

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: JOHNSON, MARCUS

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 13 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: MARCIS JOHNSON

Date: 07/02/2018

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

This statement is about my role as a Crew Manager in the London Fire Brigade (LFB) on the 13th to 14th of June 2017 at Grenfell Tower.

The people I will be mentioning are F/F Joe DEAN (Driving), F/F Richard KNIGHTS. I cannot recall the third member of my crew. F/F Holmes-Lewis was on the ladder.

I am currently a Crew Manager, at Brixton Fire Station and that means I am second in command on Red Watch. The Watch Manager is ultimately in charge of the Watch. I sometimes deputise for him when he is absent.

I help with the orchestrating of training, also with Incident Command when we go out on jobs. On smaller incidents, where only one fire engine goes, such as 'floodings' and shut in lifts', I ride on the pump, as opposed to a pump ladder, which is ridden by the Watch Manager. I'd be the Officer in charge of the incident; responsible for resolving it. I am also responsible for maintaining all the outside duties that we do, such as Fire Safety Inspections, Familiarisation Visits, Key risks on our grounds, such as like hospitals, tube stations.

I'm responsible for maintaining everyone's level of training with the Watch Manger... I joined the Fire Brigade in 2006. I did four months basic training as Firefighter. I went to Wimbledon, as a Firefighter,

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and completed the rest of my training, where you go from a Firefighter on development to competent. It took about two years. It was Station based training; improving competence in the role, which written evidence. You submit the incidents you undertake. I served there until March 2011 and then I was promoted to Crew Manager at Brixton Fire Station to now.

A crew consists of a minimum of four firefighters including myself, but depending on the time of year and how many people on duty, we can ride up to six. You can't have any more than six on a Fire Engine, including the Officer in Charge. But we have to have at least four; including the Officer. There is a minimum of two on the back. One driver. One Officer in charge. Potentially up to six. But that's only really one or two weeks in January, when no- one is on leave.

A call comes through to the Station's Central Mobilising System in our Watch Room. It is on the Ground Floor, near the Appliance Bay. There is a computer where everything comes through, it has a Call Slip. That tells you what the incident is, where it is, the Time of call, who called you and any extra information that is held about the premises or the call that has been taken by Control. And that's alerted to all staff by the 'Top Bells' going off. It says, "Mobilise, Mobilise.", then whichever appliance; or both appliances, go out. The message will be "Mobilise, Mobilise." "242" or "242" and "241".

When we get a call, The Duty person, who is assigned at the Watch change, when we come on duty, has the responsibility to go to the Watch Room on all calls, whether they are on the machine that's going, or not, to acknowledge it.

They get the route card, which is a little A5 map of the grid square, in particular and the neighbouring wards around it. They hand that to the driver. The driver then looks at a big map in the Watch Room, to work out where they are going. When I get the call, I go down to the machine. The machines have a computer tablet. The call slip comes up on it.

There is also a layer beneath that map that shows exactly where the call is. That map highlights all risks known about the area so that if there is even a slight hazard associated with it or if it is a known premises that's got an Operational Risk data base entry. You can press one button and bring all that information up about the area. It shows what the risks are; life risk; Key risks, like a hospital, will have all the

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information we hold on it regarding Risks and Hazards, which operational plans we need to take into account. What the operational actions it states. It helps with what you need to be considering.

I go down to the room and acknowledge that I've got a 'shout'. I have a look at it and wait for my crew to get on board. I then change our status. You just press to say 'Right, I've got a shout'. Then all the information comes up. If we are mobile, not at the Station, it comes up as exactly the same way and shown at the station.

When the call comes up, it comes onto the big grey screen. There is a green button at the bottom, saying 'Acknowledge' I brief the crew so that they know what we need to take on board, what we will do when we get to the incident, or what our initial plan is, based on the information I have, at that point. There are two Call Sheets. They are pieces of paper. One is produced in the Watch Room from an old-fashioned printer. That prints off our station prints. Three copies. One stays permanently on the role of the machine. You tear off the two extra copies.

If both machines going out, each driver is given one. If only one machine is going out, you just give it to the driver of the machine that's going out. Then on the machine there is also the exact same information but in a slightly different format. It is brought up on the computer. You have the paper copy in case the MDT (Mobile Data Terminal) fails.

You have got the hard copy with all the written information on it. You can use it as a back-up. The Fire Brigade has a different status code to say where the fire engine is.

Status 1 means the machine is available for a call and is based at the Fire Station.

Status 2 is when you get a 'Shout'. It means we are now on-route to the incident.

