

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: SINGH, MANDEEP

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 25 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: MANDEEP SINGH

Date: 13/12/2017

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

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I am the above named person and my details are known to Police. This statement is in relation to the Grenfell Tower Fire that occurred on WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2017.

My name is Mandeep SINGH and I am a Firefighter. I have been a Firefighter for seven (7) years, my Pay Number is [REDACTED] 7K. I am currently based at Acton Fire Station and am posted to Red Watch. I have always been based at Acton. The night of the fire at Grenfell Tower I was on night duty at Acton Fire Station. I was on Red Watch and my call sign was G261. I was posted to the Pump Ladder. This is actually a 'Dual Pump Ladder'. Acton is a singular station and has an appliance which has a nine (9) metre ladder and thirteen and half (13.5) metre ladder. It also has various bits of equipment. We carry what two (2) other appliances have in one (1) appliance. Usually you have either a Ladder or a Pump, at Acton we have a Dual Pump Ladder. That is the name we had for it at training school.

I will make reference to the following exhibits in this statement:

- I made some notes of jobs during the night of the fire which I exhibit as MSI/01 - handwritten notes of jobs at Grenfell Tower Fire 14/06/2017
- Whilst providing police this statement I drew on map of the area around Grenfell Tower which I exhibit as MSI/02 - Map of Grenfell Tower.
- I took three (3) photographs of the FSG calls that were written on the walls of the lobby area of Grenfell

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Tower which I exhibit as MSI/03 - FSG calls on lobby of wall of Grenfell Tower.

I am a competent Firefighter in terms of my training and have additional qualifications and skills during my career. We are always learning new things and always refreshing what we know. This includes things like mass decontamination and dealing with chemical incidents. We train at our station in Acton and surrounding stations too. We are always training on the job. The kind of training we do is dependent on what is required at that time. We may train with knots, lines, ladders, road traffic accident (RTA) refresher training. There is a magazine called 'Shout' which we get, training could be covered based on what is in the magazine. We have lectures as well as practical training. There is no specific time or calendar for training.

We are training all the time. Sometimes things are brought up by us and then train on it. For example if the Watch Manager brings up messages we may train on things related to them. We may not do always a physical drill but we are learning all the time, incident and job related learning.

Training we do may be related to several things; for example when we do Breathing Apparatus (BA) training it may be related to a particular incident. BA are sets that enable us to breath in a smoky environment. There are two (2) types of BA. SDBA is Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus and EDDBA is Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus. EDDBA gives more time under air for a Firefighter to breath than SDBA, the length of time is dependent on how hard you are working and heavy you are breathing.

We use Best Practice Assessment (BPA) for training. The Watch Manager will check you are able to perform well, for example we can use sets properly. We also have one (1) day and two (2) day refresher course for BA once a year. This is at Park Royal Training Centre, this training is run by a company called Babcocks.

We have training for high rise blocks. This includes lectures and practical. Lectures include information on equipment, the bridgehead, can be around a table, giving us information. We put this into practical training, outside tower practice. We throw up ladders, get the ladder up, and get water up. I cannot give you specific times and dates for training for high rise, but the couple of months before the fire at Grenfell Tower we probably covered high rise training. We have had training before and after the Grenfell Tower fire on high rise buildings.

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The training for high rise includes training in a tower, most fire stations have a tower. There is a tower in the yard at Acton, and we use this tower for our training. It is a tower, you cannot mimic going into someone's flat; it is not realistic. A tower is different to a block of flats and high rise building. You can mimic some things but not others. The tower we use for training in our yards have four (4) walls on the outside and has an internal staircase. The heights of the towers vary dependent on the station. They are usually around six (6) floors but can be taller or shorter. At Acton the tower is six (6) floors. You use equipment as well as the tower for the training.

Our Watch Manager, Kim JERRAY-SILVER, pushed for a training exercise which was in a local derelict building that was going to be brought down. This was so we have a more realistic training exercise. She went herself and spoke to the people about letting us use it for training before they brought the building down. My Watch Manager is an ex BA trainer. There is another guy in our Watch who used to be a BA trainer too. It was both of them that set up the training. Quite a few stations got involved in taking part in the training, It was realistic as we could make it. This training was around a year ago. This building was on South Acton Estate, it was four (4) or five (5) floors high. We created smoke for the training. I ended up looking after the Firefighters going into the building for the training exercise. This meant I was doing the safety side from the outside of the building. It was good training. She knew the building was going to come down and went off on her own back to arrange this training. She made it into a really good training exercise.

I have dealt with high rise block fires during my career. These includes on Green Dragon Lane, Brentford, a couple of incidents on South Acton Estate, one in Shepherds Bush. I have picked up experience of dealing with high rise block fires over the years. How we deal with high rise fires depends on several things, who arrives there first, and what they are doing. It depends on the fire, say, is it already punching through the window? The driver who gets there first will have to quickly get to the dry riser main, and hope that more machines are getting there as quickly as possible.

