

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: WIGLEY, PHILIP

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 13 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: P WIGLEY

Date: 10/11/2017

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

I am making this statement in relation to being deployed to the Fire at GRENFELL TOWER on 14th June 2017.

The people I am going to mention directly in this statement are the red Watch Manager Steve COLLINS Fire Fighter Dean ROBERTS and Fire Fighter Martin GILLAM. I will also refer to my colleagues from Red Watch who were deployed to work on the Fire Rescue Unit (FRU).

I have been a Fire Fighter for twenty-three years and I have been based at Paddington Fire Station for the past eleven years. On the night of the 13th June 2017 I was on duty at Paddington Fire Station. At every station you will have a Watch Manager (WM) and a Crew Manager (CM) some Crew Managers have a plus next to their name which means that they can go to other stations and be in charge. I am a CM+ which means that if a WM is off duty on a night or day shift then I can go to that station and be the WM for that duty. At my own station the WM is in charge of the team and the CM is in charge of an appliance and the crew for that appliance.

Shift starts at 2000hrs on 13th June 2017 and I was detailed to be in charge of Fire Rescue unit (FRU).

The initial part of the night shift was pretty uneventful.

Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) contains certain equipment that other appliance doesn't have. It has line access equipment, heavier duty cutting equipment and other bits and pieces. Some rescue units have a capability to do Urban Search and rescue or open water rescue. At Paddington we don't have that additional capability we are for want of a better description a basic Fire Rescue Unit with Line rescue capability. A normal call out would be a car crash, railway incidents or if someone is threatening to throw themselves

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off a roof we will go and put in safe systems of working for our staff. In addition there are pre-determined attendance calls which is a call for eight appliance and above. So naturally on a bigger call or if anyone calls you out to an incident because you have that specialist equipment. We also have Extendable Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA), so if you have an incident that is arduous and is going to go a bit longer. Most people in an established watch would have been on the courses to go and work on that appliance. Some people who come to the service may need to go on the courses. I have been on all the relevant courses for working on a FRU.

I remember that I was in bed when the lights go on and there are calls for other appliances go out. The Pump and the TL got the call to go out first, I woke up to that and then in less than a minute, the Pump Ladder and then the FRU got the call. I can't remember the time and I did not take a note of that time. I know that it is on record the time that we got the call to be deployed. The time did not mean anything to me at that time.

Generally when lots of machines are going out in quick succession then it means there is either something that is close by or something big going on.

On hearing the call sign A216 I went and got geared up and made my way onto the appliance, I normally get the driver to go to the watch room and get the call slip. I normally look at the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) in the appliance to see what the call is all about so that I can brief the other Fire Fighters on the appliance, by this time the driver has found out about the call and I check to make sure that they know where to go.

On the MDT it came up the details of the call, it also shows if there are any risks at the call. Initially there was nothing specific for the FRU. This was not an issue at the time as two appliance were going out. I radioed WM COLLINS, who is the guvnor, WM COLLINS said there are no details for us. Steve then got back to me to say you are not required for this and to look at the bottom of the slip. I checked on the MDT and it said FRU not required at this time.

We were stood down, it is not normal for this but the Fire Brigade have changed to a new type of mobilising system. There have been glitches in the system as it had mobilised the wrong machines to an incident or we had been stood down because the new system had mobilised a nearer machine to an incident. The mobilising system uses your location to mobilise you rather than your static location, it use to be the case that you would be mobilised because you were the nearest station but now it just sends the nearest appliance.

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That means if you are travelling down a road then you could be mobilised as the nearest appliance rather than an appliance from the nearest station which means that you can be working on other people's grounds. We knew that there had been glitches in the system, control room sometimes mobilise too many crews so you get a call to stand you down. That call is a radio transmission directly to the appliance to stand you down. MDT — Mobile Data Terminal, the screen did not show the information, we heard a call for us to go out. The driver would have gone to the watch room and see where the call was for and it would read A211 and A216. But at the bottom of the page it then said A216 not needed. I did not see that but my guvnor did see that as when I radioed him it said you are not needed. So we pulled over and then it came back on the screen that we were required because it had gone to a ten appliance fire. If there was already a FRU on that pre-determined attendance at eight appliance then we would not be needed unless there was a need for two FRU's so things like our EDBA requirements were needed.

