

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: DRAWBRIDGE, LEE

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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: L DRAWBRIDGE

Date: 24/01/2018

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

This is an account of my role as Sector Commander Command Support of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) at the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017.

I have 24 years of service with the LFB having joined on 11/10/1993. I served at a number of South London fire stations. Approximately 9 years ago I was promoted to Station Manager (SM) of Lambeth Fire Station. From there I was posted to Headquarters where I undertook a couple of roles. I then spent a couple of years working on the establishment of National Operational Guidance (NOG) Programme for the National Fire Service. I was still an operational LFB officer based in London at that time. I then became an Operational Review Team (ORT) Officer providing Operational Assurance to the London Fire Brigade at significant incidents over and above normal business. I was then promoted to Group Manager (GM) and headed up the Operational Assurance Team I did this for 2 years. I was then promoted to Temporary Deputy Assistant Commissioner (T/DAC) in charge of that team for a period of about 8 months to cover some sick leave for my boss. This took me up to the start of 2017 at which point I was going through the promotion process for Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC). It concluded in March 2017 and I was successful in that process. I was promotable but there were no vacancies to fill at that time. However, my boss who had returned from his period of sick leave was then promoted so I took the role of Temporary DAC from the beginning of April 2017, still in Operational Assurance. I was then posted into Fire Safety on 1 June 2017 as a T/DAC with a view to that being my permanent role. I have since been promoted and am now a Substantive DAC in Fire Safety.

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I have served as a team member of the Operational Review Team (ORT). I was one of 12 ORT officers spread across 4 rotas. The role of an ORT is to identify areas of learning for the organisation. I would either monitor remotely or attend 'make up' incidents and provide organisational assurance and identify themes which could be brought back into the organisation. The lessons learned were then used to drive improvement through and through policy change and training. As a station manager that was one of my roles. We did 7 '24' duties in a 28 day period. So you'd either be dedicated as a normal officer or to ORT duties. If you were ORT duties that would be exclusive and you'd provide pan London cover. After delivering the new arrangements for National Operational Guidance I was brought across as a GM to head up that ORT Group. I also had the Incident Command policy framework to manage and drew on my previous experience to drive changes identified nationally within our local policy framework. As GM I was also in charge of LFB Operational Improvement Processes. I completed a review of this and implemented some changes to the reporting process within it. We have a quarterly process where we report through governance arrangements to decide what the themes for training should be and we provide a 6 monthly newsletter that we roll out to all the stations. We also monitor to ensure that training has been implemented.

I was also part of instigating National Operational Guidance. The national fire service had been through a long period where there was very little guidance produced centrally so the LFB decided to take some leadership here and invested £6 million into sorting this. I was the initial officer tasked with consolidating all of the guidance that was out there and produced a new National Operational Guidance Framework.

One of the themes within this framework was Incident Command and we provided guidance to the National Fire Service around arrangements for Incident Command for which I sat on the Project board. Before I moved to Fire Safety I was also involved in a review of our Incident Command training in London. There are 4 levels of Incident Command; Level 1 relates to the initial responders, Level 2 relates to the middle managers such as Station or Group Managers, Level 3 relates to the principal operational officers and Level 4 to the strategic response. I had implemented changes to Levels 1 and 2 and developed specification for 3 & 4 working closely with our external training provider, Babcock, to ensure that we specified our training requirements and that they delivered these. I also had a Quality Assurance role in checking that they were delivering the promotion assessments and our incident command training requirements.

Following the fire at Lakanal House we had recommendations from the coroner to deal with and we reviewed our high rise training and our generic high rise risk assessments. High Rise training is always

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prevalent in our Incident Command training and assessments as we understand that this a big risk for London and Londoners. We make sure that all our people are properly trained for it. In recent years, we've also looked at the equipment we use around our 'branches', which is the bit of metal on the end of the hose. We went through a big procurement change and one of the drivers for that was specifically around high rise fire fighting. From my role in Operational Assurance, a lot of the 'make-up' operational incidents we attended were for high rise properties so we have gained a lot of experience and dealt with a lot of high rise fires very successfully. We also have Performance Review arrangements in place. We have robust Performance Review of Operations arrangements where there is a local debrief so that lessons can be learnt and also for larger, 6 pump or more, incidents where we have a Performance Review of Command, where we look at the command function. A lot of these reviews involved high rise properties. I have never been to Grenfell Tower, or indeed that area of London, before that night. I've never served North of the river, other than my pan London responsibilities for ORT cover.