The fire on Green Dragon Lane was a flat fire in a high rise. The fire had gone through the whole flat. There was some minimal damage to the communal area, this was most likely smoke damage which was caused by Firefighters breaching the door to gain access. The fire completely

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burned out the whole flat. It was an aggressive fire. You could see the fire from the outside. The flames were punching out of the balcony of the flat but stayed contained in the one flat of the high rise block. The fire at Shepherd's Bush high rise was different to the usual. It started on the 7th floor and the fire jumped. It could have been something to do with the materials on the window, the window frames had caught fire. The windows were PVC windows. The fire jumped and escalated from the 7<sup>th</sup> floor to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor. I saw it and thought it was weird and it was something that I had not seen before. This is something similar to Grenfell Tower where the fire was spreading from the outside. The building was a concrete building. I was the eyes for the job, and had to do a 360-degree of the incident. This fire was on a neighbouring station's ground, Hammersmith crew were there first, I think we arrived 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>. We have a good rapport with them and I feel that we can rely on each other. I was driving to that job so was not kitted up for when we arrived there. I got kitted up and went to the Officer In Charge (OIC) and I went around the building. I could view the building from the roof of a cinema and had complete view of the side of the high rise. I could hear on the radio that they were dealing with the 7th floor. I told them on the radio that the fire was on the 9th floor, and that they needed to take fire-fighting media up. At the Shepherd's Bush fire I was the OIC's eyes. The fire did not breach the compartment from the inside but from the outside. This fire was around a year, year and half ago. It went up rapidly to the 9th or 10th floor, within minutes. I thought at that stage the whole side of the block was going to go up. It was made a twenty (20) pump fire and we managed to contain it and it went as far as the 10<sup>th</sup> floor. Maybe it was overkill making it a twenty (20) pump fire in some people's eyes, but we needed that reassurance. You rather have the extra fire engines and personnel there and not need them rather than needing them and they are not there.

At Acton we have one (1) appliance. We have 7 members on our watch but usually only 5 of us be riding Acton's truck and the remainder 2 are either on leave or sent on standby duties to fill up any shortage of staff at other fire stations. Three (3) of us on the team can drive it. It is the driver that plugs in the dry riser at an incident. If the fire has developed then more crews will be needed. Two (2) from a crew will be BA wearers. These will be the ones sitting at the back of the appliance on the outside. In the middle will be the person who will be the Entry Control Officer and Hydrant Location Officer. If BA is required then you will need a dedicated person who has the Entry Control Board. The Watch Manager will be in charge, and look at safety. The Bridgehead will need to be set up, equipment needs to be set up. You are not meant to go inside any building until the safety aspects have been set up. The safety should include

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another BA crew. So if one BA crew is going in you need another BA crew ready for the safety of that BA crew that's gone in. So you need that back up, and another crew there.

Being a Firefighter you have the human-side to consider and the brigade-side, If someone is inside a burning building we cannot just go inside. Things need to be set up and you need the number of people required before you can go in. We need to wait for personnel, for back up. When you are saving people you are talking about seconds to save a life, not even minutes. Sometimes to save people policy goes out the window.

The Bridgehead is meant to be a safe place. This should be two (2) floors below the fire. The Entry Control Board will be here, manned by an Entry Control Officer. The minimum rank for the Entry Control Officer is Crew Manager. At the Bridgehead you have BA crews, equipment, first aid packs, hose, for example. The Bridgehead is like the operating floor. It is meant to be a safe place. Grenfell Tower has questioned this safe place for me. The Bridgehead should not be smoky, it is meant to be a safe place.

We have no training specifically on when compartmentation fails. A fire is usually going to be in a flat when you turn up to a high rise flat. In a house it is different because the fire can get in-between areas of the house. But a high rise, it's concrete. The only way out of the compartment is usually the front door. You tell people to close the door, stay inside. There has never been talk of compartments failing. I have not been told what else we should be doing if compartmentation fails. Since the fire at Grenfell we have not been told anything different. Between our Watch we have spoken about it and we said we would just get people out.

I have never been to Grenfell Tower before or even heard of it. It is on a neighbouring ground. I am not aware of any pre-planned plans for Grenfell Tower. I have completed section 7(2)d's on my ground, not for Grenfell.

That night, TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2017, I was working a night shift. I started work at 8pm that evening. Our Watch Manager was on leave so we had a stand in. I think he was from Chelsea, N Ashe. There were

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two (2) other Watch members on leave. It was me, Nicke MERRION and Harvey SANDERS from Acton Red Watch working, Will MURPHY from Ealing was standing in.

I was driving the appliance that night, Acton's Dual Pump Ladder. I tested the engine at the start of the shift. We were stood down that evening, and chilling out at around midnight. It was some time after lam we were mobilised, the call came through. We were all in our rooms at the time and we quickly made our way down. The Watch Manager has gone straight into the appliance. This is standard procedure. Harvey and Nick were the BA crew on the appliance that night. I went to the tele-printer, hit mobilise, the system prints out the job, which I ripped it off. This tells you the information for the job. At that point it said eight (8) pump fire. The message on the printer probably said 'persons reported'. I cannot remember now if it said that or not. This means personnel reported to be inside the building, members of public. This puts you in readiness to deal with the situation. I cannot remember if it said high rise, I think it must have said eight (8) pump high rise. I know whilst on route we knew it was a high rise fire that we were going to. I saw that the incident was not on our ground so I went to look for a map, but the area was off my map. I told someone to pull out the location from google maps. I knew the rough direction to go but not exact location. It usual for one of us grab our phones and use google maps, it is a lot easier to use than to go through the maps on the appliance.

In the appliance there is a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT). You press two (2) on the MDT when you leave the station. You press three (3) on the MDT when you arrive on scene, this will log the exact time we got there. The MDT has lots of information on it, including maps. It is an electronic device in the appliance. The information on it has to be uploaded beforehand. For example we now have details of section 7(2)d in electronic format on the MDT, but only if someone has uploaded this information. Also information for RTA - for example cutting up cars; locations, for example, hydrant locations; chemical information. It has lots of information on it. I was driving that night so I did not look at the MDT. I cannot tell you what the details of the incident on the MDT were for the fire at Grenfell Tower.