In many cases the FRU is sent out on as part of a pre-determined attendance to incidents such as multiple pump fires. On this initial call we were not needed. I told the driver to pull over and we would work out what we are going to do next. Once we had stopped we then got a message to say that the incident had escalated to a 10 pump fire and therefore we were put back on the list to attend straight away. We again mobilised and carried onto the call. At the time of being re-committed we had lost our bearings a little and we were trying to catch up with the Pump Ladder and make our way to the incident.

As we are travelling to the location I began to start thinking that this had escalated quickly and what is going to be my role in this incident. I start to think about what am I going to try and get the guys to do when we arrive. What risks are at the scene and what to get off the truck, we were listening to the radio and we knew it was an escalating fire. I was thinking we would be used for our extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) and general rescue skills, also in the back of your mind you are thinking as it is a pre-determined attendance we may not be needed.

As we are getting to the scene you can see what is going on and this is a major incident. As the truck turns down the side roads to get close to the scene we encountered a few problems. The FRU is longer than most appliances and we tried to get it down the roads and we couldn't. The crew got off the truck and moved a car which was parked right on the bend of a road. I don't know any road names. The guys bumped the car out of the way, whilst they were doing that I was busy looking at where the hydrants are and what the risks are at the call. I was trying to get more information and visually take more in of the scene that was in front of me.

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We get to close to the tower block and park up, straight away couple of guys from I think North Kensington were saying to us "CAN YOU GIVE US A HAND". They needed to get a hydrant in place, they were not lacking in water but needed to get another in place. So they could feed from two hydrants. Whilst this was happening I went to find their officer in charge.

Upon exiting the appliance there was quite a lot of noise at the scene. There were plenty of people around shouting and looking these were mainly members of the public. There were lots of sirens. I recall that there was a glare from the fire and looking up and seeing the angle the way that the fire had progressed initially I thought that it must have caught some sort of pipeline or something that it had caught on the outside.

I knew who the Incident Manager was and I knew that he would be the initial incident commander. I wanted to find out from him what he wanted from our truck and what he wanted from us at the time. What he said to me was he would like us to utilise our Line Rescue capability. I can't remember the name of the initial incident commander that I spoke too. He detailed me and my crew to go up onto the roof and somehow work out to put a safe system of work in place so that in future we may be able to work a line of hose off the roof. I agreed to have a look at this plan.

Depending on my role at the scene, the standard is to go and see the Incident Commander and get your tasking from there. There is not a policy for making notes at the scene, the only time that you have the write something down is if you go outside of policy. I have never had to do it, there would be a key decision log which is where you would make your decisions. It would be to explain were you had come out of policy and then what steps you have taken and then what steps you have taken to get back into policy. I do know about it but I would never have to do it, it is not post incident you are supposed to make a record of it as soon as possible. You are making a decision and you are carrying out a risk assessment to minimise that risk. To come out of policy you need to justify why you have come out of policy. I don't know the incident commander that I spoke to at the time, his direction was to get onto the roof for a line rescue. How I saw this was you are going to gain entry to an unsafe area, now if they are used to having contractors working on the roof then it would be surrounded by some form of fence. But to get to certain areas you may have to go through unsafe areas. To make sure that people are safe and don't end up hurting them or killing them you need to have them tied in. The only way to do that is for people who are line rescue qualified to take our equipment and set up a safe system of working that would allow us to connect a line to an object so that no one can fall off the roof. That was our initial task, we had four or five bags which contained line, helmets and harnesses and lots of other bits of equipment that would

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allow us to work safely or rescue people. The line is fifty meters long so any building like that would be too tall to go from the roof all the way down the building. We were not given a detailed brief by the incident commander. He did not give us specifics but just a general task, I believe that his thinking was to try and get to a point where water could be poured down the side of the building and quench the fire coming up the building. That is what he wanted, that was my understanding of the situation. It was an exploratory thing to see if it was possible, I would have reported back to him with the outcome. Looking back on this plan it could have worked in getting water to the fire.

When I took that initial look at what's going on with the tower block I realised that something is not right and with hindsight months later, you know that this is not right. Especially the way that the fire has gone up the side of the tower. I have seen little bits and pieces of similar fires because of plastic windows and in particular in the summer the way people have the windows open with lots of flammables on balconies so we have seen stuff like this before.

My initial thought is that it is something that has escalated on the outside but it is not something that is not out of control at this stage, it may have jumped a couple of floors but it is not out of control. I come back to the appliance and detailed to the guys what we have been asked to do, I explained that we are going to be used for our line access. We are also going to get our breathing apparatus off the appliance as we are not going to go into the building without any protection. So by the time we help the guys get the two hoses in the hydrant a couple of guys were getting the lockers open on the appliance and getting the equipment out. I am not sure how long this would have all taken but I would think about ten minutes.

