaising with the crew already up there, I don't think there was very much water up there as it was all coming down the stairs. I don't know how many crews were sent in there to rescue him, it seemed like it took four (4) lots of wearers just to get the door open to the lobby before they could even get to his front door because the heat was so intense in the lobby area, the crews were having trouble getting to him. The debrief from crews who had been on the 11th floor was really about the intense heat. Each crew who came down just spoke about the heat and not being able to get past the fire door. I did mention to Pat GOULBOURNE that if the flat was in good condition and we were going to take him out into extreme heat if that was a wise thing to do but Pat said we just had to get him out. I didn't know what the condition of the flat was like, it's a really hard call to make. I did see this male being bought out, they managed to get him out, the crews bringing him down informed us he was from that flat on the 11th floor, and this was a relief for everyone. I can describe him as an Asian male, Chinese looking, fairly elderly 50's or 60's I think.

There were lots of FF's in this area on the ground floor, lots of water was coming down the stairs, I asked FF's to do some hose management because people were falling over things. The bridgehead was then moved up to the 4th floor and I think the reason for that was any rescuable life had been bought out and it was now a matter of firefighting and it was now to try and ease the wearers with the amount of oxygen that they were using.

I went up to the 4th floor without any BA on but it was clean air. On my way up to the 4th floor on the mezzanine floor I past GM Greg ASHMAN, we said hello and I carried on up. It was clear with just lots of water damage, lots of hoses. I didn't get off any other floor just the 4th floor. On the stairs on the way up, there was no lighting, it had all been destroyed, we had our own lighting up there. I didn't hear any alarms but if there were they would have been gone by then I imagine, there were no sprinklers. The stairs were concrete, the lobby area downstairs was fairly tight, there was a couple of lifts. The hallways were fairly tight with flats leading off that. You could pass another FF on the stairs but I don't know comfortable it would have been. The stairs was the only means of escape from the tower.

On the 4th floor there was lots of smoke damage in the lobby area but it wasn't smoky, I poked my head around at one of the flats and it was totally gone but I don't know which flat that was. The Bridgehead was set up in the lobby outside the lifts, it was fairly vented because of the broken windows from the

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flats. I have been to high rise towers before and after 2 hours if its raging then it's starting to compromise the structure of the building, I knew a structural engineer had been and I knew it was a risk being in there but I wasn't panicking, I was fairly comfortable being there. We had a forward information board on the 4th floor, the information was going to be put on that, I think whoever took over from me may have taken photographs of the wall downstairs to set the up information but I can't be sure on that. I set up the board equipment, there was lots of chat going on between the senior officers but I wasn't privy to that. At this point there were no FF's waiting to be deployed from the bridgehead. I don't know if the FF's were informed that the Bridgehead had moved but you always would but communications were very very poor so I don't know if they knew or if they were sending runners up I don't know. The radios are usually bad, at any high rise incident you would expect not to have any communication as radios don't tend to go through concrete. The crews coming down were just passing on the information verbally on their way out and it seemed like there was a steady stream so whilst you couldn't get live updates they did as they were coming out. When I joined we only had one radio between the crew anyway so my initial training was that.

As I was setting it up it was at that point that over the radio my crews were asked to leave as they were bringing in relief crews, crews were coming in to replace us. A FF called Scott BELL told us that control were trying to get hold of me but they couldn't so FF BELL passed the message to me that we were leaving. I then handed over to a Station Manager (SM), I don't know who that was. I walked down to the ground floor and met my crew in the lobby area, we left the tower on the SOUTH side, the crew carried on walking and I made my way back to the CU and collected our nominal role board, I also had a quick chat with the GM who had asked me to do the FSG. From the CU I could still see the tower. The tower was still smoking very badly, from the SOUTH and EAST side it was a lot worse on the 4th floor up than it was from the WEST side and the EAST side was more damaged than the WEST. When I first arrived it was a raging inferno but now it wasn't like that, but it was still a job going on however.

I went back to the appliance using the same route we used to get there. The atmosphere was fairly sombre, I don't think we really knew what we had been to, people were coming up to us giving us proper coffee from coffee shops, giving us food, we were a bit surprised by that. It seemed like the whole community had got together to help the FF's. At 0940 hours we left the incident, the CU told us to go to PADDINGTON Fire Station to do a statement and there was counselling there as well. It took us a while to get to PADDINGTON, there was lots of traffic, and I'm guessing, an hour or so. On arrival at PADDINGTON we were taken to a room on the top floor and told we would get a quick brief on

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questions and to write down the answers to the questions. Also those that needed it or wanted it could see a counsellor. I didn't speak to a counsellor myself. My crew were alright, they had been deployed to different things, Margaret, who it was her first night duty with us, I did see her during the evening, she was helping with the riot shields and was committed without BA to help with hose management. Some of the crew had gone into flats to rescue people. Once we had finished at PADDINGTON we went to our Fire Station arriving at about 1330 hours. We were due in for night duty that evening as well, I went home for a few hours and came back into work the second night shift.