We got out of the station, took a right and this took us near Acton Police Station, there is a roundabout nearby and I heard it was 'make pumps ten (10)' over the radio. Further up when we had got to Horn Lane it went to twelve (12) and then fifteen (15) pumps when I was up to the A40. The Watch Manager was saying 'they are going to need us'. I was going quickly anyways but I sped up more. Near the estate

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around the surrounds streets of the incident road closures were in place, this was off Latimer Road. The Westway junction is complicated. Initially I have come off the A40 for Westfield, this is where there were some road closures. There was a highways van to where google maps had guided us and more road works and closure. I ignored this and just carried on down the closure. We were on this street where a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) was ahead of us. It was a narrow road with cars parked on both sides, and there were complete 90-degree bends on the road. An FRU is longer and a bit wider than a Pump Ladder so I thought if the FRU can make it round the bends that I will be able too. I waited on the road, a bit further back waiting to see if the FRU could make the bend and it made it past. I was surprised it did, I then went and followed in the same direction. Google maps will not necessarily show road closures. The others in the appliance guided me through. The turning we took as we got off the A40 was a right which looks as if you are going away from the incident. I questioned the turning and then we took another right, and come from the north down Bramley Road, the direction of travel was south. I could remember the Watch Manager saying 'I think they need us', 'okay they really need us'. We were wanting to get there as soon as we could. I parked our appliance where I have a marked G261 on the map, exhibit MSI/02, on Grenfell Road.

I did not see the tower on route, my concentration was going forward to the route. When getting closer as I was unfamiliar with the route I was concentrating on the roads. I was also unfamiliar with the Watch Manager that I was working with that night. If I was in the back of the appliance then I would be able to look around, but not whilst driving. I do not drive in PPE, this would not be safe.

I parked a bit further back on the road as I saw the FRU get stuck on Grenfell Road. That is why I parked where I did, also it meant that there was still space for cars to get past. When you get to a high rise initially the appliance that you arrive in are to be used. The equipment from the appliance and also the personnel in the appliance, and the BA sets. Sometimes you are using your appliance to backfill the equipment being used. Some appliances were getting stuck so I parked out the way so there was space. I could see other vehicles getting stuck, doing a U-turn. Where I was parked I could not see Grenfell Tower as it was not in the line of sight. I do not know how long the journey from Acton to Grenfell Tower took us.

The area was not that crazy in terms of people on the streets. There were lots of cars. I did not notice

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anything unusual, I was quite a distance from the tower. I was probably around a minute or under a minute away from the tower at normal walking pace.

The appliance has a radio, this is the main set. Individuals also have a handheld radio, basically it is a 'walkie talkie' where everyone on that channel will be able to hear the communications. Different channels can be used on the radio. Entry Control and BA wearers would be on channel six (6). The handheld is used for incidents. The main set radio was going crazy, it was so busy. Control was trying to get hold of an appliance that was already there but could not get through to them. Our Officer in Charge (OIC), which is the same as Watch Manager, has taken the radio and said G261, we have just got here, we will take the message'. The job needing doing and the other crew were not responding. As the OIC has taken the message he has given me the radio. The three (3) at the back of the engine are already rigged and ready to go. They grabbed their BA sets and the four (4) of them left, with the OIC having handed me the radio. He said they were going to head towards the tower.

Our crew were going there to fire-fight, but for me this turned into Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls. This is where people call the brigade, they get given advice, they call again maybe and say they cannot get out. This becomes a specific call, Fire Survival Guidance call. You have a Command Unit set up to deal with these. When we arrived on scene we arrived to be as part of make pump eight (8) crew. We were not called to the incident originally to be a FSG unit. But the unit there that was meant to be responding for this FSG call was not answering, so least this call was answered. I had not been in this situation before.

I took a notepad I had in the truck and I have taken the message. The message I was given was a floor and flat number for an FSG call. These people could not get out of the tower. If you are on FSG you do not get involved in fire-fighting. You are there for the person(s) that need to be rescued, and for that particular call. The Command Unit will have four (4) or five (5) people there. The Command Unit will give people a note with the floor and flat number. You do not pass this information over the radio, you have to physically pass this information to someone else. You take the note and run it to the Bridgehead or Station Manager. You physically hand it to someone so the note does not get lost.

Usually when you arrive on scene the driver of the appliance will plug into the riser. Above the driver's

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seat is a black switch which activates a speaker. Once the driver plugs in then the driver will be the water operator. There is too much to do and not enough people. Each person will be allocated tasks. In the appliance you have the driver who will be the pump operator. Those on the outside seats will be BA wearers. The person sitting inside the BA wearers will have potentially two (2) jobs; Entry Control or Hydrant location. If BA is required then he or she would have to do Entry Control, which leaves Hydrant location. This leaves the driver to plug into the hydrant. You will be hoping that another appliance will be turning up as it is too much for one (1) person to do. During the time the driver is carrying out these tasks he or she will be away from the radio so messages could be missed. Really you should not leave the pump or radio but the driver may leave this to find the hydrant if that is required. The pump operator will have to monitor the water.

So, my crew have taken this FSG call, but I am the only one left with the appliance. The others have all run off towards the tower. FSG procedure would be to run the message. In my head I am thinking what am I doing now? Are they going to send all the FSG calls to me? If I run this message what if I miss other messages? There is lots going on in my head. I got on the radio and spoke to Harvey, and I gave him the details of the FSG call. I cannot tell you what they did with the message, they would have dealt with it. This is not the usual way to pass a message on for an FSG call as you are meant to physically hand the FSG call over. This is from previous experience and incidents. But as there was no Command Unit there when I had the first message I gave the first call over the radio to my team. I believed that Control would be still on the phone to the FSG caller. So now I am thinking I need to get my set on, but do I leave the radio? I did not know whether more FSG calls were coming through or not. I did not hear, speak or see my crew again until the morning when we were ready to go.

