

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: GRAY, PAUL

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 19 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: PAUL GRAY

Date: 22/01/2018

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

This statement relates to when I attended Grenfell tower on the 14th of June 2017, on that day I searched for and rescued casualties and I fought the fire.

I joined the London fire brigade In March 2002, I completed my firefighting training at Southwark. Between 2002 - 2009 I joined Southall Blue watch which was based at Southall fire station, during this time I completed a small green watch attachment. In July 2009 I completed my Fire and Rescue course which included Line and water courses and in 2010 I completed a urban search and rescue course, I have also completed other courses during my service such as fitness and car cutting. In July 2009 - 2015 I moved to Heston fire station. In 2015 I got promotion and moved to the red watch as a crew manager to work on the Fire and Rescue Unit (FRU), this is my first position in management rank and I am the only urban search and rescue officer on the red watch. I am generally responsible for a crew of 4 and in charge of a pump and appliance or in charge of a FRU. Heston has a watch establishment of 18, a watch manager at the top, 3 crew managers and 14 firefighters.

Prior to the night of the fire I had never visited Grenfell tower and had no knowledge at all of the tower or surrounding area and I have never been posted to the fire safety department. The FRU is a unit that carries additional equipment and is not usually called out to fires and we don't generally get first arrival firefighting calls, when it is called to a fire it is used for breaking an entry or EDBA (extended breathing equipment). The FRU is often used for heavy road traffic accidents as we carry rams and heavy duty

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cutters it is used for people stuck in/on/up things. It is also used for more specialist things like line rescue, safe working at height, working with police negotiators and for incidents on water. Heston is one of five technical rescue centres in the brigade we have additional capabilities, urban search and rescue (USAR). For a FRU to be fully operational 3 members of the FRU have to be trained in urban search and rescue, which would mean the lorry would have all of its attributes. In the station the role call board dictates who goes where in the fire station, the riding positions are dictated by rotation, attributes and skills on that shift and the tour.

On the 13th of June 2017 I was on my first night duty tour in charge of the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU), we had 5 people riding on the FRU that night. The 5 crew members on the FRU that night working alongside me were firefighter Gary HISCOCK who was driving, fire fighter Ben HOLEHOUSE, firefighter Alan HUDSON and firefighter Daniel PEGRAM. That evening there were 3 crews at the station, call sign G382 was the pump, call sign G381 was the ladder and call sign G386 was the FRU. It was a fairly busy night for the FRU that evening, we had been to a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) that night up at Heston services where there was a HGV involved and we dealt with an injured person. We also went on another RTA and a couple of other runs however we were turned away and didn't have to attend.

At approximately 00:30hrs on the 14th of June I went to bed in the station, I was asleep when I heard a call and the alarms for the pump to go out on standby, the lights went on and the bells sounded. I then heard a call for the ladder to also go out, I don't recall what time that was but it stirred me so I went to the toilet. I went back to bed but shortly after we received a call out, I went downstairs to the teleprinter. Alan HUDSON was in the watch room when I got there and he had the mobilisation sheet (TIP sheet), the TIP sheet tells you what you are going to, where it is, a map reference, what machines are attending and how many FRU's are attending. Alan told me that we were going to a 40 pump fire which was unprecedented. I had never heard of a 40 pump fire before and I had never seen that on one of our tip sheets, I have previously been on a couple of 30 pump calls. Alan knew where Grenfell tower was as he knows that area, I did not know where it was he told me that we were going to go past Hammersmith fire station. Most people put on their firefighting kit prior to getting into the lorry, boots, tunic but not BA. We mobilised at 0220 and whilst on route to the call we had the radio on in the lorry and I heard that the call for FRU's was made up to 10 attending. I could hear heavy radio traffic, there were FSG (fire survival guidance) calls on the radio, due to the heavy traffic on the radio I knew that it was a large incident. I could hear

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firefighters on the radio when we were closer to the incident as they are short range radios, frantically trying to track down other firefighters in the building.