To assist in giving this statement I have referred to a number of different documents which I identify as my exhibits accordingly:

LDD/1 — Notes of incident made on 07/01/18

LDD/2 — Appendix A generic form

LDD/3 — Paper copy of photo of Command Board taken at Grenfell Tower Fire incident

LDD/4 — Notes made at 1700 hours on 14/06/17

LDD/5 — Itemised telephone call log including 14/04/17

It is LFB practice that there are 2 DAC's providing 24 hour cover in terms of operational response. One of those would be nominated as the Duty Officer. A third DAC is also nominated to be called in if an incident in London is deemed to be significant and the 2 DAC's require assistance. On the night of the incident at Grenfell Tower I had been nominated as this third "recall DAC". The arrangements for this are a phone call or a page on the decision of the Duty DAC and then you have 3 hours to be in the London area. I was 'on recall' at home [REDACTED], just outside of the M25.

At 0212 I was called by Deputy DAC Adrian FENTON. He was in his car, driving in to Stratford where they were setting up the Brigade Coordination Centre (BCC) arrangements. He informed me that there was a 40 pump fire and that Assistant Commissioner (AC) ROE had just taken over. He told me that it was a high rise property and that it was 100% alight; that there were a number of people involved and that there were concerns regarding its stability. He confirmed that I was being 'stood up' but not mobilised at that stage, as he did not yet know what the demands were going to be. He did, however, ask me to contact

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the duty officers who assist with brigade coordination arrangements, the Operational Resilience Support Officers (ORSO). They are also available on recall but because Control were so busy taking calls he asked me to get them 'stood up' and deployed to Stratford so that they would be available there to support him. I then spent the next 10 minutes trying to get hold of the Officer of the Day and the Paging Officer in Control, so that these officers could be alerted. I was unable to get through so in the end, I contacted Bob PROUDFOOT, who manages that Group, and asked him to contact the ORSO officers on my behalf and brief them as regards attending Stratford.

At approximately 0230 hours I then took a call from Duty AC Richard MILLS who confirmed that I was to be stood up as 'Recall DAC'. My role was still not defined, but I was likely to be a Press Liaison Officer or "Talking Head" although this still required confirmation. I was asked to make my way towards the incident although I was still not being 'mobilised'. I was paged at 0312 hours as I was talking to Bob PROUDFOOT. I'd been listening to the AirWave radio and had heard the request was for an additional DAC just a few minutes before. I responded and was booked as mobile at 0314 hours. I didn't ask Control anymore about the incident as I'd already been briefed and had been listening to the radio. I then made my way to the incident on blue lights. I arrived in the vicinity of Grenfell Tower at 0336 hours.

I came up from the south on the A3220 and took a right on Shepherds Bush roundabout where I could see Grenfell Tower. It was well alight. I then made my way via Holland Park Avenue and Royal Crescent and into St Ann's Road from the south end. It started to get very congested and realised that I wouldn't get any nearer and so parked in a side road near Wilsham Street. I parked my car, got out and got rigged into my fire gear.

There was lots of people around. As I walked towards the incident, a Command Unit turned up and was struggling to park, so I stopped and helped them. This was at about 0345 hours. Having helped them I walked up St Ann's Road, turned into Stoneleigh Place, Sirdar Road and then into Treadgold Street. I was in full fire gear, walking alone, through groups of people. As I walked I could sense agitation and distress in the crowds of people. It was a tangible atmosphere, which I was concerned could turn hostile. I overheard many people on their phones talking to people inside the building. I knew then that we were going to lose people. I considered whether I should stop and offer advice but I hadn't yet been briefed on the Operational Tactics so I decided to not to intervene and to get drawn in, but to carry on walking & avoid making eye contact. I also saw the police Territorial Support Group (TSG) up ahead of me moving east to west on Treadgold Street. It occurred to me then that we needed to stabilise the scene as there was potential for a riot. People were too close.

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Knowing the scale of the incident and how long we'd already been there I also knew that we'd need to get appliances in and out. I could see that as crews had arrived to the incident they had left their engines as close as they could to the tower and that there was now significant congestion. They were blocking the streets, especially on the south side of the incident. I knew that this would cause us problems later on when it came to moving appliances in and out. A little later on, I became concerned as to how the crowd would perceive the sight of crews leaving the scene, especially if the building was still alight and people were still trapped inside it. I was acutely aware that we needed to control the scene, as losing it would hamper our operational activities.