Now I notice a car in front in the way on the road, this meant that appliances would not be able to get through. I ran towards the car and told them they could not park there. I then ran back to the radio and saw more cars were coming and blocking the road. I then saw a Command Unit and ran towards this appliance. I have marked the map, exhibit MSI/02, with 'CU8' where this Command Unit was parked. The call sign of the Command Unit would have been Command Unit 8. I told someone on the Command Unit the message we took on the radio and that I had passed the message onto Acton's crew. I then went to get off the Command Unit and I went to my appliance to grab my BA set.

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I was on Grenfell Road, junction with Bomore and I was then collared by a resident, a man. He said 'my wife is inside in her flat and she cannot get out'. He was on the phone to her at the time. I told him to give me her flat number. I noted this on my notepad. I do not have all my notes from that night anymore and I do not have that note. Some of my notes I passed on when I handed over the messages, some they took their own notes of the message I passed on. I took the man's mobile phone from him as I did not want to have any mistakes with the details like the flat or floor number. I wanted to get details of exactly where she was from the lady herself. I noted down her flat number and floor number after confirming this with her, and I asked her how many people were in there. I do not remember asking her about the fire, or smoke. She said she could not get out and I remember she had someone else with her. She sounded panicky. I cannot remember anything about her voice. I told her to stay inside and someone would come. I told the man this and gave him his phone back. I went to the Command Unit and gave them the details of this call. I told them she was stuck. I gave the information to someone in a white hat, the white hat is for a higher rank. Then I went and made the dash to the Bridgehead. I cannot tell you what this man looked like. I remember it was a man and he was on his mobile. He came with me to the Command Unit but did not go inside the Command unit

It is standard advice that we give to tell people to stay inside their flats. This is the same information Firefighters give when we give information during home safety visits. Stay inside, close the door, block the bottom of doors, stop the smoke. They should have fire doors to protect them for some time. In a house it is different, the advice you give people is to get out unless the fire is blocking the exit route. So it is for a house, get out. For a high rise, stay in and the fire safety advice.

I gave the Command Unit the information and they jotted it down, I cannot remember if this was on the board or on paper. I had already jotted it myself on a bit of paper and I kept this to take to the tower, to the Bridgehead. I ran there at full speed, it felt like it took ages. I was running as fast as I could in my fire boots and kit. I had already got into PPE, quickly grabbed my kit and rigged up. I was in boots, leggings, tunic, helmet, gloves, personal protective stuff, flash hood. I had still not seen the tower the first time I went to the Command Unit as my viewing was obstructed by some hedges or something. I could feel the stamps through my boots every time I took a step. In my head I was thinking of the urgency to get this information to the Bridgehead. It takes three (3) breaths of smoke to get someone unconscious. After three (3) minutes you will be a vegetable. This job is time critical, so I ran as fast as I could.

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The first time I did see Grenfell Tower the fire had not fully spread. The fire was coming up one side. It was diagonal, from bottom left going up and right. I could see the east side of the tower which was the side closest to the leisure centre. I looked up and saw the tower but did not concentrate on it, I had jobs to carry on with. I could see the fire on the outside of the tower and it made me think about the Shepherd's Bush fire. But that was nothing to this extent. I did not think that the fire would go all the way around like it did. The fire was around the middle of the tower when I saw it first, up to the 16/17<sup>th</sup> floor, maybe higher.

I saw OIC Louisa De Silva at the Bridgehead, she was a familiar face. She used to be in charge of White Watch at Acton. I passed her the information about the lady being stuck inside. The radios were going crazy. I remember the stairs being narrow, really, really narrow going up to the Bridgehead. You could not walk up or down without having to go sideways. After I gave this information to the Bridgehead I ran back towards the Command Unit. In my head I am still thinking, do I need to grab my BA set? Am I now the runner? By now I can see a line of BA's waiting to go in as I am on my way out of Grenfell Tower.

At this point I do not know if I am running FSG jobs now. I did not have a Command Unit contact for this, they were busy trying to sort their own command. I told someone at the Command Unit that I passed the information now. I asked them if they needed me or if I should grab my set. By then a few more members of the public were near the Command Unit, some were on their phones. I remember one man saying he could not get hold of his family. There were also a few more Firefighters, a Crew Manager — I cannot remember his name. I told the Command Unit there were people outside with information.

Watch Manager Alan MOORE, from Chiswick, was by entrance marked '1' on MSI/O2. This was the entrance to Grenfell Tower. He had positioned himself where he was stopping any crew from crossing as debris was falling from the tower. When he was ready for crew to rush into the tower he would shout 'Go, go, go'. I ran straight past him, not to ignore his direction but because my message was time critical. I noticed there was loads of water from a burst hose. All around the tower, near Alan too.

I got asked by ADO (Station Manager) McCONNELLY to find the senior Police Officer and senior Ambulance Officer on scene. I actually have a note with this and the time noted is 0220hrs, this is within

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exhibit MSI/O1. There were lots of police and ambulance on scene by now. I jumped off the Command Unit and went to find this information. At this stage it felt like there was not the right flow of communication. It felt chaotic. There was no organisation. The senior people from the three (3) organisations (LAS, MET, LFB) needed to be put together. I found the LAS lead and Police lead in the same sort of area, on Grenfell Road. I cannot remember the names of the LAS or Police lead. I told them the Command Unit wanted to talk to them. I took both to the Command Unit. I saw where the police vans and the ambulance service was set up. I have also marked the LAS area on the map. I also saw TSG Police Officers all rigged up.

By now I have figured that I will be running messages, and I have ended up pretty much running FSG calls and messages that night. Running them from the Command Unit to the Bridgehead. It was either to WM Glen (I am not sure if I have noted down his first name or last name) or Watch Manager Brian O'KEITH who was the now point of contact for me to give the FSG calls to.