We tried to stick to the main roads and travelled in from the direction of Hammersmith fire station, down to Shepherds bush, the roads were clear at that point. I sat up front and operated the two tone sirens that evening there was initially not a lot of traffic to get through, everyone on the FRU that night were just absorbing the information that we were receiving some of the crew were quiet and some were expressing their disbelief of the situation. We made our way into Royal crescent and the plan was to go to St Anne's road and then towards the RVP point at Whitchurch road. As we made our way to the RVP the MDT (mobile data terminal) usually gives you a target destination which is on a wide angle map, however that night we didn't have a target. I didn't worry that we didn't have a target on the MDT as Alan knew where we were going, we knew was that it was a 40 pump fire so we were going to find it. As we come into Park Crescent the road was closed due to road works, there were 3 other FRU's in front of us that had turned around and were coming up Out of the road. Control was constantly sending fire survival guidance so I didn't break in on the radio, I just told the driver to follow the other FRU Lorries. At that point I could smell the fire it smelt toxic, there were members of public out and about on the roads. I didn't see Grenfell tower until we were coming up Ladbroke grove, the tower block was burning vigorously and 50% of the tower from the middle upwards was completely engulfed in fire. I think that we went to Silchester road and we parked the truck on the right hand side just past Latimer road station just before Whitchurch road, the road was full of fire engines.

I didn't know where the command unit was as I hadn't been given that information, normally you get to the command unit before you get to the incident. I told my crew to get their EDBA sets together and I went to find the command unit, I needed information and I was not going to get that on the radio. Finding the command unit was my main priority as I knew that there would be a plan in place, we needed to get booked in and hand in our role boards so they knew who was in attendance.

When I went to find the command unit I could see the incident, I could see that there were people in the windows of the building waving torches and mobile phones. The fire was tracking sideways across the building in a V shape, the leading edge of the V was the burn line. From my experience I could see that it was a metal burning, I could see that it was metal burning as it was spitting and it had an intense first

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burn. I could see yellow behind the burning metal and orange windows fully alight, I could also see expanding foam burning on the building. I saw a footway with hoses down it and I could see the LAS, I walked down Station walk and I asked where the command unit was, I didn't want to run past the building because I could see falling burning debris from the building. I was told that command was at the bottom of Grenfell road, there were people stood around the building spotting for burning debris falling off. This was probably the most dangerous situation that I had ever been in and I knew that there was going to be a high loss of life.

As I was making my way to the command unit the crowds were dense in places and people had their cameras out, some of them were screaming and crying. There was a LAS area with a barrier where people were being triaged; I tried not to look in that area too much as I knew there was nothing I could do at that point. The riot police were there and there were cordons in place, the tower was well alight and it still had the metallic burn. Bits of the building were breaking away, insulation was falling and floating away, windows were falling out, expanding foam blocks were alight and they looked like charred wood floating off the building. Small embers, cladding panels and cladding material were also coming off the building exposing the insulation underneath.

I knew how severe the situation was, I could see people in the building. I knew that I needed to get the crew onto the system and get booked in, this was so that people knew we were on scene. I knew that there would be a plan in place for us but on arrival I did not know what we would be doing. As I was running along there was man who had fallen or jumped from the building and was being pulled out of the way, they were asking for a IEC pack (immediate emergency first aid) I didn't have my IEC with me as it was on the FRU. I saw a guy that I knew Matt Gregory who is the watch manager at Kentish town, he pointed me in the direction of the command unit behind a lorry. I put my visor down and made a mad dash of about 30 or 40ft in the danger area to the command centre, I had to run due to the amount of debris that was coming down and burning metal falling down.

The first command unit that I got to people were ignoring my booking in board, I realised that I was at the fire survival guidance command unit and not the booking in one. I then went to the window of the booking in unit, the booking in officer took my board and told me to get my crew with our sets and all of our cylinders and go to BA main control holding unit which was in front of Kensington leisure centre.

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Just behind me at the command unit was Paul MARKS who was the firefighter in charge of our pump G382, I had missed him on the way in. He took me a different route back to the truck than what I came in which was much better, we went up Grenfell Road, Tredgold Street, Whitchurch road and then into Bramley road to where the truck was parked.