We made our way to the base of the tower block and get into the building. As we approached we were not square onto the building, if you were looking at the main entrance to the building the fire was on the right face. If you looked at the right face the fire was going at a slight angle and it was right in the middle of the building face. From about the 4th floor upwards.

It looked like it was smack bang in the middle of the face of the building and looked like it was moving at about 10 degrees, my initial thoughts were that it had caught a pip or cabling or something like that. We went to book in at Entry Control and we were met by a couple of Watch Mangers, because of the pre-determined attendance they would have been called and come to take over from the fire fighters who would normally have done the job at Entry Control, but as there was a lot going on the Watch Managers were there with an Entry Control officer. The Watch Managers were helping out and giving guidance about what was going on.

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We turn up at Entry Control and tell the guys what we are detailed to do, explained that we were detailed to go up onto the roof. The brief was very loose, the initial Incident Commander knew by giving us a loose brief that he was allowing us, the experts, to get on with this job. If he were to tell us exactly what to do it may not have been the best way to do this in practical terms. He told us that we needed to set up safe systems of working on the roof.

We were wearing our Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) sets, these are sets which last longer than the normal sets they have a bigger cylinder and they are heavier than the normal sets. Normally these BA sets last between 46 to 50 mins dependant on the circumstance of the wear, if it is more strenuous then it will be shorter. We had these heavy sets on and also we were carrying a lot of equipment going into the tower. On entering the building it felt like there was a hell of a lot going on and we did not have enough of it. There were lots of things being put in place that not quite got into place, it was very dynamic. It felt different to a normal high rise fire, even though in the initial stages of any fire it is a very dynamic situation. Because this was so much bigger and there was so much more going on this felt more of an urgency about this situation.

I did not look at the tower or take time to take in any of sights, I knew what I was doing and I was focused on that task, I wanted to make sure that all the guys were singing off the same sheet. We initially went into the tower through the covered walk way and then went up the stairs to the mezzanine floor to entry control. It was later when entry control moved down to the ground floor. Entry Control is the point where BA wearers go through, you take your tally and hand it to the entry control officer. That tells the Entry Control officer how long you have with your air etc. Normally the Entry Control Officer will be a Fire Fighter as the size of the incident increases it may be a crew manager a Watch Manager or a station manager as the situation gets more complicated. Initially as we went on as ten, to my reckoning there were two Watch Managers overseeing what was going on. Entry Control was in safe air at that point, normally when you go through Entry Control there is the incident commander who often has all the details of the floors and there may be a committing officer who will be a Crew Manager or above and they will give you're a brief as they would know what is going on. In this incident as I had already spoken to the incident commander who had given me the direction to go onto the roof it was more of us just going through Entry Control as we were not going under air and going up the stairs.

As we went through Entry Control we did not go under air at this stage as the smoke in the tower block in this immediate area was OK so we made a decision to take our gear with us and go up the stairs as far as possible. If it then became obvious that we needed to used breathing apparatus then we would come back

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down and go under air. On the 4th floor we got to there was a plate on the wall which indicated that we were on the 4th floor. It must have been fairly smoky at that point, for us to be walking up the stairs it was not that bad. However we must have thought that this was only going to get worse as we were going up, you would never go past the fire floor without going under air. It was a conscious decision to come back down and go under air. As soon as we went out of the mezzanine floor and out of entry control we went straight under air. The conditions were bad around the fire floor as you went through the heat barrier and for a few floors above, it was clear that smoke was escaping a bit but it was easing up as we climbed the building. It got to a point when you could have probably taken off your mask and breathed normally. It may have been a bit of a splutter but we could have, I can't remember what floor that was at all. I did see other firefighters in the tower, it was a team of our own guys who were coming out as they were close to the whistle. I don't know who those fire fighters were.

We realised that as we got three or four flights the fire was escalating and it was not a protected stairway. I remember seeing a crew of our guys coming down, we had a very brief chat to the crew as they were passing us. I can't remember what was said as we just wanted to get on with the job, everything is heightened and we are looking to get on with our job. I can't remember exactly what floor we were on but I remember that saying to the guys, lets just keep going and go as far as we can and then leave our gear somewhere and go and tell them at control what we had done. Then Entry Control can then either get a fresh set of people up or we can replenish our cylinders and got back up and finish our task.