At the FSG Command Unit there was four (4) or five (5) of people including me. It was three (3) officers plus a Station Manager coming and going. Where the FSG Command Unit was parked you could not see the tower. There are TVs in the Command Unit but they were not working that night. The maps were not working. The printers not working. The Command Units are basically containers with a white boards.

When you get incidents where you hit a certain trigger you will also get Command Unit's. Then more pumps, and more Command Units will be required. Usually it is one (1) Command Unit per one (1) FSG call. When one (1) FSG call is dealt with then the Command Unit can deal with another one if required. That is how it is meant to be but this is not what happened for Grenfell Tower. There was quite a few Command Units there. I went to the first one I saw, it was around 15 seconds from my appliance, running distance. The officer at the Command Unit said another Command Unit was set up to deal with FSG calls. This was just off the green area and I have marked this location on MSI/02 as 'FSG CU 7'. The call sign of this Command Unit would have been Command Unit 7, but I cannot say for sure that it was called CU7.

In the Command Unit (command Unit 8) it felt like no one knew what to do, it felt a bit chaotic. I was there early on. There were around six (6) or seven (7), maybe more people in the Command Unit. The

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Command Unit was full. They told the Firefighters to stand outside and go in when it was required. This is why the members of public were approaching Firefighters outside. Usually an FSG call is a 999 call and not from people on the ground on their phones, on the ground. I felt the public were being patient. If that was me, I would be banging the door in. I cannot tell you the names of the officers in there, apart from ADO McCONNELLY was definitely in there; that was the only name I took down.

I took another member of public call, grabbed the piece of paper and ran in with the information. I realised now that the bridgehead is a bit smoky compared to when I was in there first. It was not like you could not breath but you could tell it was smoky. Louisa was at the Bridgehead with Watch Manager O'KEITH and Watch Manager GLEN. There was a tight space where the Bridgehead was and a line of Firefighters waiting ready in BA. I had to work my way around them. The Bridgehead was a complete mess, Firefighters everywhere, and trying to get past with casualties. Every time I took a message into the Bridgehead there was more and more smoke. The first time I could smell the fire, I could see it outside, and breathing was hard from running, I could also feel the smoke.

As I am going out Firefighters are bringing casualties out. I remember a black lady who looked unconscious being carried by four (4) Firefighters. They were carrying her a side each and I could see it was a struggle for them to carry people out. Until that point, the second run I had not seen casualties. I could see the Firefighters struggling. Whilst running back to the Command Unit saw the LAS person in charge who I had seen before. I asked for boards or something similar to carry casualties on as at the time people were being dragged out. I was told they had some 'rescue sheets' in a vehicle. The 'rescue sheets' were plastic sheets that could be used to carry people. There was an ambulance there as well that had a stretcher. We grabbed that as well as the rescue sheets. At that point I was blowing, I needed water. They had a few small water bottles in the vehicle, I grabbed them all and drank three (3) or four (4), and I gave the LAS lady one too. I cannot remember who it was I have given the sheets too, it was an officer in the Bridgehead area. When I handed them over I said use these to put casualties on and take them out.

Then from the Bridgehead I got sent to BA Main Control, I got told to find out who was in charge there. I spoke to Dan KIPLING there. I cannot remember what information I had to pass over. Dan had also been struggling with getting through on the radio. He gave me his mobile number and I gave him mine. The radio traffic was crazy and people could not get through to others. Dan KIPLING would send BA wearers

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to tower. The crews there would have to walk all the way through burst water hose, get soaked. They were going into the tower wet, which is a risk to them. I have marked on MSI/02 where BA Main Control was that night. This was the holding area for the BA area.

When you go into the tower you go into the lobby area. There is a staircase on the right. There is some sort of glass/window thing. Up those stairs it leads to a balcony and mezzanine area. Firefighters were standing there, going up in a line, in the balcony area, just past that is BA entry control. Initially I was passing the messages to the balcony area. Another time I could not see WM GLEN and so I ran up. Apparently I had rushed past WM GLEN. He was writing on the wall on the ground floor, he was writing the FSG calls. As I had not seen him there I ran past and straight to BA. It was smoky on the Bridgehead. I was coughing, the Firefighters there were coughing. It was too much, they were struggling. Nobody wanted to make the decision to bring the Bridgehead down, maybe because they were so busy. When I ran back down I realised that WM GLEN had relocated. I told him it was really smoky up in the Bridgehead. WM GLEN asked me to speak to BA control about something. I told Dan KIPLING at BA Main Control, as well that the Bridgehead was really smoky. I actually did not know who was in charge outside. I know it would be someone in the Command Unit, but did not know who.

As well as FSG calls I was passing all sorts of messages back and forth on the ground. The radios were so busy that communication via the radio was too difficult. The radio communication was not effective. At some stage I was referred to the FSG Command Unit so I then made runs from there. They were just giving me calls. I asked them if they still needed me to do the runs and if they did not I would grab my BA set. At one point I did go to my appliance to grab my BA set, but someone had taken my set, it was gone. So I figured my place was FSG Command Unit.

Debris was falling like mad from the building. WM Alan MOORE was still in control here. Some pieces falling was like the size of a table, so much stuff was crashing down. I said to WM MOORE I was going to grab some shields. I had already saw TSG and recognised them as TSG as have family members in the Police. I ran full pace towards where the TSG officers were. I was worried about our guys getting hit with debris. Whilst I was running I was thinking I hope they just give me the shields. I went up to the TSG officer in charge and I told him a lot of debris was falling from the side of the building and that it was preventing us from getting into the building. I said 'we need your shields'. The TSG officer asked me if

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his guys were going in. I told him 'no'. He said 'that's fine'. Then he told a couple of his officers to grab shields and to follow me, to drop the shields where I tell them to and to go back. He sent four (4) to six (6) TSG officers with me. They put their shields down near the covered area where WM MOORE was. We had to walk through the burst water hose getting there. I told WM MOORE we could use the shields to run back and forth in and out of the tower. I was glad I came across that TSG officer, I am not sure of his rank, he was in charge of them I think. He seemed an experience officer and he realised from when I spoke to him that Firefighters would be in danger and could get hit. He quickly gave us the shields without wasting time. The shield runs had started.