This was at about 0350 hours. My view of Grenfell Tower from Treadgold Street was of the south face of the building. I tried not to look at it for too long as you can get drawn in and it can be mesmerising. I wanted to maintain discipline and focus on what I was there to do. However, I could see that it was alight from the lowest floors visible, which I think were the 6 —8 floors, all the way to the top. The fire was clearly not just burning externally, but internally as well. The flats were alight and the fire was fully involved. I don't recall any noise. I think I recall screams but I couldn't say where they were coming from.

I entered the main Command Unit which was CU8. Inside were Dany COTTON (the Commissioner) who was in the role of Monitoring Officer and her staff officer GM Keeley FOSTER, SM Jackie McCONACHIE who was acting as a loggist, and 2-4 command staff. Dany COTTON asked me to be Sector Commander Command Support. This made sense to me as, just in walking to the command unit, I'd already identified areas of work that needed managing. We clearly needed a sterile area to get our appliances in and out. It was also clear to me that all of the initial response had been concerned with firefighting and search and rescue, but that now some support arrangements needed to be put in place. I established that our electronic Command Support System (CSS) was working but also took a picture of the Command Structure as it was written on the white headline boards on CU8 (LDD/3) because I didn't want to forget it as soon as I left there. This exhibit shows that the Operations Commander was Andy O'LOUGHLIN, Fire Sector Commander was GM WELCH supported by GM GOULBOURNE, FSG Commander was GM GOODALL supported by SM EGAN, Fire Safety was GM O'NEILL supported by WM HAYWARD. GM Steve WEST was shown as Commander Command Support at that time but then I took over. I assumed that a Commissioners Group had been set up but in the role that I was given I wouldn't have needed to communicate with them as all communications would come through the BCC or the Incident Command Unit.

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At about 0355 hours the team leader from the command unit that I had helped to park, attended CU8 and booked in. I confirmed with the Commissioner that I'd use this command unit. This was CU1. It would keep our actions separate from that of the main command unit and so it would be less confusing for all. I was allocated the command unit team of WM's John STEWART and Mark DEAN, and also GM Keeley FOSTER and T/GM Steve WEST who had been shadowing the Op Review Team. Before I left the Command Unit, the incident commander AC ROE returned and confirmed my role as Sector Commander Command Support. He was very calm, controlled and focussed. So by 0400 hours I had a command unit team and 2 officers. We walked back to CU1 which was in Bramley Road, just south of the Tube Station. It was well located as it was close enough to the incident such that we could have an effect, but also far enough away to be in a fairly sterile area.

The first thing I did was to reinforce communications (comms) as everything was going across the fire ground radio. So I spoke to either Adrian FENTON or one of the officers in Control to secure another Airwave Channel so that I could have comms with my resources and the Incident Command Unit. We were too far away for runners. Our priority then was to put in cordons and manage the scene, and organise marshalling so that we could facilitate access and egress for the inevitable relief crews. I drew up a list of objectives so that we could keep the fire fighting and the search and rescue running:

- (1) Cordons and control of the scene
- (2) Marshalling for egress and access

We then had to start thinking about the following:

- (3) RVP's and how we were going to bring relief crews into the incident ground
- (4) Our Press strategy
- (5) Welfare arrangements for crews
- (6) Investigation. Specifically, how we would capture information before our responders left site as regards where they had been, what they had done and of course their welfare. I had an early conversation with our Brigade Coordination Centre (BCC) at Stratford as regards finding somewhere for the 40 relieved pumps to go and be debriefed. This was decided latterly as being Paddington Fire Station.
- (7) Breathing Apparatus (BA) resources. We've never had to sustain such a commitment of this size both in terms of the BA equipment and in the number of wearers. We have two types, Standard Duration (SDBA) and Extended Duration (EDBA). EDBA is carried on our Fire Rescue Units (FRU) and we

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had all our 14 FRU's present at the scene. We also had a total of 60 machines, including 20 relief machines, so our BA logistics commitment was massive.

I asked Keeley FOSTER to look after the marshalling and relief of the 40 pumps. I asked Steve WEST to look after the resourcing of the BA operation. Throughout the incident Steve kept telling me that we had sufficient BA for another 2 hours. I didn't want to drop below that 2 hour window. I don't know how they were doing it, but they were doing it, which was unbelievable.

