

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: MCCLELLAND, KYLE

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 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: KYLE MCCLELLAND

Date: 08/02/2018

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

This is my account of the fire at Grenfell Tower in the early hours of Wednesday 14th June 2017.

On the 21/01/2017, at Croydon Fire station between 1039hrs and 1405hrs, PC Elif AGYUN and PC Nonso ANIDI interviewed me, in the presence of Fire Brigade union representative Nigel COS. This interview was audio recorded.

I will mention a number of people that I attended the scene with and some I met at Grenfell tower during the incident.

Crew Manager Tom AKINS

Firefighter Ben DOTCHIN

Firefighter Ennio GONN ELLA

Firefighter Tom DOTCHIN

Firefighter Constantine NWAGWU

Firefighter Tom BUNDEY

Crew Manager Dominic FEARNLEY

Firefighter Martin HOOPER

Group Manager Pat GOLDBORNE

Crew Manager Michael DENNY

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

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I will mention the first staging area, which was located outside the Kensington leisure centre, where firefighters were held before committing them to the second staging area, which was at the green grass area near children's play area.

The first staging area was facing the South-East side of Grenfell tower while the second staging area was directly opposite the West side of Grenfell tower.

I will also mention Grenfell tower and the internal layout of the ground floor lobby where the bridgehead was located, including the stairwell that leads to the top floors. The ground floor lobby was flooded with water, which was up to 2 inches deep.

I will finally mention the 12th/13th floor, where Croydon crew and I were tasked to do search and rescue.

I have 7 and half years of service with London fire brigade; and I am currently based at Croydon Fire station on Red Watch. I joined the London fire brigade on 12/07/2010, before I joined the LFB, I had 2 and half years with East Sussex fire and rescue service.

After I joined the LFB, I was posted to North Kensington Fire station on a 2-month attachment. I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in in May of 2007, which it requires me to inject insulin every day. The reason for the posting to North Kensington Fire station was that there was an officer that monitored my progress due to my diagnosis. I was later posted to Chelsea Fire station on Green watch in June of 2011 and from there I was transferred to my current base in December 2014.

When I joined the LFB, I had 17 weeks initial training and these courses were as follows: 1 week of first aid training followed by another week of physical training. After that I had Pump and Ladder training at Shadwell Fire station which enables you to understand the uses of pump and ladder in event of a fire incident.

I also took part in 3 weeks training on the use of Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA). During the Breathing Apparatus training, we were taken to a real firehouse, which is a controlled environment.

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

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They set the plank on fire and you would be briefed to go and do a search and rescue. This training was a bit realistic because it gave you the platform to be a good firefighter.

Breathing apparatus is what firefighters wear in an environment that is smoky to avoid us from inhaling smoke. A BA set has a cylinder of compressed oxygen and it weighs between 13- 15kg. The oxygen can last up to 31 minutes, depending on your working conditions; it also has a bodyguard that tell you much air that is left in the cylinder. In the event of a fire, the minimum required is 240 bars before a firefighter will be committed. There is also a tally that is attached to the SDBA, which has the details of the BA set, the name of the officer, cylinder pressure and time in.

After my initial 17 weeks training, I have had continuation training at stations where we do drill training in the yard using the drill tower. This training can come in the form of lectures and sometimes we go out on familiarisation on a High-rise tower within the borough where we are based. During the familiarisation visit, we find out how many people are living in the tower, where the dry riser and wet riser outlets are located, how many lengths of hose are required in event of fire, and where the lifts are. The purpose of these visits is to try to build a picture of the building and all the information is updated in the system and transferred to the Mobile device Terminal (MDT). These visits are mostly done on a weekly basis depending on what is in diary for the station.

Furthermore, I am trained to use Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA). In 2013, I went on a 4 weeks FRU course at Southwark. EDBA are carried on fire and rescue vehicles. The vehicle also carries cutting equipment, which is used in the event of RTA to rescue someone who is trapped. EDBA has a twin cylinder that weighs up to 23kg and the minimum pressure allowed before committing a firefighter is 240 bars. EDBA contains compressed air that can last up to 43 minutes depending on conditions.

