

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CLARK, PETER

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 3 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: P CLARK

Date: 19/04/2018

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

This is my statement regarding my involvement in a large fire at Grenfell Tower, W11 on the 14th June 2017.

In this statement I will mention the following people, some of whom I know by name and others I will try to describe. My colleagues on the night; Firefighters (FF) Billy BOULTON, Enrico BELTRAMI, and Dillish DIVANI. Also (3)three other Firefighters (FF) from other stations; one being Watch Manager (WM) Alex CARDY who is now based at Willesden Fire Station, another being his recruit who I had not met before and do not know the name of and lastly Watch Manager (WM) Shaun COLTRESS. I will make specific mention of one casualty I aided out of the tower. I will describe him as a child of approximately seven (4) four to (6) six years in age, he was light skinned, but not Caucasian, possibly an Arabic background. He had black hair and had a towel or something similar over his face. I will refer to him as 'the child' I will also mention a female member of public I spoke with on the night who I describe as a black female approximately late teens early twenties, she was on a bicycle and was wearing glasses. I will refer to her as the woman on the bike.'

I am watch manager based at Wembley Fire Station within Red Watch. I have been a firefighter since January 1998 and have worked previously at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue prior to moving to the London Fire Brigade and being stationed at Southall, Paddington, Chiswick and now Wembley.

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I have attended previous S72D familiarisation visits at properties. S72D visits take place at properties that are deemed high risk due, often due to structure. I never attended Grenfell Tower on a S72D visit as it is not local to my station. I am not aware of any pre-prepared firefighting plan in place for Grenfell Tower. I have previously attending a 20 pump tower block fire in Shepherds Bush previously to this. We have periodic training on a number of things, one of which is high rise fires. I could not say when I last did this prior to the fire on the 14th June 2017 however my training records will show when this was.

On the 14th June 2017 I was working our first night shift having started at 2000 hours on the 13th June 2017. At approximately 0055 hours on the 14th June I was in bed at the station when one of my firefighters Dan BURTON knocked on my door [REDACTED] so he had to go home. About 20-25 minutes later we received the call to mobilise. I went down the pole and went into the watch room where the calls are received and was informed by Dillish that we had a (25) twenty five pump fire. I assumed at first this would be the usual warehouse fire that we would be at for the rest of the night. Then the address was read out and I wasn't familiar with the address. We all got on the truck; Myself, FF DIVANI, FF BELTAMI, and FF BOULTON, who was driving. The location noted for the fire had no road name and just said Grenfell Tower and the estate. I was trying to ascertain which road to head to. Having a rough idea of the location we turned right out of Wembley Fire Station and made our way to Ladbroke Grove via Harrow Road. Enroute tried to contact control to obtain a road but the radio channel was very busy and the severity of the fire was very apparent. As we turned onto Ladbroke Grove I saw the tower and I noted that it looked like a roman candle. We eventually guided onto Bomore Road, where we parked, The time between leaving Wembley Fire Station to parking would not have been much more than (5) five minutes. My crew and I then exited the engine and made our way to the command unit CU6, where I handed over the roll board for my crew and awaited instruction.

We were told by the watch manager 'just get down there'. We made our way to the tower and saw it properly for the first time and my first thought was it was some form of terrorist attack and someone had flown a plane into the building. You couldn't really see what had happened other than this developing fire.

There were a group of Firefighters grouped underneath a walkway by the Paddington Pump Ladder, in breathing apparatus (BA) and I could see there were two other watch managers' further in the distance. I could see I would not be required to be part of the incident command structure and told my crew to go back and get their BA and also mine. We got our BA and stood waiting for further instruction. Someone

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exited the tower and said that as much 'breaking in gear and hose as possible' was required. So we all starburst to engines and took all equipment we could. I carried over two lengths of hose and dumped them with the rest at the equipment dump.

We were then told to get a 13.5 Ladder, which we did and placed it under the walkway. It was at this point I found I was stood with FF BELTRAMI, WM CARDY and a recruit of WM CARDY. The recruit of WM CARDY asked "Is it going to collapse?". We didn't know the answer. Whilst stood here I saw firefighters exiting the building carrying a west Indian looking female she was either unconscious or dead.

I, WM CARDY and FF BELTRAMI then entered the ground floor lobby, dodging falling debris. The debris at this point was approximately 1 metre in size and metal that was still alight. We arrived in the lobby area and made our way up to the Mezzanine Level. We called up to the bridgehead and made our way there. It was situated at this point on the third floor. WM Brian O'KEEFE from Red Watch at Kensington was running the bridgehead and we were given a brief to make our way up to the ninth floor and locate a 45ml hose. Once found we were to complete a search and rescue and do what we could.

