

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: TANNER, MATTHEW

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 11 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: M TANNER

Date: 29/01/2018

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

The content of this statement constitutes a summary of an interview conducted by DC Amin KOHZADBAHYAT and DC Gary WILLIAMS at the West Hampstead Fire Station on Monday the 4th December 2017 between 1033hrs and 1235hrs. Statement of Matt TANNER with his Fire Brigade Union representative Greg EDWARDS. This statement does not purport to be complete and for completeness and accuracy it must be read in conjunction with the interview transcript exhibit GW/MT1.

In this statement I will talk about my role on the night of the fire, the actions I took and conclude with some post-incident information. I will also mention the many members of the Fire Brigade I worked alongside that night. I am a Fire Fighter with twenty-five years' experience. I am currently with red watch and was at the time of the fire. We have regular practice and lectures on high-rise flats and I have been to a number of fires at high rises over the years. I've had training in the last year including 72D's. We had a fire at Swiss Cottage two to three years ago with similar cladding in a high rise called Taplow. Taplow was a complete burn out in one flat but I've never seen fire spread to another flat like it did at Grenfell. We didn't receive any specific training on fires on the outside of buildings. You just see it as you find it. My colleagues I will mention will be Steve DOUNIAS, Martin HOARE, Carl CLARKE, Alex CARDY, Chris DORGU, Brian FLANNAGAN, Luke COOK, Anthony NELSON, Brian O'KEEFE, Louisa DA SILVA, Charlie RAWLINGS, Graham SHAW, Jim CUTHBERT, Greg LAWSON and FF HILLS or MILLS.

On the night of the fire when the call came on we were already on a call at the The Royal Free Hospital cutting a ring off a ladies finger. We were notified by our driver Steve DOUNIAS who said there was a

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job going on at the next ground from ours North Kensington's ground. Then when we got on the fire engine we closed our status down from the ring job and we were mobilised by the RT. Literally within seconds of showing our status available, so status six, control came out and ordered us on to a ten or twenty pump fire at Grenfell Tower. Steve was driving, Martin HOARE was the leading firefighter as the temporary Crew Manager acting up, I was sitting behind him as BA and Carl CLARK the new boy was sat next to me; so four of us in total. Martin had a go at the MDT but with a bit of local knowledge we said they're rubbish and because it's not our ground it's quicker just to get on your phone so I google mapped it and typed in the actual address: I typed in Grenfell Tower and it came up with the route straight away. I navigated Steve just telling him left right and so forth from the back. I can't remember what route we took to be honest. I think we went towards our station at West Hampstead and turned left and down. I think it's Fitzjohns avenue and all the way down towards Swiss Cottage and then worked our way across up to Edgware road and sort of across that way somewhere. I don't remember the exact roads we went. The journey took between about five and ten minutes as there was no traffic due to it being early in the morning. This was about twenty past one in the morning by now. Not a lot was being said between us on the route really. We could hear different stuff on the radio with fire survival calls going on and the fact it was quickly going up in the number of pumps needed. We were telling Carl we've got a pretty good job on here because it was only his third tour. We were buzzing really because you know with all the calls it's going to be a big job. Going through my head was just a bit of excitement. A couple of weeks before that we had been on another job over on North Kensington's ground where it was just a flat fire so we just thought it was just a run of the mill flat fire and obviously with all the smoke there's going to be a lot of people involved so it'll be quite exciting.

I hadn't been to the actual area of Grenfell Tower before but the other one was close by. We only got slightly lost at one point I think on St Annes road but we just did a quick U-turn and then we saw the tower on fire. Through the gaps in the houses we could see the whole side of the tower alight. About half the tower block from the third or fourth floor was alight. None of us had ever seen that before. It was like a wall of fire on the outside of the building. It looked like the flats below were on fire but it was obvious to us that the cladding on the outside was all alight. It was the sheer scale of it just seeing ten to thirteen floors alight. I think when we saw it we wound the windows down on the fire engine to have a good look. I couldn't really smell anything at the time. I can't remember exactly where we parked but there were no issues with getting access until we got close and parked behind another fire-engine down a side street. I didn't see any other fire engines on route but could hear sirens all over the place. I don't recall any other