During the EDBA training, on the first day was lectures on the differences between SDBA and EDBA, followed by a drill to go and rescue someone in a basement. We wore the EDBA and crawled into a basement for the rescue. The remaining one-day training on EDBA involved dealing with a contaminated environment, 4 weeks course training in hazmat, line rescue level one by working at a height and RTA, followed by one week level two training, when a firefighter is lowered to rescue someone. We also do yearly refresher courses on Breathing Apparatus and line assessment in a station yard every 6 months. We

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2018

Signature witnessed by:

also do an annual rescue refresher course. All the above mentioned refresher courses are practical courses. Additionally, we are trained to withdraw in a situation when compartmentation fails in a high-rise block. In this event, we are trained to look out for crack on walls, floors, and check if the stairs are structurally sound. When compartmentation fails it might be due heat or materials used in the structure of the building, for example cladding.

However, good fire doors, vents, protected stairwells, sprinklers and structure of the building are meant to contain fire at its origin until the firefighters get to it and put it out.

In relation to Stay Put Policy, it is implemented by the control room, mainly used in the event of a fire in high-rise building, it allows firefighters to get to the casualties. In these circumstances, the controller will give the individual involved in the incident fire safety advice, like advising them to put bedding underneath the door, to stop smoke from coming into the room, possibly advice to go to the balcony. Stay Put Policy avoids rushes in the stairwell so that it will be free for firefighters to operate. In this circumstance, the controller will be on the phone to the person concerned while an appliance is mobilised.

I am not aware if the Stay Put Policy was used at Grenfell tower during the incident but as a firefighter, I presumed that it was used during the incident because that is the policy used during high-rise fire incidents.

On the 13/06/2017, I started by night shift at 2000hrs, which to 0930hrs the next morning. I became aware of the Grenfell fire incident when the crew of H31 6 were called to a 40-pump fire at 0400hrs. The crew of H316 are as follows:

Crew Manager Dominic FEARNLEY

Firefighter Tom BUNDEY

Firefighter Martin HOOPER

Firefighter Tom DOTCHIN

Firefighter Constantine NWAGWU

After the crew left, I went and switched on the TV and saw footage of Grenfell tower on fire. CM AKINS

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

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called the control room to say that we are EDBA trained in case we were needed. After the call, FF Ben DOTCHIN, FF Ennio GONNELLA and I went into the BA set room.

Moments later, at around 0430hrs we were mobilized to go to a 20 Pump relief of a 40 pump fire. The details on the call slip stated: '20 pump relief, persons reported, ARIAL 2, Fire survival.' We were riding on pump H312 and the other crew with me were as follows:

Crew Manager Tom AKINS

Firefighter Ben DOTCHIN

Firefighter Ennio GONNELLA

We proceeded to the incident on a road speed not on blue and twos because we were mobilized as non-emergency. It was early in the morning, the dark was breaking and we travelled through Tooting, Wandsworth Bridge and Earls Court into Hammersmith, then Holland Road onto Ladbroke Grove where the Rendezvous point (RVP) was located.

It was at Wandsworth Bridge that I first saw Grenfell tower on fire, and it was 3 miles away at that point. I saw smoke and fire and it seemed that the fire was on the 3rd floor and above. I knew that we were going into a big fire incident. It took us around 30 minutes to get to the rendezvous point. We parked at Ladbroke Grove and there I saw many appliances. It was a residential area and by this time, it was day light. From the RVP, I was unable to see Grenfell tower because it is a residential area, with many buildings towards the direction where Grenfell tower is located.

We got ready by getting our SDBA sets on and carried EDBA, then started making our way to the first staging area that was at the Leisure centre. At the first staging area, there were many firefighters, LAS crews treating casualties and police officers within that area. From the first staging area, I could see the South-East side of Grenfell tower, I had no obstruction to my view, however, I was concentrating on going into the tower. We stood at the first staging area for around 20 minutes before we were ordered to go to the 2nd staging area. At this point, I was getting commands from my crew manager Tom AKINS.

My colleagues and I made our way to the 2nd staging area by walking along the South-East side of Grenfell tower. There were many trip hazards on the floor along the way and for this reason, I was not

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2018

Signature witnessed by:

paying attention to the tower on fire, I then saw an appliance parked on the South-East of the tower which I believed was pumping water into the building. At this point, I was also not concentrating on the building. I walked towards Grenfell Walk, underneath the walk way and at this point lost sight of the building. There was an entrance to the tower on the South side of Grenfell tower that was not in use at that point because of a lot of falling debris. It took our crew around 5 minutes to get to the 2nd staging area. I have indicated on a map provided to me by PC Anidi where the 1st and 2nd staging areas were located.