When I got back to the truck I did something that I wouldn't normally do and I took all of my ID and phone out of my pockets and put it into the truck under the seat, Gary did the same thing as me and left his ID behind. I thought to myself that for the first time ever I didn't know about this one as it looked iffy, I wasn't sure what was going to happen as the building was 75% completely alight by that point. I briefed my crew that we were going to the holding area just off sector one and that we would be committed as soon as possible for EDBA, I asked them to drink plenty of water and to take their thermal image cameras and cylinders with them. Everyone knew what was going on so we all put our EDBA equipment on and we took our spare cylinders on frames with us. Having seen the incident and the amount of people in the windows I knew that unless we were fast we were going to lose many more lives. I knew that because of the ferociousness of the fire if we had followed policy we would have needed 120 jets, 12 jets per floor, 1 per flat/compartment plus 1 back up per flat/compartment over the 10 or so floors that were fully alight. I knew that the riser was going to give us 4 jets at the maximum. There was nowhere to put the ariel ladder because of the falling debris, the only option was to get jets up the stair well and the maximum would have been 10 jets up the stairs.

We walked down to the holding area at Kensington leisure centre on Grenfell road, it was full of fire crews. When we got to the BA (breathing apparatus) holding area, we could see the back drop of the tower and could see the east, south and west at that point. I could see that the fire was still tracking around the building and I was trying not to dwell on the people that I could see in the building, I could see a body under the sheet in the bin area. I knew that I needed to drink as much water as possible, we sat down as I knew that we needed all of our energy. I could see that they were having issues with the ALP and I believe that they had yellow hose reel tied to the ALP in sector 4, I don't know what the issue was but they were trying to stop the fire around the 10th or 11th floor. There was another pump in sector 1 at that time which was supplying water to the dry riser in the building, the supply hose for the dry riser had been compromised from falling debris which had caused the hose lines to rupture. The hose was spraying water everywhere and it was like a heavy duty garden spray. I believe that the water was left on as we had

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crews committed on many floors that were relying on that water coming through at that point even though it would have been at a reduced pressure.

We were told that all EDBA wearers would be going in first, the other Heston crews only had standard BA equipment. Our governor Helen CHRISTMAS told us to stick together and we went straight off, it felt like minutes but could have been 15-20 minutes later. I knew that we were going into a building that was 100% alight from the 12th floor, 90% alight from the 11th floor, 70% alight from the floor and 40% alight from the 9th floor and as it went down the building it was less alight. This was the information that I took in and what I could see whilst we were waiting to go in.

We went straight into the south side of the tower which was sector 1 for us, west was sector 2, north was sector 3 and east was sector 4. I could see that there was an ALP (Ariel appliance) pitched on the grass in sector 4 at that time and people were trying to fight the fire from that ALP. There was also a turntable ladder in the undercroft area which was a covered area, the turn table ladder was housed and put under there cover due to the amount of debris falling from the building. If it had been left where it was on the hard standing it would have been on fire and burnt due to the debris.

We had to make a dash across the south west of the building, on the way in the riot team had not yet assembled but they were at the entrance to the building with shields. There didn't seem as much debris coming from the sector 2 area at that time, sector 3 and sector 4 seemed more on fire and the fire was all the way down the corner. We couldn't use the main access in sector 1 at that time due to falling debris so we entered the building through sector 2 playground area, we got into the building through tall windows which were floor to ceiling that had been smashed out for access points. The windows were not quite wide enough for our double cylinder EDBA equipment so we had to shoulder barge each other through the gap and we would then turn around and would then pull the next member of crew through the window. We were shielded by riot shields we could hear the debris falling and hitting the police shields when we were going in, there were people shouting when large parts were coming down. When we got through the window there was an officer there and I snapped at him asking him if there was any chance of getting the windows removed because we couldn't fit through, I don't know who the officer was but he was wearing a white helmet. The windows were gone by the time that we came back out.