Status 3 is when you get to the incident. It means you are now 'in attendance' at the incident.

There are Monitoring Officers who are used to find out where fire engines are, who is in attendance. If a call finished early, that is if machines are still showing Status 2, Control can ring us, or contact us on the radio and say "You can return to Station." Because we are no longer required at the incident.

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You also have a Status 6 which means we are available, but we are out on the ground. If we are out doing any visits, someone is permanently on the machine looking at the computer terminal because that's the way all the calls come through. It shows that we are not at the Station, that we are out on the ground doing certain other rolls but we are available. There are other status codes but they are not necessarily that poignant.

Before the call to Grenfell Tower we were Status 1. Both the appliances at the Fire Station were Status 1.

On the 14th of June 2017, at about two o'clock (2am) we got the call. The incident was made up from twenty-five pump appliances to forty. Were part of that extra fifteen appliances mobilised to the incident. We were on 'Down Time' when the 'Bells' went down. We got up and went down to the fire engine. We were mostly talking about this being a forty-pump fire, asking, "What does a forty-pump look like?"

In the eleven, or so, years I have been in the job, I have never heard of one. I have heard of heard of twenties, and maybe twenty-five's, but they were large flat scale incidents. This was a call to a high-rise block of flats on fire. I was in almost disbelief as to what could possibly require that scale of response.

That did not last very long. Everyone got on the machines. I made sure everyone on my crew was on the machine (Hotel 242) and ready to go and we went. I think the Pump Ladder went first. The LFB Policy states that when you go out as a pair, the Pump Ladder leads and the Pump follows second.

We then we proceeded to the incident. We slightly lost our Pump Ladder because the chap driving me was new to driving. He was not quite as fast as the other driver. I just told him, "Make sure you drive to arrive.", because we actually need to get to this safely.

The route we took, as far as I can remember, was, we turned out of Brixton Fire Station, on Gresham Road, up Stockwell Road up to South Lambeth Place, around the one-way system at Vauxhall. We went over Vauxhall Bridge, along Vauxhall Bridge Road to Victoria, straight through Victoria, up to Hyde Park and along Park Lane. At the top we turned left along Bayswater Road that leads into Notting Hill Gate that leads into Holland Park Avenue which was the route on the MDT and where the Call Slip showed a rendezvous point assigned for the incident.

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The LFB policy is to follow the route given on the MDT to the RVP. We can go outside the policy if it is justifiable. As we got close to Grenfell Tower the road was blocked. We had a cab driver on the crew and he got us to a road that meant that we didn't have to trek half a mile carrying BA sets and PPE.

We turned right off Holland Park Avenue and about half way along the road was closed for Gas works. There were a few engines ahead of us that were turning around because they couldn't get through. We could not see where to go from there, another Fire Engine took another road around but got stuck because of traffic. They left their Fire Engine and ran off. I did not think that that was good for us, so we actually drove all the way back around and went up Ladbroke Grove. We then took a left turn that brought us in to the East of Grenfell Tower. We were somewhere between Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park Avenue when I first saw Grenfell Tower. There was a break in the buildings. I could see a huge tower of fire. From a distance you could not see any breaks in it. It was a 60 or 70 meter tower of flame over to my right hand side up towards The Westway.

I was taken aback, I thought "How does that even happen?" I thought "WE are going to that and we are probably going inside that!" There was a quiet resilience, this could be a bad incident not just for the residents but us, our colleagues and our friends as well. I hoped it was a one off but right now we were going right into the heart of it. I had a feeling of disbelief and thought, "How could something get THAT on fire?" We knew we had to get there. One of the crew F/F Knights is a London Cab Driver, so he knew a good way of getting really close. I thought it was justifiable to take a different route in these circumstances

I have marked where we parked our fire engine in Lancaster Road on my exhibit MPJ/2. That took us close to the incident and we walked around to Grenfell Tower. We were faced by the Leisure Centre.

We parked-up. As the Officer in Charge of the appliance, it's my responsibility to take a Nominal Roll Board (NRB). This is a little metal board. On it is written, in chinagraph pencil, the appliance number, the shift date and whether it is the day or night shift. It is also a physical register of who exactly is on my appliance. My job is to go to the Command Unit with that board and hand it in. I get a specific briefing from my crew. The Command Unit then has an exact knowledge of precisely who is at the incident, what

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appliance they are riding and where they should be, in case you have to withdraw the crew or have an Emergency Roll Call. If anything has gone wrong they can account for all staff. That is why it has to be accurate. We make sure that at the change of Watch, someone is responsible for putting those boards on the appliance and making sure they are correct.