The 2nd staging area was located on the West side of Grenfell tower. At this point, I was carrying my EDBS set and queued up in single file, ready to be committed into the building; I noticed that the fire was on the 10th floor, there were a lot of debris falling off the building, making a banging noise as it crashed on the floor. The falling debris looked like foam installation and cladding that were attached to the building. In addition, there was a strange gunshot noise coming from the building, it sounded like a gunshot. I noticed that all the windows had burnt out and fallen off, I was not aware on how the fire spread because the fire was well established by the time we arrived to the 2nd staging area. There was a lot of smoke and fire but more smoke than fire. The colour of the fire in the building was orange.

We were held in the 2nd staging area for around 30 minutes, there were another 9 EDBA wearers, plus myself, standing in the queue and waiting to be committed. At the point I was feeling so frustrated because we had been waiting for a while there.

There was a Watch Manager who was in charge of the holding area and he was coordinating firefighters moving into the lobby area. Later we were moved in to the lobby area by the help of a Met police officer with a riot shield. The police officers escorted us in pairs to the entrance door, which is located on the West side of the tower, by holding their riot shields above our heads to avoid the falling debris hitting us.

Through the side entrance, we crossed a room into the ground floor lobby of Grenfell tower, where the bridgehead was located at that stage of the incident, towards the left side in the lobby. This area was used as a holding area for firefighters - there were 10 firefighters in there at that point, towards the right was where the Entry control officer (ECO) was. There was 2 inches of water on the ground floor because the water was coming down from the stairwell, where it flooded the lobby area. It was at the bridgehead I

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

Signature witnessed by:

saw: FF NWAGWU, FF Tom DOTCHIN and FF Tom BUNDEY, I then joined them to make them a team of 4.

We then got a briefing with GM GOLDBORNE, and he said the following during the briefing: "Go to 12th/13th floor for search and rescue anyone believed to be alive. There is no water supply because the dry riser is not working properly. Comms/Telemetry is down" and he advised us to stick together.

After the brief, I asked GM GOLDBOURNE "If we find a deceased what do we do?" His answer was "Anyone you are sure is dead, leave in situ and note where the body was found". The equipment I had on me was my EDBA set and a thermal imaging camera, all the fire kits and equipment I had weighs 35kg. I am aware that LFB policy states not to commit a firefighter without proper equipment but at that point, I just want to go in and save lives.

After this, we went to the entry control officer, handed in our tally which had the details of the station we are from, our names, EDBA set number and we repeated the brief to the entry control officer, then go under air before making our way up to the top floor to complete our tasks.

We made our way upstairs through the stairwell on the ground floor. The stairs led to a mezzanine level, that had an open space and from there we continued to another stairwell that led to the upper floors. I was leading the crew at this point. I would describe the stairwell at Grenfell tower as not big but can fit 2 adults side by side. The visibility in the lower stairwell was clear but the upper floors' stairwell was really poor and hot.

On the 7th floor, we met CM FEARNLEY and FF HOPPER. They informed us that the floors above us were really hot and also there is a casualty between the 8th/9th floor landing. I had a quick conversation with the rest of the crew and we all decided to continue going up but FF NWAGWU was not happy that we are still going upstairs after the concerned raised by the crew we met.

Between the 8th/9th floor, my thermal imaging camera picked up the heat of someone who was burnt - it was obvious that the individual is dead. I did not take a closer look because the visibility was really poor and it was really hot on that floor. There was another deceased casualty on the 9th floor landing who was lying face down. We had to step over the casualty and continued making progress. We continued making

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

Signature witnessed by:

our way upstairs - there were a lot of firefighters' equipment everywhere on the stairwell and on the landing, and there were several hoses on the stairwell and making it difficult to walk upstairs. We struggling to know the floor we are on because of the smoke, so we were cleaning the wall and making marks so that we did not lose track.

On the 12th floor, I had a quick discussion with the crew and we decided that FF BUNDEY would stand at the door that led into the lobby area and hold the door while FF DOTCHIN and I entered into the 12th floor with FF NWAGWU behind us. We entered on hands and knees crawling towards our right hand side which led us to a flat that I cannot remember the number of. It was really hot and at the point, my body was burning. I could see that the flat was burnt out and could see day light, I looked around but did not see much because of poor visibility and at this point we made a quick exit and shut the door behind us.