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When we went into the main entrance the lobby on the ground floor there was a constant stream of crews shouting casualties and bringing them down, there was a constant flow of casualties coming out. The lobby was ankle deep in water and there was a crude drawing plan of the building on the wall but this seemed sketchy, it didn't represent exactly what the building looked like and it said that there were 6 or 8 flats per floor. I asked one of the officers in the lobby if a floor plan walk had been completed on the lower floors but I was told that it was not possible to do this due to the fire being right down to the second. There was lots of hose and firefighting equipment in the lobby area. As we went into the tower I did not hear any alarms sounding, the area was very busy with firefighters some didn't have any BA on and were chaperoning people out of the building under the riot shields because the main entrance was so compromised.

We started up our BA sets from the lobby area on the ground floor, we took our breaking in equipment with us. The equipment that we had on at that time was EDBA which weighs around 23kg and we were in full firefighting kit which weighs around 5 kg at a guess. Breathing under EDBA is restricted as is your hearing and you have touch only senses, the enforcer that we were carrying is also 10kg in weight. In training you are taught slow time in EDBA, it is supposed to be half pace and for planned work.

We were using communication channel 1 on my personal radio and we were using communication channel 3 in this instance for BA sets. We started a briefing and there were a number of crews being briefed by the committing officer but I don't know the name of the person who briefed us, Station manager Pat Goldbourne was also in the area at the time. We were told to go to the 9th floor to search and rescue that floor, I was told that no one had been to that floor previously but I didn't know if that was true. We were told that they were aware of the bodies on the 8th and 10th floor stairwells and that they had been assessed and we should move on past them. We didn't have any water and to my knowledge we were told that the nearest jet/hose was on the 8th floor. We were told that there were crews on other floors trying to hold a firefighting corridor open and trying to control the fire so we could get as many firefighters in as we could. We had to change to channel 3 for BA as we were trying to be on multiple channels, there was a lot of radio traffic. We put our BA face masks on and completed a communications check with Alpha control which checked our tallies on the board, this gives them information on us, monitors our air, how much we are breathing and lots of other information. We were approximately 6ft apart when we did the communications check so it worked. We were told that there was fire survival

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guidance on the 10th floor at flat 70, 71 and 72. I repeated back the information and we committed to the tower under air as a crew of 5, we took 2 enforcers in with us.

We went from the mezzanine level and started to go up the stairs, I believe that they were approximately 1m in width and a single person filled the width of the stairwell. We started to go up the tower to the 9th floor to search for people there were burst hoses on upper floors. There was water cascading down the stairs on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor stair well, we were walking through a torrent of water. It was hard work as we were carrying enforcers and the EDBA equipment which was heavy due to having two cylinders, we were also saturated in water.

The smoke started on the 3rd or 4th floor and on every floor it was increasing as we climbed up the stairs, it was humid and with the humidity I couldn't see so I had to keep wiping my mask. There were some lights on the stair well however some didn't work, there were so many crews in and out of the stairwells I could see that when the doors to the stairwell were opened by firefighters the smoke would come out of the lobby's and go up the stairs. The lights were covering the floor numbers so I didn't know what floor we were on, there were numbers on the walls from where fire fighters using waterproof markers had previously tried to number the floors. The stairs were in half landings and had 2 flights of stairs per floor so we started to count the floors as a team as we went up.

By the time that we got to the 6th or 7th floor we could only see our feet as the smoke was that thick. We didn't come across any other Crews on our way up, by about the 7th or 8th floor we were losing our vision and by the time we got to the 9th nearly all of our vision had gone. In our initial briefing we were told that there were bodies on the stairwell and that the command unit was aware of them and that they had already been assessed. On about the 8th or 9th floor there was a large African female body that had a lots of hoses around her, we had to bypass over the top of the body due to the hose. Our immediate priority was the living however it was difficult to move on as we would normally recover bodies. I was aware that due to the body being large crews has previously tried to move the body but they had run out of air.

We went past the person on the stairwell and went to the 9th floor and confirmed with my crew what we were about to do. When we were in the holding area I was aware that fire fighters had been coming down

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and putting their masks on casualties, however I told my crew to keep their masks on and that I didn't want any heroics. I knew they would not be able to rescue anyone if they couldn't breathe and were likely to become casualties themselves, their best option was to keep their masks on and get the casualties down the stairs.