We began to make our way up the stairs, for the first few floors the stairwell was completely clear, though there were no numbers on the stairs so we had to count floors until we reached the ninth. We opened the ninth floor lobby door and instantly black smoke and heat punched out into the stairwell. I had the Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) and I handed it to WM CARDY and told him 'Don't take your fucking eyes off me' as I entered in search of the hose, the lobby visibility was poor to none as it was full of thick black smoke, the heat was too hot to stand and I crawled in on my stomach, and after what seemed like a long time, but probably wasn't, I located the hose and found that it was tangled up in itself. From our briefing I knew the rough location within the lobby of the rising outlet, so located it and then traced back on the hose till I found the branch. Then facing the lobby door we began to search the floor for flat doors. Crawling, we came across a door and I sprayed the back of the door. FF BELTRAMI with the enforcer then stood up to strike the door but soon dropped back down due to the heat. He gave the door three or four solid hits but they just bounced off. It seemed to me that someone would have been in the flat.

It was at this point I heard a radio message on my personal handheld radio that was saying to evacuate the tower and the bridgehead was moved to the ground floor. We began to evacuate and exited out onto the stairwell. Opening the Lobby door and stepping out, the thick black smoke filled the stairwell. Suddenly

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'The child' was there and he grabbed hold of my left leg. I picked him up in my left arm and carried him down with my right arm holding the stair rail due to the visibility being so low. My colleagues came across a woman and another young girl. I believed them to be a family as I could hear the boy calling back to his mother. I continued down the stairs in front of my colleagues carrying the child and came across what I thought felt like hose on the stairwell. I had to kick this out of the way to stop it tripping me. As I reached the lower stairs visibility improved and I eventually reached the ground floor and handed over the child to another firefighter and that was the last I saw of him. I made my way back up to the top of the stairs to the mezzanine level and I then waited there till my colleagues came down with their casualties. Once they were down WM CARDY said to me "did you feel the bodies on the way down?" It was at this point I realised that what I thought was hose may have been deceased casualties.

We joined an orderly line to get out of the tower. Police Officers with riot shields were running back and forth from the tower to a safe area and we were escorted out and once out I made my way to a grassy area and took my set off. From where I was sat I could see people at the windows and to my right I could see a casualty triage area. There was a bodies to the side covered in sheet with nowhere for them to go.

I located an Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) set and checked it and put it on. The others went back to the tower and due to the odd number I remained outside. It was about dawn and just starting to get light when Group Manager Keeley FOSTER approached me and asked if I had a job. I was tasked along with WM Shaun COLTRESS to aid the relief effort by mapping out the locations of all the appliances; logging trucks and working out how they were going to get out. I then walked around the tower locating the trucks and I began trying to contact all officers in charge of the vehicles and get them to go to the BA control area. Whilst walking round I came across 'the woman on the bike' who told me she had a friend who was in the tower. I directed her to the command unit. I did write a list of the engines whereabouts but I do not know where that list is now.

I was then liaising with Deputy Assistant Commisiner Andy ROE who held a briefing at the BA control hub. I was eventually working out of the BA main control until left the incident at approximately 1200 on 15th June 2017. We initially made our way to Paddington and debriefed and made initial notes before heading back to Wembley Fire Station, arriving there at 1730 hours. I then rested until start the night shift again later that day at 2000 hours.

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My knowledge on the Command Hierachy for this incident is that initially it was run by the WM from North Kensington Fire Station and when it reached six pumps it was taken on by the station manager before working its way up the ranks as the number of pumps grew.

I suffered no injuries however a colleague of mine; Les TUCKER suffered burns on the back of his neck from falling debris. I am also aware that ongoing support is available to me if I feel I require it.

I do not remember hearing a fire alarm however I admit things like that become a white noise in the circumstances. I had no issues with my communication equipment whilst in the tower. In terms of things that could have hindered the rescue operation I note that the Firefighters lift was not working so all crews had to use the stairs to climb the tower.

I have the following exhibits;

PJC/1 - My initial notes made on the 14th June 2017 at Paddington Fire Station

PJC/2 - Birds Eye map of Grenfell Tower and the surrounding area in which I have marked the resting area I went after leaving the tower with the word 'resting area' and also I have marked with a star by Grenfell walk on the Far left of the page the place I could see the deceased casualty covered with a sheet.

PJC/3 - A picture of all four sides of the tower where I have marked on the Northside of the tower how I could see the fire spread.

PJC/4 - An aerial map of the surrounding area in which I have marked the positions of where we parked, the command units CU6 and CU7, The position of BA main control and the entry point.

PJC/5 - A floor plan of the ninth floor where I have noted the point of entry. The flat door we attempted to enter and the position of the hose.

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