We made the second entry, this time on our belly, crawling towards our left hand side - it was really hot, visibility was very poor and my body was burning. We made another quick exit because the conditions were unbearable. We did not do a proper search because of how hot that floor was and we went back to the stairwell. At this point, we were really concerned that we didn't have proper equipment with us. At the stairwell, my crew and I had another discussion and we decided to go up to the 13th floor, and we made our way up. While on the 13th floor, the rest of the crew informed me that they saw an elderly deceased woman but I did not see the woman or the location on the 13th floor where she was found. The conditions on the 13th floor were really bad - beyond unbearable and at the point heat exhaustion had started kicking in and my legs were wobbly. At that point, we made a quick exit and decided to make our way down to the bridgehead because is the conditions on the 13th floor was unsafe. I have indicated in the floor plan provided to me and showed the route that we took into the lobby area of 12th floor.

At this point, we got a radio message that said we should withdraw; I do not know the reason why we were asked to withdraw. On our way down to the bridgehead, the visibility was so poor, with several hoses in the stairwell that we stepped on the deceased woman lying face down on the stairwell. Moments later, we intercepted a radio message that stated that there was a casualty seen in one of the windows on the 6th floor. We made a quick decision to go to the 6th floor on our way down and search and rescue the individual.

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

Signature witnessed by:

At the 6th floor, we were met by the other crews from Croydon and they stated that they had searched and did not see anyone one there, we also searched and did not see any casualty on that floor. We went into every flat in the 6th floor using our enforcer to force entry into all the doors. I am aware that there was a rescue made on the 11th floor but I do not know the crew or the individual that they rescued from the fire. From the 6th floor, we proceeded to the ground floor lobby where the bridgehead was located.

At the bridgehead, the entry control officer noticed that I was wobbly on my feet and my colleague to help me out of the building. I presume that a proper debriefing was done by my crew - informed the entry control officer of the conditions in the stairwell and the bodies that were found, but because I was suffering from heat exhaustion I was not present. I made my way out of the building with the help of a metropolitan police officer with a riot shield. I believe we spent between 35 and 40 minutes from the time, we entered the building to the time I was escorted out.

I went to the green grass area outside the leisure centre, rested for around 10 minutes, took my EDBA set off, and opened up my tunic to cool my body down. I got up to go and use the toilet, it was at the point I vomited and started to feel unwell. I tested my blood sugar with a kit provided to me by the London Ambulance Service (LAS) and found out that my blood sugar was high but I did not have my insulin because I left it at Croydon fire station. With my diabetes diagnosis, I am supposed to take medication every day.

I decided to walk to a GP surgery at Ladbroke Grove to see if I could get some medication to control my blood sugar. The staff there were helpful but unfortunately, they did not offer me any medication. I did go back to the holding area, which is located outside the leisure centre, and by the time I got back, the Area Platform Ladder (ALP) was doing active firefighting on one of the sides of the building. My crew were getting ready to go back into the building again. While waiting to go back into the building, I kept on going to the toilet to vomit and it was at this stage that CM ATKIS expressed concerns about my health. I also told myself that I am not going into the building again because I will put myself in danger and possibly put my colleagues in danger as well. I handed over my EDBA set to CM Michael DENNY - he is based at Addington fire station and qualified to wear EDBA.

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

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I was taken to the LAS ambulance, where I was checked out, and informed that I was suffering from heat exhaustion. I was put on a saline drip in the back of the ambulance and was discharged after 2 hours. By the time I was discharged, my crew were relieved and ready to go. My crew dropped me off at St Mary Hospital where I received further treatment for heat exhaustion. I was discharged from hospital around 1830hrs and my crew came back and picked me up before we started heading back to Croydon. We arrived back to our station at 1945hrs. I was due to start another night at 2000hrs but I was asked to go home.

During my rest days, I was unable to eat and drink due to the heat exhaustion that had caused a sore throat and I had to seek medical attention from my GP.

I did not sustain injuries during the time I was inside the building; however, I had to seek medical attention because I was suffering from the symptoms of heat exhaustion.

Finally, I believe that the LFB should invest on equipment that would help us in dealing with unprecedented incidents.

I will exhibit the following in this statement:

KNM/1: Note I made on the 19/06/2017 in relation to Grenfell tower

KNM/2: 12th floor plan detailing the route we took to the first and second entry.

KNM/3: Map indicating the route we took to the tower and where the staging areas were located

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

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Statement of: MCCLELLAND, KYLE

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Page 11 of 11

Signature: Kyle MCCLELLAND
2018

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