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emergency vehicles. I think it may have been Treadgold street from looking on the map. As we pulled up there was another one or two fire-engines pulling up behind us. Normally you don't all immediately put your sets on, especially the officer, but because we could see how big it was and because it wasn't out ground we all straight away got our sets on. The only other equipment we took with us was the recruit who took a line bag with him. We walked about five hundred yards from our fire engine through a crowd of people to the base of the building, I think it must have been past the leisure centre area but I'm not sure. There were loads of people standing around watching the fire so we had to push our way through the middle of them because there was a cordon already on. As we were walking down to it and getting to the base I saw the Hydraulic Platform working with a bloke on it trying to squirt hose.

Obviously there was lots of shouting from windows and people down below, lots of fireman shouting up as well. I do remember, almost like you know when magnesium burns you get the white flashes of fire, there was lots of that sort of effect falling down around the HP. Not normal flames, it was properly glowing white stuff. I saw people shouting and waving from windows but I couldn't say what floor they were on or give any description of them. To be honest looking up at the tower on fire you were just in awe of it and also you just wanted to get in there as standing outside it was just a bit frustrating. When we got there it didn't feel like there was many others at the base although I know there were obviously crews at the base supplying the HP and stuff and other crews there. But when we got there it felt like there was only a few of us, I don't know if they'd just let a load go in the lobby but very very quickly then there were loads and loads more fireman coming in behind us. There was lots being said but I can't remember much of it, some was stay in your flat, open your windows, get to the windows, that was it. Meanwhile on hand-held radios you were getting lots of messages saying people in flat such and such, people in flat such and such; well we were getting that on route as well. On the radio it was just constant. Also there was bits of the cladding falling down. As we were stood right at the base looking up it became quite clear that it was the cladding that was alight and that it was the cladding that was falling around you. My first thought was bloody hell that's gonna kill someone because bits were falling down and blowing under the foyer. But when I touched it, it wasn't very heavy so the fear of getting squashed by something went away. It was all different size bits falling down from the size of my phone to the size of a whiteboard. The small bits were like charred foamy stuff while the larger bits were thin metal material. I remember people screaming and shouting out of the windows with their heads out. You could only see people who were below the flames. I don't think the windows were wide open, I only think they were open a little bit. There was a guvnor there, I don't know his name, but he was a station manager.

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When we got there we were basically the first wave of the next lot coming in. I remember Alex CARDY from Willesden turning up next because I know him as he used to be based here at West Hampstead. I looked at him and jokingly said "where's your set mate, I can't believe you've turned up without a set" He said "what I'm officer ain't I". So I said "nah mate you need to go and get a set". Which I think he then went and did but there was a wave of other fireman coming up then. The more that were coming, the more that were saying to the Station Manager we are all here, what we doing outside? He then said "look you're all going to go in, trust me you're all going to go in. But there's no room in there at the moment but you're all going to go in" We were waiting there for about thirty minutes which started as an orderly queue but when the HP had to be moved it was lets help but keep an eye on the queue., we all still wanted to go in but no one wanted to lose their place in the queue but then it was hold on help move the hose. The HP had to be moved because so much stuff was falling on it and it was getting more rapid so this was our first job. I think the lad who was on the HP got off it while it was being moved and as they backed it up he stood on a fire engine and was continuing to squirt water from there. They backed it up as close to the foyer as they could. So me and Martin and a few of the others started helping with the hose. I don't think the HP got back to work while we were there because Then the Station Manager asked everyone to go and get breaking in gear. Some people had brought sledge hammers and some people brought enforcers but on the great scheme of things there wasn't a lot there. People dispersed a little bit as they realised they weren't going to be let in and so went to get equipment. Our two Steve and Carl had been told to go and get breaking in gear. So we had to wait for them before we could go in. We got on the radio but it felt like it was an eternity waiting for them even though it probably wasn't that long; maybe about four minutes or something. When they arrived they had a sledgehammer. So as soon as they turned up we went up to the Station Manager and said right we got a crew here and he said right go in. We were the first in our little holding group to go in but there was obviously people that were already in there. It was when we were waiting that the first lot of casualties were coming out. There was a couple of live ones but there was a young girl who didn't look very alive as they brought her out. She was about twelvish that sort of age, she was unconscious, darker skin, dark curly hair, slight build. She came out on her back on some kind of stretcher carried by a couple of fireman. The live casualties were coming out in drips and drabs. Some were walking on their own and some were being supported by fireman. There was also a black fella who was definitely not very well. He was being carried out with one at his head and one at his feet and his eyes were wide-open with his head back. He looked like an Ethiopian kind of build. I suppose he was about middle aged. I said to Carl, because he's the new one, I said to him mate you're