I told my crew, "Get your BA Sets on and follow me around, I'll go find the Command Units. You might as well stay on your radios, if I need to contact you, just get the Breathing Apparatus marshalling area." There was a very clear marshalling area for all the Breathing Apparatus Crews. I went to where the Command Unit was. I could not tell you where it was. It was possibly on Grenfell Road. I don't know the area. I was just pointed in the direction and told, "Oh, it's over there." I went down to the Command Unit and handed the NRB in. I said, "Look, I've told my crews to go to the B.A. Staging area. I have marked this on exhibit MPJ". Is there anything else you'd rather them do?" They said, "No, that's exactly where we need them." I did not have a BA set because my driver had taken it.

Whilst doing that, and as I've waited to talk to the Command Unit, several members of the public, came up to me and said, "Some of my family are still in there. Can you get." they started pleading a little bit. "So can you go and get them now?" I said, "Look, we are doing everything we can. Tell me what flat they're in." I could hand that information over to get relayed to the people in charge of the Fire Survival Guidance Calls. So we know where people are."

I just wrote what flat they said on my hand. When I spoke the people in the Command Unit, I said "There's also, I've been told, there's people in this flat and this flat." That information was handed over to the Command Unit to pass on to whomever. I believe they were quite inundated with people being in lots of the flats.

From there, I go back to my crew at the B.A Station Point. The machine I was riding had five people, including myself that day. It has four Breathing Apparatus Sets. Whilst I was away, my driver, who didn't have a BA Set at the change of Watch, tested my BA Set and put it on. So that he could go to the B.A Area. I was supposed to have a BA set at the start of the watch.

I think I spoke to the Sector Commander at that point. I said like, "Look, I'm a free Crew Manager. I

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haven't got a B.A Set. Where do you need me to go? What do you need me to go, what do you need me to do?"

He said that there were a number of ambient and slightly injured casualties. I have marked 'LAS' on exhibit MPJ/2 Where there was a Primary Ambulance Staging Area for casualties. It was near an area facing the West face of Grenfell Tower.

He also said to me, "I've got one, or two Firefighters over there. I could do with an Officer over there."

When we parked up and walked around was the first time I was aware of the enormity of the incident. Looking up from ground level about 40 or 50 meters away, it was completely alight apart from a few floors at the bottom. Debris was cascading down, it was noisy and people were standing around. There was a 'roar' of fire, clanging and banging from the falling debris. I smelt like building materials were on fire I wondered how anyone could be alive in there and how are we going to get in and out in one piece.

I went to an area near the playground, just off of this Blenhynden Street. There were two, maybe three other fire fighters and we set up a Casualty Care Area. That was done by opening big blue salvage sheets that we have. It is just a tarpaulin you put on the floor. I recognised one of them from red Watch at Tooting but I don't know his name. We also had several Immediate Emergency Care Packs; they are green IEC Packs that we carry with our other oxygen, defibrillators, wound dressings, Neck braces. All the stuff that we carry for our initial emergency care response.

There were several casualties that I saw there, about three, maybe four residents, all were just very, very minor burns, if any. They mostly seemed to have smoke inhalation. They were in various stages of undress.

Some didn't have shoes on. They weren't particularly well-dressed for the night. Fortunately, it wasn't too cold. But we were just caring for them, making sure they were warm. They were given oxygen. We were monitoring their conditions; making sure they didn't deteriorate in anyway. That was whilst the main LAS Area were dealing with the more serious injuries. We were making sure that those people were safe. They were there because it wasn't particularly easy, at that point, to transfer them back across the

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Main Staging Area. This was because all of the falling debris. It was not safe underfoot. I think casualties were being brought out from two ways, some were being brought out the building and taken over to the main Staging Area, and some were being brought over to where, where I was opposite the West face. At one stage we had one or two Paramedics with us but the vast majority were at the Main Staging Area.

Then a decision was made to move this immediate Casualty Care Area down the road, to near Latimer Road Tube Station. I do not know who made the decision. It was a larger area and it meant that you weren't leaving people who were traumatised, by being inside such a terrible fire, facing the building. I think that West Face was one of the most alight. Also, it took them away from any falling debris. It was not the best place to leave them, staring at something they had just escaped from. There were a few Police there. They were trying to push the crowds back because people were trying to get to see and even trying to get into the building. They had their families in there.