As we get to about 4th floor again we go through a heat barrier, as people are progressing onto that floor the door is open and heat is coming out. I made a mental note of roughly what floor that was and I made a mental note about that floor. We went up and I was counting, I think we got to 15th or 16th floor and I said to the guys keep going give it another couple of floors then after another couple then we stopped.

As we go up the stairs we share the work of carrying the gear, I said to the guys we are not progressing why are we stopping? Either we stop or we progress, the message got back to me that we had found someone on one of the floors. I went passed a couple of guys to see what was going on, there was a woman who was disorientated. It was about the 20th or the 21st floor. So we began to speak to her, were have you come from, is this your floor is there anyone else on these floors. We did not have a clue what was going on each floor. Why had she come out. I thought she should be in her flat that was the safest place for her. I believed her flat would be the safest place and could come and get her. I don't think that English is her first language and we could not get her to fully understand. So the decision was either to

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progress with her upstairs or we bring her down with us. I decided that it would be better to take her downstairs with us.

It was on either the twentieth or twenty first floor when we met the disorientated woman. I would describe her as a youngish woman in her early twenties, either Mediterranean or Asian looking woman. I can't recall anything that she was wearing, I think she must have had night clothes or a dress I was worried about her getting exposed when we were carrying her down the staircase. She had come out of the fire door and onto the stairs. I believe that she was there to have a look to see if she could get out. From what I can remember she implied that she was on her own, I remember that FF Dean ROBERTS had a bit of a look to see if there was anyone else in the corridor. We thought why has this woman come out she would be safer inside. As it is getting worse and we don't know where she has come from along with her being confused we thought we have to get her out. At least she will be out and then we can deal with this a bit later.

In most cases the Fire Brigade Policy is for people to stay inside their own property. It is there because most of the time it is safer for people to stay inside, if people come out and look around in the corridor then they will be taking in smoke and fumes. It is safer for them to stay inside the flat. They are usually protected in a shell, it gives them enough protection enabling us to get to them or put the fire out so that they can be taken out safely. If there was not that advice in place you would have people who would come out, this would create more of a problem for us as people will be taking on fumes. I don't know who made the decision to withdraw this policy, but we were later made aware that during the night people were told to leave their flats.

We left our gear in the corridor all the stuff we had carried was left in the corner of the stairs. We spoke to the woman and explained what we were going to be doing. I explained that to her you have to communicate with us if you are worried about anything. At the same time of doing this I am thinking this is alright for us as we had breathing apparatus on but we were going to have to carry this woman down the stairs. Through this, we have no choice whatsoever. We tried to get onto entry control, over the radio, to explain that we had found someone and that we were going to bring this woman down.

We get onto the stairs with the woman, I can't remember what order we were in I think FF Dean ROBERTS and FF Martin GILLIAM were in front of me and there may have been another person in front of that and one guy behind me. We were all swapping round roles, the woman was walking and being lead down the stairs. We headed down, as the smoke got worse we started to slow down. I can't remember what floor this was on. We ended up carrying the woman, one fire fighter at her feet end and

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then one fire fighter being held under hear arms. It was black with smoke in the stairwell, we were protecting her from the heat, and it must have been incredibly frightening for her as we went down. She can't carry on as she was frightened and the guys and I were swapping around. I remember that I got hold of her legs. We were absolutely knackered from the whole exertion. By this time it was a scramble to get her down the stairs. It was not calm we were trying to get her down and out otherwise she would not survive. It was hot thick heavy smoke that we were fighting our way through.

The mask has a demand valve in the front of the mask, you can take it out if it needed to be cleaned. Part of the way down the stairs, I am not sure where we were but one of my colleagues took his demand valve out of his mask and flushed air into the woman's face. Basically he put the valve into the woman's month and pressed the button to flush fresh clean air into the woman. This was because the woman had stopped groaning and was limp. At the time I was not aware that he was doing this, it was because we kept stalling on the way down. I understood that she had been sick and this had allowed all the crap to come out of her system. After that it was latterly a scramble to get her down and out of the building. It is not normal to remove the demand valve in this way and it is something that I have never done myself.