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probably going to get your first fatals here. I remember the paramedics in that area, because we had to set-up a blue sheet that we were going to put the casualties on but it became quite apparent very quickly that the blue sheet was not going to be big enough as more and more people were coming out. Chris DORGU I remember coming out, he's on red watch at north Kensington and I know him very well. He was one of the first into the flats and I asked him what's going on mate? He told us about the initial call to the flat where he went and he said to us "mate, it's horrendous up there". I think another crew came in behind us but we were just like come on let's go. The HP was on the east side of the tower and we had been stood on corner of south and east. The casualty bit was set up on the south side. The first thing we saw when we went in the building was the big open lobby at the base with the bottom glass windows. It was all glass at the bottom if I remember right and the staircase. There was no smoke and I don't think any water. There were also a lot of firemen there who had already been up. I saw Brian FLANNAGAN and Luke COOK there. Brian had soot up his nose and he said to me "mate it's horrendous up there and I said "alright mate we're going". Luke was the same, they were both just sweating and their helmets were all dirty. I think them two went together because I think Greg went with Anthony NELSON. But we were just told by someone that the bridgehead is on the third floor so get yourselves to the third floor.

The stairwell was a normal concrete stairs, just a small stairwell which wasn't that wide. You could just about get two people standing next to each other on it with gear on but not a huge stairwell. On the way up to the third floor there were a few coming down, some live, residents coming down, some with fireman some not with fireman. I can't describe any of the people. I wasn't really taking much interest as the adrenaline had taken over then. Outside watching it I'd made the decision I was going to die; I did text my wife. I can't remember what I text her just I'm alright I think. Normally if I'm on the phone to her when I get a call I'll talk to her when I get home, if I'm not on the phone she doesn't need to know. This one you could just tell straight away it was a bit different so I think I just text her I'm at a big job, I'm alright, talk to you later. Outside looking up I was pretty sure we were going to die or someone was going to die. You worry about it outside but as soon as you go in that feeling just goes. The bridgehead was packed and roasting; just carnage. When I walked in I saw Brian O'KEEFE who I knew because he was at my training school and Louisa DA SILVA she was entry control officer helping out. So you come up the stairwell out into the lobby bit and it was rammed. You kind of just push yourself through but there was lots of people waiting. There was a slight sense of being gutted cause you think you're next to go and then you find yourself at the back of the queue again. However, people were getting deployed quite quickly so I was trying to listen to what was going on. There was another, I think just a fireman, showing

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everyone who was committed a drawing that was on the wall, a plan of the floor and saying have a quick look at this cause every floors the same as this one so when you come out the stairwell this is what you'll see. So every crew we saw were being told have a look round because you can't see up there. It was just a chinograph drawing on the wall. There were tons of radio messages with people being told to go to flats up there, it was all radio messages. There was no real floors it was just flat numbers and then it was where's that? Then a fireman came in in a right state his name was HILLS or MILLS, I don't know where he was based. He was proper exhausted, just all floppy, eyes rolling, people were helping him in, trying to take his set off. His got pushed over to where me and Martin were in a little corner. He got tucked in there and sat down so a few of us took his tunic off and his set off. Someone got the oxygen from the engine control bit and we let someone else deal with him as we wanted to get on.