We had a trickle of ambient, or walking casualties. Some people had maybe minor burns. Some were suffering from smoke inhalation. A large number were suffering with shock. They were predominately adults. I remember one parent with a child. They were both conscious and breathing. At that point, one of the paramedics said that they could do with some more ambulance resources and asked me to go to the main LAS Staging Area, to see if they could get some resources sent to this where we were.

When I spoke to them they said, "Oh, This is the Main Staging Site. Our resources are focused here. Can you get these casualties over to us over here?" I explained to them that we were not able to get them all through and that it was not safe to bring to them. I asked them if they could get resources around to where the casualties were. One of their chaps came back with me to work out how we could get some more resources to the area. There was an increasing number of casualties trickling out from the incident coming to the second Staging Post.

When I got back to this second site, near Latimer Road Station, a young girl was brought out. She was of carried by one of the Firefighters who was not one of the Breathing Apparatus Crew, but one of the people who met them at the door to get the casualties out. She was unconscious. At that point, I could not say whether she was breathing or not as I wasn't dealing with her personally. There was two Paramedics there and they were working quite furiously doing chest compressions, CPR and trying to do everything

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they needed to do. A defibrillator was attached to her. She was wearing only knickers. Her eyes were open all of the time. She was about between six and eight-years-old and of Middle Eastern, North African, Arabic descent.

There was a huge cordoned off group of people, just staring. A few of the Firefighters who weren't specifically dealing with casualties got a Salvage Sheets which is a tarpaulin and held it up to give them a bit of privacy to work and stop people prying.

Her situation seemed to be deteriorating. I remember an ambulance turning up. We were helping the paramedics, by carrying the equipment from the Casualty Care Area onto the ambulance. I was stood by another fire fighter and the paramedics said, "I need one of you to come on the ambulance right now to do compressions and take her to hospital." The other Firefighter seemed a little bit hesitate. I said, "Well, I'll go." I said to him, "Can you radio the Command Unit and let them know that Crew Manager JOHNSON has left the fire ground on an ambulance, doing CPR."

I wanted to make sure the information that I had left the fire ground was available and known so that if there was an emergency withdrawal they knew where I was and they would not have to commit people to try and find me. I don't know if that information got relayed; I hope it did.

I got onto the ambulance. I don't know the call-sign. The paramedic said "Look, Are you alright doing the compressions?" She was monitoring the equipment. She had an Australian or Kiwi accent, was white and had blond hair in a pony-tail. The driver was male with short darkish hair. We went to the hospital, I don't know which hospital we went to. I was doing chest compressions. I was standing over her, doing one hand chest compressions all the way to the hospital. I would stop intermittently for the defibrillator to run its checks.

I think there were about four and they tend to be every two minutes. That means that the hospital was within an eight minute radius. Each time it advised 'No shock'. That means just carry on with the compressions. They did not have any pulse. We kept doing the chest compressions the whole way.

As we were approaching the hospital, a paramedics said, "What we're going to do is, we're going to carry her in, into the Trauma Ward." I can't recall weather I suggested or the ambulance driver suggested it, but

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it was agreed that we leave her on the actual trolley because it 'would be far easier for me to do compressions on the trolley against it. We could do it the whole way in to hand over. We could walk in nice and slowly, not breaking in compressions at any point. The trolley could be set for my height. It seemed the best chance she's got of continuing some form of circulation."

We went into the hospital. We pulled the trolley out and I continued doing the compressions as we took her into the Trauma Ward next to a bed. They handed her over until I was relieved by either one of the nurses, or one of the doctors in the Trauma Ward who physically took over from me. I was dirty and they weren't keen to have me in a clean area so I waited outside. That was the last time I saw her.

I was then released. No one took my details at the Hospital. From there I went back to the ambulance with the two paramedics. I think they spoke to one of their bosses asking "Do we just go now or do we have to do the paperwork?" They were told that they needed to do some sort of basic paperwork for their 'shout'. It seemed to be between five and ten minutes, where I just like sat on the back of the Ambulance. One of the paramedics had gone back into the hospital. The other one was doing the paperwork.

Then I heard the other paramedic return and they were chatting in the front. I was not really listening to what they were saying. One turned round to me and said "Did you hear that?" I said, "No." They said, "They've managed to get a signal." That meant they had managed to get a signal on the cardiograph. Then the other paramedic went back into the hospital for about another five minutes. And then he came back out and said, "They've actually got quite a decent strong signal for her now." I had a feeling of relief.

So from my understanding is they had managed to have least get her back at that point. The ambulance then returned me to the fire ground. I think we came the same way back to the incident. I switched off on the way back so I don't know how long it took. It was around 4am to 4-30am. I didn't have a watch with me because I broke it earlier on. I found it in the foot well of the engine, later.