I went inside and spoke to someone by the name of WALSH, perhaps Richard WALSH, he was a Station Manager. He was inside the tower and I also spoke with a Station Manager from Kingston. We spoke about losing the entrance area due to the falling debris. Another entrance/exit for the tower was needed. So we created another entrance, which I have marked with '2' on MSI/02. Firefighters grabbed axes and smashed through the window/door and created another entrance. We smashed through glass and plastic to make this opening.

Entrance '1' was now lost completely due to the debris falling. The north and east side of the tower was lower ground and completely full of debris so not an option for an alternative entrance / exit. Now the Firefighters were using the west side for entrance '2'. This was a make-shift door and it was narrow and harder to get casualties out but it was needed due to the falling debris.

Debris was hitting the shields so much. That could that could have been my head. It was like hot stuff falling, including metal. A small piece had hit my radio and took my clip right off. I think some of it was metal falling off and melting. There was loads of embers falling. Some Large sheets from the building had either fallen or was placed on some hose by firefighters to protect the hose.

Making my way back to the FSG Command Unit I saw more of the area filling up with debris. I went to the first Command Unit as I thought someone in there would be in charge. I told them we were about to lose the area near the new entrance. It was also full with water too. That we needed to find another entrance. They were trying to bring up a map on a screen in the Command Unit, but they could not. So they told me to go look and physically find another entrance.

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There was another Command Unit on Latimer Road which I came across. It was there by itself, I did not understand the point of it being there. I am sure they were parked up where they were told to be but I do not understand why it was there. I knocked on this Command Unit's door. I said to the guys in there that I was trying to find another entry point. They said they did not know of another. Usually in a Command Unit the minimum rank is Watch Manager. There were two (2) people in there. This Command Unit was parked aside of the incident itself. I have marked this as CU1 on the plan MSI/02. It would have been the call sign of the Command Unit.

I went back to the tower near to where WM MOORE was and there were garages near Grenfell Walk, on Latimer side, where the train station and children's play area is. There is quite a large footpath. I thought this area, on the west side, could be used. The issue was that the equipment, BA Main Control, Command Unit was all on the east and south side. So another BA wearers plot was created on the west side of the tower, I have marked this 'BA' on MSI/02. The gate here and garage doors were opened to create this access point. The area was being lost. I felt like there needed to be eyes on the site, a 360 view. There should be contingency plans too.

It is now a good three (3) hours after my crew have got there and it is starting to become day light. I had spent the shift running around the area passing messages by myself. Command Unit 8 was made aware of the fire dropping down below the Bridgehead. The Bridgehead was very smoky, I was hoping someone will make the call to drop it down. At some point the call was made to bring the Bridgehead to the ground floor. The people in the Bridgehead are standing in there, they may not realise how smoky it had got in there. I was coming from outside each time so I could feel and see the smoke getting worse where they all were. It was smoky enough to make you cough. The visibility was there but it was not clear. White, wispy smoke and not thick black smoke.

Looking back on the night it is difficult to give a time line of events and remember what happened when. During the night a member of public, a man, told me his father was on the 15th floor, flat 122. In the flat were two (2) people and two (2) dogs and that his father was refusing to leave. This was near the FSG Command Unit. The man I spoke to was a black male, I cannot give a further description. He was on the phone, I am not sure to who. I do not think I took the phone from him as it was right outside the FSG Command Unit. The information would have been given to them and the FSG Command Unit would

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speak to the male. I took a note with the information straight to the Bridgehead. I remember this being quite late on, a few hours into the incident. I am not sure if it is daylight. It was before the second entrance in the tower was made.

I remember spoke to this woman, there were two (2) women together, one of which was wearing a headscarf. I cannot remember where I was when I was talking to them. The message I have was 21st floor, flat 162. I think I took the phone from them but I cannot remember for sure if I did or not. There were four (4) people, the family were missing. I cannot remember who I spoke to on the phone, or if I did speak on the phone. I remember talking to people, telling people to carry on talking to people on the phone. I think this conversation was after the second BA area was created and after I had seen Command Unit

1.

Another call I took was from the 23rd floor, doors 205 and 201. The message was 'all occupants'. I remember speaking to a lady on the phone. She told me she had all of the occupants 23<sup>rd</sup> floor. She had brought them into her flat. I believe it is the same lady I have heard on a 'you tube' video since. In the video someone is in the background saying smoke will come in, don't open the door. The lady is saying I can't leave people outside and that she will let people in. It was not a long conversation I had on the phone with this lady. She sounded panicky, she told me she had all the occupants in the flat. I thought they can get them all out of the one (1) flat. I gave them the same advice; stay indoors, shut the door. We will come up and we will get them. I remember thinking when she said we got everyone together that it makes our life easier to get everyone out of there as they were together. I do not know if we got to them or not.

Afterwards, sometime during the incident, I heard some crews say they did not get that high. Some said the 20th/21st floors had already given way. At the point of me giving public advice I did not realise there were floors we could not get too. Afterwards I heard from others, I cannot remember where or from whom, that we could not go past the 16th floor, another said the 12th floor. Then I looked back at the FSG calls and Command Unit, a lot of the calls were higher than 16th floor. There were very few confirmations, if any, to say any rooms were cleared. So I do not know if these people got out or not. Everyone I spoke to the advice I gave was to stay in your flat. That was to everyone throughout the night.