Once we were next in we got asked who our crews were. Me and Martin rightly or wrongly with the two boys behind us made our decision to go up. I know in hindsight that as we had the new boy and I'm the senior hand on the watch I should of really have gone with the new boy but it's one of them ones so we were just like we'll go. Steve who he was with isn't a new boy so we just put them together. I think the two behind us were Steve and Carl but it might not have been. We were getting told different flat numbers of different floors. There were three or four different flat numbers. It kept being right go to that one and then it was no go to this one and it went on like that. We were getting a bit fed up of it and we said can you just tell us what flat to go to. Then suddenly it all changed in an instant a message came down that there was a fireman gone down on the twelfth floor. They were getting fast time information on the radio and it kept changing. I think they were trying to prioritise who was screaming louder or whatever they were doing. Our final information was to go to floor twelve because a fireman was collapsed there. Then because that was one of our own that was a bit urgent. As we were going out we had nothing so we just grabbed a branch that someone chucked at us and we just went upstairs. I don't think there was much real smoke on the first two floors but we were running upstairs urgently.

I know it sounds a bit callous, but there's added urgency for a fireman compared to a member of the public who you don't really know. We didn't have much of a problem tripping over stuff as we went up; there was a bit of hose but not a lot. Then the smoke started to get wispiers and one floor went pitch black but I can't remember which floor. Once it got dark I was trying to count the floors in my head as I went up. I said to Martin I think we're on floor nine and he said fuck off Matt were only on seven. For a good few floors you couldn't see anything, you couldn't see anything at all. Then whatever floor it was it cleared and it was wispy smoke again. The temperature was going up which was weird but going through

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the smoke wasn't overly hot. It cleared, went really hot and then back in the smoke again and it wasn't that hot. I'm not sure if the floor numbers were written on the walls or not because I was behind Martin so I don't know if I was just relying on him to be counting. But I can't recall seeing any floors numbers anywhere. We got to the twelfth floor but I'd switched off counting by then and was just relying on Martin. Then there was another crew and I can't remember where or how we met them. But where ever we met them we told them we've got a fireman down so just come with us. As we got to the twelfth floor, the double doors didn't seem very hot; we were only really hot and sweaty from walking up the stairs. When you went in you couldn't see anything because of the smoke but we went to the right standing up and followed it round and found the flat doors. We were trying to do the whole floor but we didn't have torches and I can't remember having a tic but I might well have done. We were looking for fluorescents because we were looking for one of us. We weren't trying flat doors overly as the priority was to try to find a firefighter. We searched the whole floor because we got back to the double door again and it was almost like that corresponded with a radio message. I can't remember if they got onto us or we got onto them but we said there's nobody here, there's no fireman down. That's when they said no it's alright he's here it's the bloke who came in a state. Martin then said we're going down to the tenth floor. So we went back through the double doors and left the other two blokes. They said they were going to knock on flats and get people out and they did because we saw them doing it. However, I don't know any description or the names of the other two fire fighters. As we went down we couldn't see anything so we were feeling our way down and counting the two floors. There was more time to think going down cause going up we were just focused on going to get the fire fighter. I knew I had the tenth floor as I had counted the two floors. There was a hose outside of the double doors. We knelt down but we didn't have anything water wise as we only had a branch: It was like an oven on this floor in there. We knew where the outlet should be from studying the diagram on the bridgehead so Martin got the hose and I was feeling around for the dry riser so we could just plug it in. Martin held the doors open and tried to get in there again but it was just ridiculously hot; we were crawling in there. As soon as we opened the double doors it was like a blast furnace which was surprising because we'd been walking round on the twelfth floor which was warm but not unbearable. So we closed the doors and then Martin found a TIC on the floor and I think he found a hose.