I had 2 command unit officers and I tasked 1 of these to look for an RVP. I was also 'given' a police officer called Josh who identified a route out of the south side of the incident to park appliances already in attendance. An RVP was identified on LADBROKE GROVE junction with ELGIN ROAD for relief appliances. This was a straight road running North to South, which was perfect for lining up our resources awaiting deployment. Another command unit, ultimately headed by Steve DUDENEY, was set up there and my remaining command unit officer was deployed there to meet the relief crews and brief them accordingly. He was subsequently 'lost' to me as a resource. And so by about 0430 hours we had established a route out for the 40 appliances; Josh was clearing this path and pushing back members of the public; we'd identified an RVP for the next 20 machines coming in and a route for them to get across to the incident. After meeting at the RVP, relief crews were then relayed to Steve WEST who was dealing with BA management and deployment into the various sectors.

Our structure was established in a fairly short amount of time. We had CU1 dealing with Command Support, CU8 which was the main Command Unit dealing with Incident Command, a Command Unit for the Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls and I'd established a mobile to mobile comms link with the BCC. Using this I spoke with Duty DAC Adrian FENTON, Steve LEADER and Mick REX. Once the cells were established there, I then spoke directly to the leader of each cell.

As time moved on it soon became clear that our personnel didn't want to leave the incident. This was actually a problem for us as we had to maintain cover for all of London. Keeley FOSTER was trying to relieve crews. Ultimately she had to liaise with BA Control to stop them recommitting previous BA wearers. Because of the size of the BA commitment we had established a BA Main Control. This was headed by GM Steve NORMAN and he was assisted by the Protective Equipment Group who were responsible for getting all the equipment there, getting new cylinders, recharging, turning it all around. Later on in the morning we asked the BCC to organise brigade minibuses to bring in the EDBA crews as all 14 FRU were already at the incident.

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As regards the investigation aspect, it had been agreed that all pumps were to debrief at Paddington Fire Station. This was organised and run by GM Charlie PUGSLEY, who is our lead for Fire investigation, and DAC Sabrina COHEN-HATTON. My role was really to make sure that all of the 40 pumps knew about it and went there after leaving the incident.

Something that wasn't briefed to me, but normally falls under the remit of Sector Command, Command Support, was water for fire fighting. SM Gareth COOK was on the scene and in charge of this but I couldn't get hold of him for a long time. However, Bulk Media Advisor Chris PATTEN reported to me. A Bulk Media Advisor assist at large incidents to get water from one place to another. At this time Surrey Fire Service offered their Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP). This offer was relayed to me via the BCC between 0500 and 0600 hours. I spoke to the Incident Command Unit and it was approved by the Commissioner. I therefore asked Chris PATTEN to make arrangements with Surrey as regards receiving it and servicing it with a suitable water supply. I asked that he made early liaison with Surrey Control as I didn't want it to arrive and only then think about what hoses, hydrants etc. I advised Chris PATTEN that he speak with Operational Commander Andy O'LOUGHLIN as regards locating the ALP within the Incident Ground.

Between 0530 — 0615 hours I was talking to the duty press officer Vicky HARDIMAN as regards the arrangements they were going to make. They had initially identified me as a 'Talking Head' but it was clear that I wouldn't be able to do that because of the work that I was doing. They were looking for a volunteer from the DAC's but in reality it was always going to be Dany COTTON. At that time, Vicky and I were discussing the arrangements to receive the press and to control the them, as we didn't want them interfering with the operational tactics. I gave Vicky an unused command unit, parked behind CU1, to coordinate the press activities and to liaise with other agencies to ensure that we got a clear, consistent message out. It was clear by that stage that there would be fatalities.

After this time my recollection becomes a bit woolly although my phone log (LDD/5) shows that I made a number of calls in the next 8 hours. After we had the initial structure in place we were just in steady state; functioning, reacting, running and sustaining the operational requirements for Sector Fire. We had more officers made available to our Command Support function and we were just managing the relief cycle and liaising with the BCC.

Throughout our operation a number of firefighters came to cool down in our command unit. It got quite hot so we had put our air conditioning on and so it was quite cool. Our unit also had quite a calm

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atmosphere and was safe and quiet. I recall seeing officers and fire fighters sat on the bench at the rear of the unit, just staring into space. They looked spent, both physically and emotionally, absolutely shot. We also dealt with other offers from other brigades through BCC as regards the use of drones and other equipment..