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When the second entrance was made I was asked by someone to get a count of how many BA wearers were on each side. I have the figures on my notes for one side. There were ten (10) SDBA, fresh not worn; seventeen (17) SDBA, worn once, ready for second wear; three (3) EDBA. These were figures from the leisure centre side. The other side needed another three (3) EDBA wearers and I told Dan KIPLING to send three (3) EDBA's across. That was quite a bit later on, I remember the calls to FSG has stopped coming into the Command Unit.

At one stage when I was in Command Unit 8 the Commissioner arrived. I am not sure what time this was. It felt crazy the way the information was flowing, there was no flow in fact. After the Commissioner came all of a sudden it felt like there were proper channels of communication. For me anyways, I was running up and down and then the channels seemed to have been created. I remember speaking to the Commissioner, I told her that the Bridgehead on the ground floor was smoky. She asked me to find the senior officer on the fire ground. I think his name was Andy LOUGHLIN. She asked me to find Andy LOUGHLIN and told me to pass on the information about the ground floor being smoky. I found Andy near the leisure centre, I have marked this location on the map MSI/02 as 'Andy'. Up until a certain point I did not know who was in charge on the ground. I was running up and down and I could not visually see anyone in charge until the Commissioner told me to find him. Now I could see him and the communication seemed better. It felt like we had someone in charge now. Prior to that it seemed like different groups were doing different things. And to add to that the radio communication was not effective. When the Commissioner got there then there was a sense of control.

The crew manager, who used to be at Chiswick, he was running the FSG calls with me for a while. I do not know what happened but he was physically exhausted. It was at the peak of things, he was on the floor. We had been running back and forth like crazy. He said I can't do this anymore as he physically could not carry on.

I did not want to sit at the Command Unit, they were telling me to sit. There was so much to do, I broke away. They were asking if I was okay. I was thinking are you okay, I grabbed food and drink for everyone at the FSG Command Unit. A Salvation Army food van had arrived. I said I need to go and help. They said no you need to sit, I sat for a bit.

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There was an appliance parked on Grenfell Road junction with Bomore. It was to be prepped to pump water. There was four (4) or five (5) Firefighters and they could not get it to work. I do not think they were drivers. I do not know why but I got the job to get the water pumping from that appliance, to operate the pump to get it going. In theory everyone should know how to operate the pump. You will find that drivers test and use these at the start of shifts, plus in drills. Most of those that are not drivers do not get to touch the pump. So I was asked if I was a driver and I had to either change the hydrant or set it to the pump. The Pump Operator will usually have to stay by the appliance. I got it started and left it with them after I made sure it was working. This was after I had food, I remember it was daylight.

At one point during the night BA sets in the green area alarms were going off. Dan Kipling said a couple of our guys are injured. I asked if they were okay and he said he did not know, this worried me. I thought those BA sets may need to be checked, so I told the TSG officer in charge that they may be needed by Police and he arranged for the BA kits to be secured. I could not find the tallies to silence the sets.

I spoke to probably about five (5) people on mobile phones and whatever I got from the FSG Command Unit in terms of FSG messages. I passed these messages on. I do not know how many messages I had and by the end of the night I could not keep track. I know I covered a lot of ground that night. I have an application on my mobile phone which told me that I covered 12-14 kilometers going back and forth that night. I know that every time I went into the tower it was for a job.

I was running around and I was not looking at the fire apart from at BA Control or when I stopped and looked up. The whole tower was alight, I was thinking what the hell was going on. But I did not want looking at the tower to distract me from my job, and I wanted to carry on.

Around 0818hrs I messaged my crew on my mobile to tell them where I was, this was around the time I finished with the pump. I know the exact time of the message on my mobile phone. My body felt dead but I did not want to stop, I wanted to keep going as there seemed so much to do and lots still going on. It would have been after 0820am that we started getting our Watch together. I told them my location. We found out we were going to get away and went to where our appliance was parked.

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I remember that a woman and a man went to the FSG Command Unit, they said they were from the management company for Grenfell Tower. I cannot remember the company name or anything more about the man and woman. The woman told me that she had a list of all the residents of Grenfell Tower. The Watch Manager or someone else said we need that list. The printers on the Command Unit were not working. So I took the man and woman to the Church which was nearby and had opened up. I used the printer in there to get the list and I gave it to FSG Command Unit. So now we had a list for cross reference. My guys were waiting for me and we were going to go after that.

Someone had moved my appliance further up Grenfell Road, in a line with some other appliances. The appliances were all jammed up on the road, there was hardly any room to get past. An appliance was blocking half of White Church Road, this appliance was locked and someone had taken the key. This annoyed me as it was blocking the road and could not be moved. It turned out the key had been lost. In the job people are worried about other appliances taking kit or equipment to replenish their appliances and also people like members of public taking things from our engines. But for something like this, with so many appliances and this incident, they should have left their appliance unlocked.

We ended up leaving Grenfell Tower around 1030/1100am. The traffic jam to get out was crazy. We went back the same way we came. I remember there being an Operation Support Unit (OSU) in front of us. I did not understand why at incidents like this why cars were still being allowed nearby. It was hard to get the appliance out. So many cars were parked in the way, Firefighters had to bounce cars out of the way. Some residents had to move their cars so we could get out.