Then we got Martin's TIC so we could have a proper look and could see that it was a light in the lobby. That indicated to me that all the flats must be burning. I can't remember if Martin found the TIC or if he had it before but Martin had a TIC. It was so hot that we were on our bellies and our gloves were really

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hot. I think in hindsight now some of the doors on that floor must have already been compromised. Martin rolled the hose down the stairs and we tried to go back in again. The first thing we focused on was the lifts and we could see something at the bottom of the lifts. I just thought it was debris and stuff at first and we realised that we weren't going to be able to get the hose back in. It was too hard to stay in there so we came back out again and I said to Martin "I think there's something over by the lift, let's have a quick look" This was because we'd kind of made a decision that there was nothing that we can do. We can't do anything here so we'll go back down. Then we went as close as we could and I said to Martin "yeah Martin there's someone down by the lift". So Martin said "well fucking go and get him then". So I said "yeah cheers mate". He was by the door so that's why he said so go and get him then. The closer you got the more you could make an outline that it was someone laying on their side. I grabbed their hand; I couldn't really feel anything apart from their clothes but I got their arm. There was water on the floor in there as well so it was quite slippery. I almost pulled one arm out and two hands on one arm and said to Martin "I've got him". But every time you tried to get up to kneel you were getting your head cooked. You could feel your head pounding in your helmet, with your heartbeat and well and the adrenaline but you could actually feel your head banging with the heat. I said "I can't do it so Martin you pull me and we'll both come out together". It didn't take that long but he wasn't a small bloke although he wasn't morbidly obese. He was heavier than you would like when you're blowing out your arse. I never saw his face but Martin did and he just said that he had a set of teeth on him. Martin's seen the footage afterwards and he thinks he knows who it is but he couldn't swear on it. Once I got nearer to the door I was kneeling and trying to get up because you know you're by the door so just stand up and pull him out quickly. Just take it, get him out and shut the doors and onto the stairwell. I started off taking the head and Martin the feet. I was trying to hold him under the arms but he was kind of sliding out a bit and Martin had his feet. Martin went down the stairs first and I was at the top and we did one flight of stairs. Going down the stairs we still couldn't see anything at all. After one or two flights we swapped over because he was quite heavy. I can't remember if we swapped head to toe or if we swapped position so I went round with the head going down first because there must have been that situation at one point because Martin must have dropped his feet, because he said hold on a minute because he stopped moving and Martin said "hold on a minute his foot's tangled up. It was tangled up in the railings or whatever it was on the stairwell. Somewhere between the tenth and the seventh floor other firefighters were coming down with casualties shouting. I couldn't describe any of the casualties as I could just hear people coughing. A crew came down and had an argument with Martin as they were coming past and Martin said

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that we had our own casualty but I don't know where that crew was from. We had already had one crew trying to push past us and we were trying to get this bloke down. The first one we let past but we had to move over as it was a narrow stairwell like I said. But we knew that their ones were still alive and screaming so we let them past us again. We were just wearing standard BA and I can't remember when it was my whistle went. When we got down to the seventh and I heard the message on the radio to say that the bridgeheads gone, it's not on the third floor it's now on the ground floor. So I said to Martin "brilliant they've moved the bridgehead it's on the ground floor mate, we've got to get to the ground floor. So it was on the seventh floor I said well we've only got a minute or so of air left. Then another crew came down with two girls and that's what made the decision for us because they were trying to push past and Martin said "look I'm absolutely fucked". We've got to get to the ground floor and we're not even close to the third floor. We were both pretty sure that our casualty was dead so we told the other crew, I can't remember who they were. "look we got someone here but we're going to leave them, give us your two to touch our shoulders and we'll run them out together because we've got to get out quick anyway". Also we were told on the radio to come out when they told us the bridgehead wasn't on the third floor anymore. Thankfully with comms you could hear on the radios with no real breaking up or whatever. There was a lot of congestion but you could pick out the relevant bits to you even though everyone was talking to everyone. I don't remember anything about the girls we brought out. I just remember saying "gimme your hand, put your hand on my shoulder, let's go". Everything was smoky and dark until about the second floor. Once we got past the smoke the casualties just ran out past us as self-preservation sort of yeah thanks very much we're off, which was fine. Once we got to the bridgehead me and Martin just came out and we were greeted by; I remember seeing Louisa down there again in the bridgehead but I don't remember seeing Brian. As we came over surprisingly they had our tallies. I mean we were a bit heat exhausted because me and Martin were proper hunched over just trying to get out sets off before we'd even done anything, before we'd even spoken to anyone. We knew they were going to run out of air so we kind of just ripped them off. As we sat in the corner, I think there was some stairs and a lobby with someone sat in the corner and we were given our tallies. Which I remember thinking at the time that's quite amazing consider the amount of blokes that have gone in there. We were in the bridgehead only about a minute but before we left out a different exit we passed on the message about the bloke we'd left on the seventh; we told a couple of people because there was crew going in. We said to them, go to the seventh there's someone that we've just left on the seventh that's blocking up the stairwell.