I knew that we didn't have a jet as we got to the 9th floor, I knew that we were breaking procedure as we didn't have jets or water with us on a fire floor but this was a calculated risk to get in and find as many people as soon as possible. I knew that if we had stuck to policy and procedure we would have just watched the building burn and not saved anybody. I knew that we could have said that we were not going into fire floors without a jet, however everything we did that night had a dynamic risk assessment. I couldn't hear anything on my radio at that point, all I could hear was feedback and buzzing. The door to the 9th floor between the stairs and lobby was closed, the door pulled towards us in the stairwell and we couldn't see across the lobby as visibility was about 2ft. I decided to do a left hand search as we always pick a direction to search, I spoke loudly and clearly to the crew that this was the plan and the message was passed down the line. I was constantly narrating what I was doing to the crew. We had to stay connected so this meant that it was a slow process, we started on the far left flat on the floor and did the 3 flats on the left of the building working in an H configuration shape.

We went to the left of the stairwell I was carrying the enforcer and I checked the first flat door with a thermal image camera, it was warm but I don't remember the heat reading and I didn't see anyone on the camera in the flat. I used the enforcer to break into the door, the door opened inwards and we went in and searched. The smoke in the flat was not as thick as the lobby and we could just make out external lights, it was a tiny flat visibility was about 6ft. We burst and searched the flat which was derelict, there was no furniture, no kitchen and no one in it so it was a quick search. I could hear the Comms buzzing in my ear but it was broken and the microphone was bad.

We went to the 2nd door which again I forced entry to the door and it was similar to the 1st flat so we searched and came out there was no one in the flat, the details in that flat are hazy in my memory. One of my crew Dan PEGRAM started to hit the 3d door and hit it 4 or 5 times but the door did not open, I told him to carry on and I went to flat 4 on the other side of the H with one of my crew as we needed to get a move on. We couldn't see across the lobby and had to use our torches and thermal image cameras, we

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went to the other side of the building and to the 4th flat in the H shape. Continuing with our left hand search the 4th door didn't open at first with the enforcer, after a couple of hits we managed to get into the flat. When we got into the flat I glanced out of the window to try and get a mental picture of where we were as I didn't know which way we were facing. When I looked out I could see sector 2 and the playground, I knew that I had seen people at a window overlooking sector 2 in this area but I didn't know what floor.

As we were searching the 4th flat I heard our call sign G386 being called on the radio by the same voice of the man who committed us to the building. He was giving me a priority message to go to the 11th floor, I could not hear the rest of the message. I asked the flat number and what we were going to but I didn't get any information I just managed to confirm that we needed to go to the 11th floor and he said yes priority 11th floor, I couldn't hear anything else. I didn't know why we were being sent to the 11th floor, all I could hear was buzzing in my ear. The crew were trying to get into the other 3 flats that we had not searched but we had to abandon that floor and go to the 11th as directed, flat 4 only got partially searched.

As we went from the to the 9th and 10th floor I continued to try to get information as to why we were going to the 11th but the radio cut out at every point where there could have been crucial information. I noticed as we went up there was a massive change in the heat and smoke colour on the half landing, there was soot and carbon depositing on my face mask which was building up and I was wiping carbon deposits off my face mask. On the half landing between the 10th and 11th floor there was a bariatric person dead on the landing facing the railings which we tripped on, it was clear that the body had been there for a long time as there was hose on top of the body. In the stairwell on the 11th floor there was 1ft visibility with a torch, we could barely see the stairwell light it was just a dim glow through the smoke. The heat was a lot more than the floors below, I still couldn't contact control and get through on the radio. When we got to the 11th floor I knew that pretty much every flat was on fire, I knew this because when I put my thermal image camera really close to my face the screen was all white. Normally you can make out walls, floors and ceilings as there is difference in colour with black and white, you can also normally see red and yellow if there are hotter areas but that night the whole screen was white. I wasn't sure why I could only see white and couldn't even make out walls, I was unsure if it was too hot or my thermal image camera was faulty. I asked Gary HISCOCK to check his thermal image camera and he couldn't see anything at all through his either.