Unfortunately what was initially one or two floors of heat and smoke had escalated now to three or four floors of heat. As we are progressing down the stairs I am thinking this poor woman. We all took it in turns swapping over, one of the guys were at her feet and one had her under the arms. We were all concerned about her wellbeing, this is not one stairs of heat but three or four floors of heat. As we were taking her down she was able to walk down quite a few flights of stairs then she became floppy. We stalled a bit, I was saying come on let's get moving. What was happening was that the guys were trying to cover the woman's face properly because she could not do it herself. One of the guys was concerned about it all, he did not take his mask off but he took his valve off the mask and flushed air into the woman.

I found out later that she puked up at the time and that seemed to have worked. She was a bit more with it and we continued down the stairs.

We got to the bottom of the stairs in the mezzanine floor and we were shouting at some others to give us a hand so that we could get the woman out. I was really surprised a medical team was not at the bottom of the stairs, in fact I was really cross. We had worked really hard to get this woman down the stairs and we had been through all the turmoil and a couple of the guys are now having to work on the woman to bring her back. We then had to drag her out of the building and take her to the paramedics. The Paramedics were over to work on her quick enough but the situation was stressful, the poor Paramedic guys could not

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get in to the building to work on the people as they were not allowed and stuff was raining down off the building onto them. We were stressed as we were pulling casualties out and we could not get immediate medical treatment to get them the best possible care for these people because they were not in the right place and for us. A couple of Fire Fighters went to help get this woman out and get her medical care. We went and told the booking in team what we had done and we also got out BA tallies back. One of my guys had gone back to the Paramedics to see what the outcome was for the woman, he came to me and told me that the Paramedics had got her breathing and that she was going to be OK. The relief on everyone's face was massive, in your mind you are saying is she going to be alright for that time or will she survive.

After we had committed and then come out we need to get back in, in my mind I am thinking we need to be tasked let's get the team together and lets get out of here. We knew we needed to service the sets (BA) and then get ourselves ready to re-commit. I found were the area was to go to service our sets. It was just a bit of tarpaulin on the ground. This is where you could put your sets down and service them and tidy them and clean them up the best that you can and find out what the next task was going to be. By that point the incident had escalated, when we went in it was a bad fire, when we came out it was horrendous. I could not believe the transition in half an hour to forty minutes. It seemed like it was initially a candle then when you look back at it I remember saying "LOOK AT THIS" I could not believe what it had turned into.

So we go through the process of servicing our sets and sorting ourselves out, it took some time to do this and by then there were fresh teams who were at the scene. These fresh teams should be going in before us. So my guys are standing around and they want to do something to help. My guys ask to go and assist with a few tasks. Initially I said No to this request I remember saying to the guys lets stay as a team. Eventually three of them went go and assist. I remember reminding them to make sure that you have your radios and stick together. I said that I would stay here with Andy HARRIS the other FF. We will push to get back in again, I will try and sus out what's going on then I will call you on the radio and you must come back. Our BA sets are all serviced we are ready, we knew that it would take only a matter of seconds for us to get our sets back on. So I started to push the Station Manager (SM) who was in charge of BA Main Control to get us back in, he was saying yes you can go back in we will be committing you just wait your turn. This took an age, it was frustrating for us and I don't know how long this took. Eventfully I said to the SM we are not needed here you have loads of people here we need to go and do something and help the SM said No don't go I am going to use you and you are going to be committed. I

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called the guys on the radio and said come back and get your sets on we are being committed. It then stalls again, it did not stall operationally but it stalled for us as a team, in our minds. People are being committed and sent in. In our minds we wanted to get back in and do something rather than standing around we felt useless.

We started helping with servicing other BA sets. Then they got a whole load new sets come in, we could not use the sets. Apparently they have them in storage they power them down and to get them back up and running they need a computer. Normally this is done as they come to the scene from wherever they come from I think it is PEG (Protective Equipment Group) in Croydon. They do something with the battery to make them usable. We were trying to do something with these sets, I went back to one of the guys. I said we can't use these sets, they were running out of sets but we could not get these sets up and running. They are not working, there was a bit of a panic about this and the guy from PEG tried to sort out what the issue was with the 4se sets. Eventually they managed to get the problem sorted.

Because you have worn the apparatus you may have knocked it and you need to put a new cylinder on and check that it is working and clean it if needed so that it can be worn again. If it is an A test, which is one when you take it over from another colleagues. This takes about 10 mins. If you were carrying out a monthly test which could take about half an hour. We did what is called a fire ground A test, this is because you have not got all the dedicated bits as you have in a station. If there was anything wrong with the set you would not wear the set.