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As we were going out it was packed full of firemen waiting to go in. They were all looking at us looking at the state we were in because we were steaming. I don't know who came out with us because we had to wait when we got to the backdoor. We weren't being shielded as we came out initially. We were waiting, so there was someone in eyeshot saying wait wait wait till we get enough of you together. So there might have been six or eight of us. Someone was looking up for falling debris and they shouted right go and we all ran out. At the playpark by the tower there was one fireman sat under a slide squirting a hose. This is something we all talk about because one side of the building that was saved, he done all that by himself by continuously squirting the hose on it. That never caught fire while he was doing it and he was being protected by a couple of other firemen who when all the cladding and stuff was falling on the side they were putting it out allowing him to keep squirting the hose. We thought it was about time people were using common sense because you're never normally allowed to do stuff like that. So it was good that people were being allowed to do their job considering what was going so. So me and Martin were just sat on the floor now trying to cool down a bit. We were probably deliriously out of the game for about five minutes because it took that time to recover. Then things started coming round to you again as you recover. We saw Charlie RAWLINGS big bodybuilder lump from Euston and he was in a right state as well, looked like he was about to have a heart attack, really beetroot. So we were chatting to him and that's when Martin was looking up and saying "look at that". We were all watching a family on the eleventh floor. We were looking in awe at that fire which had gone round the building by now. When we arrived it was only on one side but now we had come out it had gone right the way round the entire building. We were watching it coming round the west side. We staying there for probably about ten minutes. For the fire five minutes we didn't do anything because we were absolutely fucked but then we started to help with casualties but I couldn't describe any of them. I remember one was in a zipped up body-bag though. I heard there were jumpers but I didn't actually see anyone jump. However, I saw the remains of a jumper a bit later on. He was put in a garage on the south side of the building where there was loads of lock up garages. We were told he was in half but I didn't see him close enough to confirm this. Apparently he had hit the railings coming down. I could only see a foot which wasn't in relation to where it should be with the body, with a lot of blood coming out the bottom. It looked like maybe the foot had come off or the legs come off or something like that. We could see his whole foot and bit of leg but it was almost like if you were to take my leg off and store it by the side of me. We probably assisted two or three people, dead ones but I couldn't describe them only that they were all dead. We were putting them where there was a massive ambulance area at the top of Station walk. So we were just helping them

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coming out as it was littered with fireman sitting down the side. The bodies were being brought out and there was a couple of body bags left by the side that were probably there for the duration we were there because they had nowhere to put them up top. I think the guvnor from Kentish town was running everything down this side. Martin then got asked to do something else and the Kentish town guvnor asked me to go back in with police with a riot shield and to relay to people inside to get together in groups and don't come out without police.