At about 1300 hours I was contacted by AC ELLIS's staff officer and asked to go have a chat with him to confirm all of the arrangements that were in place. AC ELLIS was relieving Andy ROE as Incident Commander and they were having a handover. I left the Command Unit for only the second time during the incident having got on it at 0400 hours. The other time was just to use the toilet. So I walked north from Command Unit towards the tube station and then followed a footpath that went around into sector 4. I passed under the walkway, through the garages, past the CU for the FSG and onto the Incident Command Unit. It was the first time I had seen the tower close up, from ground floor level, and the crews at work. It was pleasing to see how organised and coordinated the activities were. I didn't really look at the fire, but as an ORT officer looked at the fire ground and how it was organised. There were clear areas of activity, of sectorisation, rest areas and clear flow processes for resources. I saw no chaos.

I briefed AC ELLIS and then returned to CU1. Between 1500 — 1600 hours I was becoming tired and suffering from command fatigue, I was relieved by Jamie JENKINS. I went back to my car and went away from the incident. I then drove to a quiet place and wrote my notes dated 14/06/17 (LDD/4) Stay put' is perfectly valid and appropriate advice to give to people if the building does what it is supposed to do. The time where it has been found wanting, is where the building hasn't performed as we would expect it to in a fire. FSG was a policy that came within my reference as part of my role in charge of the Incident Command Policy Framework. FSG provides a direct link with the person in the building on fire until the rescue is effected or contact is lost. Its about getting that live information to the Incident Commander & BA wearers. It was due for review in 2017 and through our Operational Improvement Processes we were capturing evidence for that review. We'd had some initial discussions around this with our legal team as most of that policy was put in place after the fire at Lakanal House and was part of our subsequent Coroners Action Plan. Through my role as head of ORT, and as an ORT officer, we had identified some issues around understanding and driven improvement through in terms of operational training scenarios and themes in our Operational News Articles. We subsequently tested that this knowledge had been absorbed and closed the loop effectively. We had also done a number of training exercises with our Control and Command Units around FSG and the logistics of it. I wasn't aware of any change in the Stay Put advice at Grenfell Tower, and in my role there, I wouldn't have needed to have

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been made aware. There is flexibility in the policy to change the advice, depending on how long fires burn and behave.

We had sufficient resources at the Grenfell Tower fire. Although it was designated a 40 pump incident, at its height from about 0430 hours we actually had some 74 machines there; 40 pumps plus 20 relief pumps plus 14 FRU's. This is a significant number of people. All of our EDBA equipment was there and once the watch changed we bussed in even more EDBA wearers. Every time I asked the question 'how long have we got resources for deployment?' I was constantly reassured by Steve WEST that we never had less than 2 hours' worth of BA based on the current rate of commitment and equipment. Our approach to the incident had to be a coordinated phased response due to the width of the staircase. I have subsequently seen this staircase for myself having been into the building at a later date. It's far from ideal in terms of firefighter access and egress and wouldn't support a simultaneous evacuation strategy.

During my deployment at Grenfell Tower, I had no knowledge of any issues as regards the gas supply to the Tower. At one point during the morning a representative from an electricity provider came to CU1 and informed me of a substation either in the building or in the vicinity of the building, that they would like to isolate. However, had they done so it would impacted a significant number of properties (1000's) in the vicinity. That information was fed into the Incident Commander.

That fire should never have happened anywhere in this country or the developed world. That is clearly not how buildings are supposed to perform in fire, something has gone wrong. We make certain assumptions when developing our tactics around firefighting in a high rise building, and all our tactics are based on that Stay Put Policy.

The impact of this incident has been felt across the organisation and on individuals. We will need to support our staff for a long time going forward, but it has put the spotlight on Fire Safety and on the Protection agenda both in London and nationally. Those working in Fire Safety have been wanting its profile to be raised for a long time. Organisationally I think it has created a bond between people and given us a renewed sense of purpose.

From a Fire Safety perspective, I was involved in some of the reaction from DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) and assisted in putting a plan in place to carry out inspections of the high rise housing stock in London. Subsequently we have become involved in the second phase of that piece of work where the cladding was subjected to testing. We have had to incorporate these inspections and assistance into our normal business.

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I've served on the Operational Review Team for almost 4 years and so am probably one of the most experienced officers within that Group, both in London and nationally. None of us has ever seen anything like that before and couldn't have predicted it. I've been to a significant number of incidents as an ORT officer and I've seen and monitored and observed a number of Incident Commanders. Andy ROE was incredible that night. He was making rational decisions based on what the law stated, our purpose there and people's expectations of us. He made sure all of this was recorded and was fully aware of the need for operational discretion. He was controlled, composed and clearly in command.

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