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We went to the left hand side again to the first floor on the H in that floor, the door to the flat was pickled and bubbled which is a sign of heat, I could see that there was charring coming through the letter box. I knelt down and held my hand to the door and the heat came through my glove, everything around us was well alight I decided we were not going through that door. I went onto the next door and my crew were at the third door which was about 7ft away from me, the crew said to me Paul it's getting really hot in here. I stood up and I am not too sure why the heat had changed, but as I stood up to talk to the crew I felt instant heat through my flash hood onto the back of my neck which is not normal. In training you would pulse spray water to keep the temperature down to stop flashovers but we didn't have any water. If we had breached one of the compartments we could have set the whole floor off on fire. I made a decision that this was a dangerous place to be, I knew that if it went wrong it was going to kill me and my crew, I felt a huge sense of responsibility. I knew that we shouldn't be there anymore and that we couldn't control the fire, it was too hot and I knew that we had to get off that floor. We didn't have enough information as to why we were even on the 11th floor so I ordered abandonment of the floor, I bundled the crew out of the lobby into the stairs and made sure that I was the last one out. I tried telling the entry control that we had abandoned the 11th floor and that we were going to the 10th floor and to send a crew with a jet to make entry to whichever flat it was. I am not sure if this message got through and I don't know if anyone had already been to the 10th.

I ordered the crew to the 10th floor, I got on the radio as I knew that there were people on the 10th floor in flats 70, 71 and 72 from the earlier briefing and I informed control we were going to the 10th to search the three flats, I didn't know if anyone could hear me or if they got the message. I knew from the heat that a good portion of the building was on fire as the heat was rising. We went to the 10th floor and entered as a train of people I was at the back of the train, the smoke on the 10th floor was thicker than the 9th but not as thick as the 11th. As we went to cross the landing I heard a crew member say that we had got casualties, I don't know if the casualties came out of a flat or how the crew came across them. I acknowledged that they had casualties and retreated back to the stairwell and made a line, I asked how many casualties and I was told 4. I told them that we were splitting the crew and that 3 of the crew should take 4 casualties down the stairs and the other crew member should stay with me as we had the other 3 flats to search, one of the crew said that we couldn't split up.

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The first casualty that got to me was male around 5'8" tall, medium build, fit and able and he had a towel over his face when he got to me. As soon as he got to the stairwell he bolted and went straight down the stairs I couldn't stop him. When the second casualty got to me she was an older lady and the third casualty was also an older lady so I realised we would all have to go down with the casualties to get them down alive, all of the casualties had towels over their faces. I walked backwards in front of the older lady in case she collapsed holding her leading the train of people, it was fairly slow moving step by step as you can't force people down the stairs as the stairs were laced with hose, bodies and a cat. We used our torches to assist us getting down the stairs, I was talking to the older lady and encouraging her down she didn't talk back to me but was walking herself. I would describe the older lady as 5'6" wearing dark clothing but other than that I wouldn't recognise her again. I had a warning beep on my air pressure at that point telling me that I had 184bar left which meant that I was half way through my air. On the way down I tried telling the control room over the radio that we were coming down and that we hadn't searched the 11th floor, when we got to the 3d floor the smoke was acceptable. We got to the mezzanine level and there were fire fighters there who took the casualties from us.

I said to the crew that we were going back to the 10th floor, I think that I had about 130bar approximately 8 or 10 minutes of air remaining. I looked around and everyone looked really hot and tired, I realised that realistically this could have caused more problems as it was not enough air to do what was needed if we came across more casualties. We shut our EDBA sets down and went out, we passed on all of our information to the committing officer. I told him that we didn't do the 11th floor and told them what we did on the 9th and 10th floor. We left the building the same way that we came in through the windows that had been smashed out. I heard a firefighter remark on the way out as to whether or not anyone had got to the mother and baby on the 11th, it was only in passing and I cannot confirm if this is why we were re tasked to the 11th or if it was in-fact true and not confused information. I did not mention a word of this to the crew as I did not want them to dwell on it at all. I also did not mention it to them until after our MET police interviews as it is something that has weighed heavy on my mind.