I saw Greg Yeoman who was on the pump ladder and relayed the message to him. I met Chris DORGU in there and me and him went out together under a riot shield. We didn't have to wait for long as the police were fantastic turning up with a riot shield straight away taking two out at a time. Martin had then come back after doing what he had been told to do. I haven't a clue what he'd done but he's an officer so he had probably been told to do something with authority. We then went back to our machines but had to walk bloody miles to get back. We got back to our fire engine to get our sets but it was locked. Then I remember walking down the road to the leisure centre because I remember all the public there thanking us. We even had people offering to carry our sets. There was lots of people on a high bank of grass offering drinks. Some of them were clapping and people were saying well done boys. A couple of young lads came over and said "lads do you want us to carry your breathing apparatus for you?" We told them it was alright but there was lots of offers like that, very supportive. Someone had mentioned that we could get spare cylinders round there. So we changed our sets over and met up with various other fire fighters. We pretty much just changed the cylinder and gave it a quick check as we wanted to get back in. We couldn't believe how many fire fighter were sitting around by the leisure centre, about forty firefighters. It looked like there was only about two blokes servicing all the sets. There was a lot of blokes just sat there watching it. Once we'd got our sets and walked back round the other way we did make a note of saying how come they're all just sat there? Why are they all just sat there? We've done this and we're going back in. I think they were just watching it in awe. I saw Wayne KENDALL from Feltham who I knew from years ago and he was just sitting there and I said to him "you boys just turned up?" and he said "yeah just waiting to be told to go in". I don't know what time it was but it was still dark but starting to get light. We went back round to where we'd gone in before and there was another queue of firefighters waiting to go in. I saw Graham SHAW and Agi FERNANDEZ G28. There was a lot of Paddington boys sat by the wall so I sat with them for a little while. At that point there was such a lot of firemen there so we were sat down taking to Graham SHAW who we know very well and Jim CUTHBERT. So we had a fag as there was nothing to do at that bit. We were watching a bloke from the eleventh floor with the fire

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burning all around him. We kept saying do people know there's a bloke there waving and we were told people did. There was lots of fireman going back in so they must of being told where people were. Then we watched him come out. We twice had tried to get back in so by this point me and Martin had given up trying to get back in. The first time we tried to get in we were refused by officers but I don't know who they were. Some white hats who knew we had already been in just by the state of our helmets. We denied it but they said that they knew we'd been in by the state of our helmets. So that's when we said to each other right lets go and clean our helmets. We waited for the queue to die down and then when we saw a gap about an hour later. In the meantime we were doing odd jobs like helping blokes off with their sets and things like that. It was at this point I think that they really started to use EDBA. Then we tried to get back in a second time and by this time it was daylight. This is when the man who had been waving from the 11th floor finally came out. It was incredible that he had survived. The only thing I can say about him is that I think he was Chinese but I'm not sure if this is just from seeing news articles since. There had been other families who were flicking lights on and off but he had been waving from the start. Then we got refused again, it was just like I've told you boys you're not going in again. This must have been about ten o'clock in the morning by now. They said that the crews who were first on were going to get away and I thought yeah dream on because there's no way they're going to know where anyone is. Then as soon as he said that, as the side bit was open now, we walked round and saw matey in the garage and we could then go back round the front where we started and go past the leisure centre. Then we met up with the other members of our crew but realised there was no way we could get the fire engine out. So we just sat there drinking tea just talking to people for about an hour and a half until we weren't blocked in. Then we got dismissed to go to Paddington but I've no idea who dismissed us.

We hadn't received any specific training on fires on the outside of buildings. You just see it as you find it. Generally you would squirt from outside of the building if you can reach it and the fire would go out but with Grenfall it started quite high up and it was just a wall of fire. You kind of sit at the bottom thinking how the hell are we going to put this out? You can see that it wasn't in the flats initially. It was very different to normal. It was almost like you'd have to get in the flats above it, lean out the window and squirt down. When we arrived the HP was working at its full height and he was squirting however much he could squirt above it which was effective for that bit. Like the bloke under the slide with his hose you can see from all the post pictures of it the whole V shape that's not been burned, he did that on his own with a hose. I've been to a complete burn out flat before, Taplow was one, and it has never spread to any other flat in a tower block. The Taplow one scorched above it, maybe slightly below it with the front door