I wanted to go home, or back to base but we were told we had to go to Paddington Fire Station. I did not want to go. The road was closed on the A40 and I was at a point now, my legs were completely gone. I pulled up at this road block and told the guy there I needed to get to Paddington and if he could let us through and he did. At Paddington we sat there a while, they gave us sheets of paper to write a statement. I could not write anything, I tried. I think I wrote a line or two but I did not know what to write as I could not focus. Looking around I could see everyone was writing a page or two (2). My mind was blank, it was somewhere else and I just wanted to go home. I went to the manager and I said I cannot do this right now. He took my name and I left the room and went into another room. I spoke with the counselling person, it

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was a brief sit down and they offered their services. Still, I just wanted to get home. I saw DAC SABRINA. I know her from other events, I almost broke down and told her she was lucky she was not at the incident, she gave me a hug. I went back in the appliance and waited there.

We got back to the station at some stage that afternoon, I do not know what time. Whilst I was driving back I hit the wing mirror of my appliance in the appliance bay. I did not even realise I hit it, it had folded right in. My body and mind was gone.

That night we began our night shift again at 8pm, I was driving again that night. We were back at work already, and we ended up going to a four (4) pump call. A smell of smoke at a building across the road from the station. There was no fire fortunately, there were no other units to attend and it was just us that attended this 4 pump. We finished there and then got called to Brentford. There was a fire inside a taxi office. I was so tired. I had a crash on the way and collided with a motorbike. His wing mirror has come off but luckily the driver was okay. I was mentally and physically exhausted. We came off the run for a bit whilst I did some paperwork for this accident.

Then that night we had to go back to Grenfell Tower. I remember me and the guys saying they would not send us back but we were told that night we were going back. There was nothing to do. That night was different, no more Firefighting. Maybe there were some embers burning inside, but our crew was not going in. Another brigade had an aerial platform and some thermal imaging kit as well. We were there to secure the place, so that no one got in. We were situated next to the leisure centre and the school.

I gave stay put advice, I did not give any other advice. Their guidance never changed as far as I am aware, nor was any other information about change in stay put advice informed to me.

I thought I was going to Grenfell Tower to put my set on and fight the fire. From as soon as I parked the appliance up, I lost my management contact. Then WM GLEN was my contact at the Bridgehead, this was until FSG Command Unit and group of Watch Managers turned up. This is the first time I have done the FSG runner role, and I will and have avoided this role since.

The FSG training I have received is classroom based. There is no practical based training for FSG. Hence

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the confusion. At the beginning I was wondering do I leave the radio, what do I do? I have had no training on speaking to people on the phone on FSG calls. We speak to members of the public in our job but not like this, an FSG call is different. I have never spoken to a member of the public who is trapped inside. Usually someone dials 999 and they will talk to a trained controller who give advice and take the call. We then we get a message sent to us, where and how many trapped. I have never been in this situation before where I am taking member of public's mobile phone to take a call from someone trapped inside. Why were they calling people when they should be calling 999? Could they not get through? Why did they have to resort to that?

Never before the Grenfell Tower fire would I tell people to leave their flat in a fire. Even now it is unclear if this advice has changed. The organisation needs to look at this and plan for the worst case again. I do not know if the stay put policy was working or not working. As far as I was concerned I was telling people what I was told to do. I came to the conclusion that it was not working as I heard Fire fighters say they could not get past the 16th or the 12<sup>th</sup>. Then it hit me, I told those people to stay in their flats, and now I am hearing that you could not get to them. We give the stay put advice because of our training. That night we did not have any further specific guidance on what to tell people. The Command Unit knew I was taking calls from members of the public and people inside.

It was loud in the Bridgehead with all the noise so I do not know if there were any fire alarms going off inside the building. There was noise from people shouting, the radio traffic and noise from equipment. I never went past the Bridgehead point as I had no reason to. I had nothing to do with the gas supply or know anything about gas in regards to the fire. The only door I used was the main entrance. Either someone was standing by the door to open it or we opened it to get in and out. I did not see any other entrance doors. I cannot remember seeing any lifts. I do not think there were any sprinklers. I was not aware of any fire risk around the cladding. We know about fire risks with solar panels but have no training on fire risks and cladding.

If you cannot message across then the radio is not functioning properly. We were not able to use the radio to pass messages (non FSG) so I ran to pass these. I knew the radio was not good so I ignored it as a use. I physically ran messages back and forth. Listening out for key words on the radio, such as my name or

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‘priority’. But the radio was background noise as it was so busy. There are times when doing things you can be away from the main set radio, this means you can miss important information. There should be another handheld for the main set. The communication on a radio should be effective but that night it was not. Radioing through messages is quicker than me running a message across. There could have been BA crew’s already on floors or near floors where there were people that needed rescuing but radio comms were not working so we were using runners and paper messages.

The firefighting measures I observed were from the outside. There was an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) that was not doing anything until the fire started spreading down. Before that the fire was above the area the ALP could get to. The layout of the land around the tower was not all flat on all sides. It was hilly, debris and grassy. The ALP needed to be on a stable ground. Not all sides of the tower was accessible. People said there were people waving from the tower. We could not get close enough from the outside and the heat levels were so high we could not get close enough. If we able to reach the tower maybe we could have got people out early on.

There was information from guys inside that there were two (2) crews to four (4) family members. That the lobby area and communal area was compromised. You could not risk bringing the conscious casualties to a smoke filled communal area. We have masks, but what about them and then the choice we have to make. We need some sort of rescue masks. Even if it gives air for say five (5) minutes of air for them. The BA wearers could carry these rescue masks. Or maybe these could be mandatory in high rise towers. The smoke, and the heat, was the biggest thing that hampered casualty rescue that night.

I was not injured that night but it messed with my head for a while. I was so tired after the incident that I was sleeping. And then I had no sleep for around (2) weeks. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I spent five (5) weeks walking on air. I spoke with counseling, I was having nightmares. Now I can actually talk about it, before if people spoke about Grenfell I made an excuse and left.

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