We went to the holding area and our EDBA sets got stripped and taken away from us, the protective equipment group took the batteries out of the EDBA but we kept the chassis of the EDBA sets. I think that we were probably cooling down and drying out for about 2 hours but that felt shorter. After a period of cooling down time we serviced our sets with new batteries, cylinders and covers putting them back

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together, I checked that the crew were ok and they were all ok to go back in. We were in the BA holding area when I had a professional disagreement with an officer who told me that they were taking parts off our sets and that he had 30 EDBA wearers ready to go in and that we were not going back in. I told him that wasn't going to happen and that my crew were rested and we that they needed all EDBA wearers available, we then went back to the holding area and ended up in the back of the queue waiting to go in. I do not know the name of the officer that I had the disagreement with.

By this point things seemed more ordered, it was a lot later on in the job and it was daylight. I knew that there were still people still alive in there, it was frustrating just being stood around waiting to be sent in. When we were stood in sector I saw that there was a jet which was under a slide trying to stop the fire spread on the upper floors 9th and 10th floor. There was a ground monitor, a ground based giant hose in sector 3 checking any fire spread that was there trying to limit it and there was an Ariel platform from Surrey fire brigade up and running in Sector 4. There was also a ground monitor in sector 1 on the mezzanine foot way above road height. Whilst we were waiting to go in I hatched a plan, the jet that was in sector 2 needed to be higher and we couldn't get an ALP into that area because of access. We decided to lay out a dry jet on Grenfell walk between flats 201- 211, I spoke to a station manager who was stood on the ground and he agreed to us laying out the hose, I don't know the managers name. There were not any deliveries spare because Richmond's machine was supplying the ground monitor in sector 2, the jet in sector 3 and one other. I thought that the upper floors had balconies and we thought that we could hit the flats on the corner of sector 1 and sector 2 and be under cover from debris. We pulled the line up along the balcony and set up the jet ready to go, they shared the delivery of the water off a jet in sector 2. We laid out the jet and got parts from an appliance on Bramley road, we took 45mm and 70mm hose from the appliance.

Just as we finished doing this an Asian man was brought out of the building, I believe that he was the last person to be brought out alive from the building. We then put our EDBA kit back on and there was a call for all EDBA wearers to go to the holding area in the bottom of the tower. We went back into the building to help with the firefighting, to get into the building we went in pairs under shields to cover us from falling debris. We were up to our shins in water in the lobby, there was a light weight pump in there trying to put water up into the tower as we were struggling with water. We were held in the base of the tower and the petrol light weight pump was filling the area with fumes. From there we were moved the

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4th floor where the bridgehead was now located, we sat in the 3rd flat on the 4th floor which was entry control in to the tower and where you receive your briefing to enter the tower.

We were briefed to go to the 13th floor and fire fight, a crew had already been up to the 13th and had laid the jet out but hadn't done anything. We went up the 13th floor through the cascade of water and we were soaked, it was like there was a water fall down the stairs. The intense heat was there but not the smoke so we could see the stairwells, it was even hotter than when we had been on the 11th before but communication was easier as we could see each other. The doors to all of the flats had gone and the frames had been largely burnt away, all of the internal stud walls had burnt down and gone the fire had nearly burnt all of its fuel. It was just the concrete building that was dividing up the flats, everything was vented due to the windows no longer being in the building. I can only describe it as feeling like a waist deep BBQ area with pockets of fire in every flat, this is the only way I can describe the heat. We would see right through the building all the way across the landing to the outside of the building, the fire doors were still intact and the service doors had charring.