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breached with scorch marks coming out the front door. Complete burn out with only the concrete structure left but it still didn't spread. I have never seen it spread to other flats. Even the one we had at Shepherds bush didn't spread. If the fire comes out a window it maybe goes into another flat above it but we're always there then so even if you've got a whole one hundred per cent burn out flat it's not really going to spread. Very rarely would it go sideways or anything like that. Generally with the stay-put policy is the flats should be built well enough that if you're in them and you can't get out then stay put and we'll get you out. Like that you're not going to get effected by the fire. At Grenfell the stay put policy changed while we were there quite quickly. I know what Brian did having spoken to him. When they went up they saw families who were told go back to your flat and we will come back in a minute because that's what was going to happen. But when we were going in we could hear people saying tell people to get out their flats. I can't recall hearing any alarms or any particular smells. I don't think the lifts were working as we weren't offered it. I think a lift may have been a hindrance anyway cause of the amount of fireman. I would have known where the dry riser was if it was our ground but if we were first on scene and it's not our ground we'd look on our MDT maps and just use common sense to look where outlets normally are. There was no way that the stairwell wouldn't have been compromised because of the size of the job. As every floor was involved so many doors were open so everywhere was compromised by smoke. I had no concerns over gas while I was there. Normally if it's just a standard flat fire the officer will get the gas supply turned off straight away. There was no real water pressure inside the building. I think Richmond's pump was out the back supplying the bloke on the jet. I wouldn't know who would get the water pressure changed. With a normal flat fire a hydrant into a fire engine supplying the dry riser would be fine. There was nothing of note with regard to the windows. I don't know where the recordings are for the tick that I used and don't know how it works. We don't have body cameras.

When we left the fire was still burning. We went back the following night and it was still burning then. We have thermal imaging cameras. When we found the body we wouldn't have seen him without thermal imaging. I don't recall where we got the camera from though. I don't know what happened to it but I would imagine that it was given to another crew. We didn't have particular training for if a fire spread in a high rise but if it did you'd just take it as you found it. There was only one stairwell as a means of escape at Grenfell and there wasn't any sprinklers. I would have thought the dry riser was charged when the first units arrived but I wouldn't know. I don't know who the incident commander was or where they were but I know there were some incident command machines there. I don't know how the incident commander was made aware that the fire had spread to the outside but I should imagine he just looked up.

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I've no knowledge of the decision making process. I will say that all the senior officers there let people do what they needed to do and it worked. I have no idea what the chain of command was and if it changed at any point. To help us tackle the fire we could have done with some more extended BA's and a way of having small personal issue small cylinder tanks that you could of given to residents. Although this didn't affect me and Martin as we didn't come across anyone in that state and the others came out with us. But for those on my watch that did find people they could have gone look we can't take you but here you go. If you could of just given them something to get them down because the stairwells were so compromised by smoke. There would have been no point in taking them down as you'd of just had a pile of dead people in the stairwell. Which I know there was quite a few in the stairwell anyway. But if there was something you could have just given them. The gung-ho American you can share my set was never going to happen because they'd just take your set and you can't do that. With the building just not having cladding that was so flammable would have helped if that is what turns out the case was. Sprinklers wouldn't have hurt but with the fire spreading it wouldn't have assisted as the sprinklers would have been on the inside of the building. It might have stopped the flats catching light but the outside of the building was still going to burn unless you had some sort of drenching system to go down the outside. One set of stairwell is always going to be a bit naughty so a second one would have helped. I saw some colleagues suffer near misses. Charlie RAWLINGS the Euston fella who's built like an ox, he was in a right state when he came out. He was gonna throw up and everything. He looked like he was about to pass out, properly beetroot red anyway. I saw another bloke, Les I think it was, from Wembley who had a deep burn to the back of his neck. He said a bit of cladding fell down between his collar and he had like a four fingers burn about the size of a fifty pence piece. It really burnt the back of his neck. I also saw different blokes with various levels of heat stroke. With myself I was done; for five minutes I was out the game. After we came out I was absolutely done. The LAS came down and took our tunics off. I don't know if it was delayed shock of coming out or seeing it or the heat. But I remember coming out and for about five minutes it was just a bit of a hazy blur. I didn't really know what was going on. I haven't required any medical help from LAS or GP. Most of the incident went beyond my experience as a fire fighter despite my long service. Doing things you don't normally do like going in with a branch not connected to anything. There's nothing else I can think of really. I exhibit my notes as MT/1.

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