During my time at the incident I didn't have a break at all but I was able to get some water. The atmosphere was fairly manic, lots of shouting, Mike the NORTH KENSINGTON guvnor, he was running around trying to get everything done. It was very busy, lots of people looking for things to do with whatever that had. Most jobs that we go on are calculated and calm to an extent whereas this as just wasn't, it seemed that there was unwritten rule that you could do whatever you wanted to do because of the scale of it and that you had to, to get the job done. I didn't feel at any stage, not that I went out of policy at all but there were lots of things we wouldn't normally do but I was comfortable with what we did, for example, lifting up a 135m ladder you wouldn't normally do that, it's a big ladder, this wasn't really controlled, you wouldn't necessarily be in the hazard zone as much as we were, with falling debris all around us, you wouldn't normally do that. I heard crews were going up without Breathing Apparatus on and starting up when they got to a smoky area, but again I think that was just using common sense. I am not worried if I have gone out of policy myself, I think I am comfortable as long as I can justify it which I can.

The spread of the fire was rapid but I didn't notice anything unusual about the smoke or the flames. I don't know anything about the gas supply or the supply being cut off. In my service I have never seen a fire spread like that before. In my opinion it spread so quickly the way it did was because of open windows and the cladding and the wind fanning the fire. Prior to this incident I didn't really have any knowledge about cladding, we have concerns about sandwich panels which are on industrial units so we are aware of them and their dramatic collapse and the way they burn which is rapidly as well. When I have been to those fires previously there is no life risk and we are just pouring water onto them. I don't know but I would think that sandwich panels are constructed similar to cladding. There is a foam injected in between like a sandwich and it's the foam that burns. When it burns it gives off a gas. I didn't open any doors or windows in the tower, when I went from the stairs to the lobby area on the 4th floor I would have

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followed someone through so I don't know if the door was self-closing, the door wasn't burn through or anything like that.

I didn't have any previous knowledge of GRENFELL TOWER prior to the incident, I haven't been on a S7(2)d familiarisation to GRENFELL or in that same area. I have never been posted to the fire safety department and I didn't attend the call at the early stage of the fire at flat 16.

We do a lot of our own training, we have our own tower at the back, we will do high rise procedures on the tower, and I can't give dates of when. We have a lot of high rise on our ground here amongst the highest in London so we are fairly well versed in it. Whenever we go out we will always look where the dry risers are, the facilities are such that we can't do high rise. There is a facility in Morden, the fire service college but we don't tend to use that any more so we have our own training towers but we are limited to what we can do with that.

I have been to many fires in high rise blocks, one was a block of flats in PECKHAM which caught fire, it was a flat of multi occupancy, the fire was on the top floor, it had exposed balconies going up the side so I was able to quickly get hose up via the outside, dragging hoses up the outside of the building. The FF's went up and threw a rope over the side and dragged the hose up from the outside. Luckily we could access the front and back so we got the ALP to the back for a covering jet which was on the roof to stop it spreading onto the roof. We were able to get the people out from the balcony.

The rising main is built into a building, it is a way of getting water from the ground up a high rise building quickly so all you need to do is unroll the hose and plug it into whatever outlet you want to and you will have water from there, so its way of reducing work getting water quickly to a burning room.

Each floor from about 4 or 5 levels up will have an outlet or it may be every other floor. A dry riser you need to charge, a wet riser is already charged with water. When I arrived the Incident Commander was by the SOUTH side, that was Mike DOWDON but after that I don't know who it was but it would have been rapidly taken off his hands by I think Assistant Commissioner Andy ROE who stayed the Incident Commander for the time I was at the tower.

The brigade has a stay put policy which is if you are in a high and its concrete then you will have two (2) hours of protection from the walls and the ceilings so the stay put is safer than having to go out into possibly bad air and to hinder any firefighting tactics. When they dial 999 and speak to the operator the stay put policy will be given to them on the phone at the time they call. It's really saying it is safer where you are we will come and get you. I don't know who made any decisions on the stay put policy or withdrawal of it. Any decisions should be recorded on decisions logs and probably by the CU. The chain

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of command generally changes with the number of appliances attending, the more pumps there are the high the rank of the officer in charge.

I don't know if FF's were keeping a look out for spread of the fire on the external walls but it is something you would expect. If there were safety officers that would be a brief for them and they would look for the fire spread. You wouldn't necessarily ask a recruit to do it. You would ask an officer or an experienced FF. I would ask them if they felt they were capable of doing it and their word would be enough. Recruits have a diamond on their helmets. The spread of the fire didn't necessarily prompt any of my decision making, we did what we could with what we had.

For me when I joined there was always an aerial appliance that would turn up to any high rise, someone at some stage made a decision for that not to happen. Perhaps if there was an aerial we may have been able to go up to the 4th floor and extinguish or dampen down the actual fire spread. It was deemed perhaps to save money that it would be a good idea not for them to go to any high rise. If I was in charge having seen that I would have deployed an aerial ladder straight away. The costs I guess is diesel, it's just a big ladder, that's all it does, it is designed for high rise buildings, it always used be part of the PDA, Pre-Determined Attendance, it is now but it wasn't before GRENFELL.

Although I did see a number of FF's with injuries I did not suffer any injuries or a near miss myself. I had no need to seek assistance from the LAS or the LFB and I did not subsequently seek help from the NHS or my GP. What I saw that night I have seen all of it before, nothing shocked me, just the scale of it. To me it feels it wouldn't happen again, I was proud to be there but I don't think this will happen again. I think the building would have been ok if it wasn't for the cladding. There were times there that I felt helpless. It hasn't had any physiological impact on me, I might change my tactics slightly at another incident, maybe putting up the aerial ladder no matter what. I don't think I would change them that much, it would be in the back of mind what has happened. My crew since the incident are fine, all ok.

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