I got dropped back off pretty much right by my fire engine in Lancaster Road from Ladbroke Grove. I have marked that on my exhibit MPJ/2

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I walked back through to the main block. There was either a female Borough Manager, or a Deputy Assistant Commissioner at the back of two vans with what was either big ventilation fans, or something else. I really can't remember what the bit of equipment was. But I said "Do you need me to help you with that, guv." I then carried that equipment through to the initial Staging Area.

I was then asked to go and get hold of two 'Leaky Feeder Units' A Leaky Feeder Unit is something you use to boost the radio signal. It's a long piece of wire that leaks out the radio signal along the length of the wire. It is used predominately in basement type incidents or anywhere where you're losing radio communications. It actually takes the communication into a building. It brings the signal closer to where you are working.

They wanted it taken to the West face of the building. An entrance had been made on the West side, and the South entrance was not being used anymore. I carried it in through a forced opening. I have marked it exhibit MPJ/4.

A Firefighter had a riot shield from the Police. We walked under it through some debris. Something fell on us and knocked us clean off our feet. I think some of it is still lodged in my helmet. We got up very quickly. I was not injured. We were ok but scarpered into the building to drop off the two 'Leaky feeder' units. I then stayed inside a room that was not part of the main foyer. It had a little kitchen in it. It lead into a corridor and into an area where BA crew were staging before getting their actual briefings before going in.

Most of the people in there were Firefighters. I was about the only officer there. I was asked by a Station Manager or Watch Manager to do a 360 degree walk around of the building and to record where fire and smoke was evident on each face of the building to hand to the Borough Manager who required it for briefing crews in the Main Foyer.

I confirmed what I had been asked, and went out. I started on the West face. I was about 50 meters from the base. It is the only one I can specifically remember. It was alight from the 5th floor upwards. I have marked on a GRENFELL TOWER ELEVATIONS plan and produce this as my exhibit MPJ/3. On the West face all you could see was flame all the way up it. It was more sporadic on the other faces. I

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recorded in my notebook where I could see actual flame fire, smoke issuing and where I could no longer passed, because of the smoke. It took me about 15 minutes to do it.

I then went back in through an opening on the South-West corner of the building. I took it to the Officer who had tasked me. He then took me to the Borough Manager; Pat Goldbourne. I told him exactly what I had seen and gave him the paper so he had a hard copy. I think it was to enable him to know where fire was visible from the outside, how the fire was developing from what the picture they had earlier.

As I did not have a BA set and because there were a number of Riot shields in that room, The Officer in Charge said stay here and help get BA set crews out safely but to also bring people in. The room had a sink in it and was 'L' shaped and about 4 meters square. It was very wet and had about 15 to 16 crews in there. One crew were there to deal with hose problems. When they did it, they did it quickly but it took a while to decide to actually do it. There was still a lot of falling debris. It was intermittent as to its heaviness. You would think it was petering down, then you would hear an almighty 'clunk', and realise that it had definitely not stopped. It was daylight by now.

From that stage onwards at about 4.00am to 5am and because crews were being committed from a 'Stop point' into the building, I was involved in getting crews in and out. This role was taken over by the Police later on.

I was ferrying firefighters and sometimes conscious and breathing casualties out of the building using one of the riot shields. One was a mid to late aged oriental man. He may have been a man that I had seen waving from a window around the floor earlier.

I asked an Officer if he wanted me to wear a BA but he told me that he wanted me to remain and carry on with the shuttles. I remained there and would tell others that relived other Fire fighters, what hazards to look out for.

Later about 11.30am, my Watch Manager John STEVENS, who was riding H241 , told me we were to go, so, I told the Office-in-Charge I had been ordered to go and from then from that point I did not do very much more. All the rest of my crew had been in and been into the fire floors twice and wore BA sets twice, they were clearly not in a fit state to go back in on a third wear. By now it was 11-30am to noon,

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we re-hydrated, got some food and we were relived. We were then told to go to Paddington Fire Station to make statements and get a bit of care. It was about 1pm by now. We left about 3pm and back to Brixton Fire Station around 4pm. I had a shower got some food. I did not go home. I was back on shift at 8pm.

I have marked this on an enlarged plan of Grenfell Tower and produce this as my exhibit MPJ/4.

I made some notes and I produce these as my exhibit MPJ/1. I have marked on a map that I produce as my Exhibit MJ/2, the places I have mentioned I produce an Elevation Plan-Grenfell Tower that I have marked as my exhibit MPJ/3

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