We tried to put the fires out but there was no pressure on the 13th so no water came out, we went down to the 12th floor and tested the jet and it worked, it was plumbed in from the 11th floor. The pressure was still so bad I managed to choke the hose under my arm and took it up to the 13th floor, the jet only had a 15ft throw which is nothing. We took it in turns in front of the doorway because of the heat on the floor, we did a one minute turn around in the lobby trying to get water into the lobby and flats just to try and cool it down. I knew that there was still gas burning on this floor as it kept reigniting when we put water onto the area that was burning, it was burning in the corners where the kitchens would have been so we didn't put any more water into that area and left it until the gas was isolated. When we finished our minute on the hose we went to the into the stair well and laid down to try and cool down, laying down was the best place to cool down. I said to Gary that we should go up to the 14th floor to check it for the next crew. The 14th floor was identical to the 13th floor with no walls or doors just concrete separating the flats and pockets of fire on the floor. At that point there was another body within the stairwell of the 14th floor, the body had a green jacket on its head and it looked like a child as it was that kind of size.

What I noticed on the 13th floor was that the ceilings of the floor were bowing and there was a deflection on those floors, it was alarming to see the ceilings bowing and I was concerned for it structurally at that

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point for the first time. The reinforcing bars were popping through the concrete and you could see it, I was aware from my training that at 600 degrees steel work loses 2/3rds of its strength and that is an early sign of collapse. When we had been outside previously I had heard a really intense banging and I believe that it was the building shaking and popping, I had also heard the banging on the 4th floor when we were committed the second time, I asked everyone if they felt it and they said that they did.

We continued fighting the fire for as long as we could until we were physically exhausted and couldn't do any more, we overheated before our EDBA expired. There was no body saveable on that floor or in that building at that time. We were basically falling down the stairs when we finished, our legs were gone and we were all exhausted. When we came down the tower we went to flat 1 on the 4th floor to debrief I passed the information onto Daniel ALLIE who is a station manager, I told him what we had done and we handed over our thermal image cameras for other crews to use. I believe that the thermal image cameras were later downloaded but I don't know who did this or when it was done.

My crew and I then went to Kensington sports centre to cool off, we drank lots of water and had some food. Blue watch then took over from us and we were stood down, we were sent by the command unit to Paddington fire station where we made notes and were offered counselling. We came back to Heston station at 18:30 that evening, we took our own EDBA sets back with us. We were told by DAC Sabrina COHEN-HATTON that we could have excused attendance that evening if we wanted so we didn't have to come into work, I chose not to take the evening off as I wanted to be with everyone. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] After that I returned to the station as did all of my crew, coming back on duty was fine for me and I needed to absorb it and talk to my crew about what had happened. I think that the best way to deal with it is to talk about it and talk it through.

I returned to Grenfell tower on the 17th and 18th of June 2017 to assist the police DVI team with urban search and rescue, they had asked for USAR trained officers. I was on day 6 and 7 in the middle of my rest days so I could be recalled to duty, from the 13th floor upwards it was deemed unsafe on the corner column. This column was monitored with lasers and on the 2nd day the movement of the building was deemed acceptable, they had monitors on each floor with alarms inside in case there was any movement in the building. I went into the tower that day with the DVI teams working on alternate floors. There was

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a maximum of 5 people per floor spread out and I worked on the 17th floor to assist with recovering bodies. I also revisited the floors that I had previously worked on just for my own piece of mind.

I revisited the tower on the 7th of November after all the bodies and property had been removed and again I was working with the DVI teams making sure that bags didn't split and that the bags were put into the correct container for removal. It was surreal going back in and seeing the empty rooms, it seemed so easy to move around with nothing in there, when you can't see the flats seemed four times the size of what they actually were.

The building didn't perform as anyone had expected it to perform, ordinarily we would only have one floor to deal with or the flat above and below the fire and that the building would have contained the fire. This is my first experience of when compartmentalisation has failed in a high rise block of flats, this fire was unlike any fire I have ever seen. I have questioned myself since the incident why I abandoned the 9th and 11th floor and did not finish the search and went to the 10th floor, I was just following instructions from the command unit.

During making my statement to police I have provided the following exhibits:

PJG/1- Copy of notes made on return to Paddington fire station

PJG/2 — Map marked and showing route into Grenfell tower

PJG/3 — Map with fire brigade sectors marked on it

PJG/4 — Detailed map of local area.

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