We were waiting in a controlled area, depending on how serious the incident there was then it depends on the organisation. There was an area where people were waiting to be committed, in an area. Then there was a holding area to go too, on this occasion there was a Station Manager in charge in that area. The SM was passing messages to another area to make sure that they had enough people stock piled. The process felt organised and the planning felt that it was put in place. My frustration was that we had been in the building and we wanted to improve on what we had done before, you never felt like you had done enough. We went from the Holding area to the Committing Area and then went into the building. The holding area was across the green area which was immediately across from the location where the fire had started. The holding area was either in a community hall or school I am not sure which. Then the committing area was on the opposite side of the community building outside ready to cross to the tower. We were right across from the building looking at the tower, we lost all sense of time so by the time I was looking at that face of the building, it did not give you the immediate impact of the fire. It maybe had not got to that side, there was all sorts of noise going on from the fire to pumping appliances to the noise of

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stuff falling from the building. To get across to the tower we had to have officers hold shields above our heads due to the amount of debris that was falling down.

There was all that little bit of confusion then we eventually we got the opportunity to go back in. Well we really pushed our way back in, there were guys who were sitting down and then there was a request for four more guys so we thought right we will go and headed ourselves to the front of the queue and then went into another holding area which was at the base of the tower but at the other side. We then waited to be committed and then we were committed and we were sat in the foyer area waiting. It was quite bizarre it was almost like waiting for the worse ride ever, we were all queuing up and queuing up and waiting, I was thinking how long is this going to take. Eventually we get committed as a team of four, we were split from our original team of five as a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU). Once you have done your task then if they need a job for one or two or four people then you get split up and go and do something else, you don't always stay as a team. FF GILLAM and I were sat with a group in the foyer, we were committed with two other fire fighters and I don't know where they were from. Each team was given a floor which they wanted to go to and see if they could gain entry and then knock the fire down.

We were sitting waiting in the area where the lifts were. There was lots and lots of water everywhere, we were standing in water and there was water coming down the stairs. There were two Group Managers who were briefing us on what was going on and what we were going to be doing and the situation. One of the commanders briefed us and told us we were going to be committed and that he was waiting to get some information so that he got it right. I remember thinking that he was not just committing us but was clearly thinking about what was going on. He was the Group Manager that I told about the lady who was dead on the stairs. He was the Group Manager called Pat GOLDBOURNE who briefed us and I got back too.

The brief by Pat GOLDBOURNE they are trying to make entry into floors to try and put out the fire and to let them know if there was any possibility of survivors being on the floors. So to report back, in our minds there still could have been people in flats that may have been in a safe area and you just did not know.

We were sent to the 10th floor, we took hose with us and stuff to fight the fire. On the 9th or 10th floor unfortunately there was a lady on the stairway.

She was quite a big lady, you could get passed her, were we needed to get entry into the lady was right there. I remember looking and thinking this poor woman this can't be right we can be stepping over her and we couldn't do our job properly. She had obviously died she is just lying. We opened the door

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slightly and had a good look and also a feel of what is going on, I was at the back and I was giving some encouragement and also advice. They were opening the door a little then putting water into the fire and then closing the door. We could not do a great deal as we were worried about this woman, you could not stand on her or sit on her and it was making fighting the fire really difficult.

The idea was to progress onto the fire floor and fight it as best we could, it was oven hot even inside our fire gear it was noticeably hot when the door was open. I am behind two the guys and I am getting told that the heat is so ferocious they are saying that we can't make entry. I said keep opening the door and keep putting water in there and we will do something eventually. We did that for ages and ages, to the point where other teams were coming up behind us, there was water pouring down on us. I am not sure if it was the dry rising main or if a hose had gone or what but it was pouring water down. This was not the best thing for us, you have this poor woman, there is water pouring down on us and you defiantly don't want to be a 'Boil in the bag'. My team can't make progress, this was getting ridiculous. So I briefed the team behind me and told them what we can't do and then left it up to that team.

I could not say how long this process of opening the door and putting water into the floor took but I think it would have been 10 to 15 minutes. I did feel like this was a full wear of my BA equipment. It was not enough for me to worry to think that I was going to run out of air, we were only a few floors up. It did not come to the point that we made it onto the floor. I was also worried that the water had been compromised somewhere as there was so much coming down. In the back of my mind I was worried that something was going wrong above us to get that much water coming down. We were wet and the last thing you want dealing with a fire is to be wet as it creates steam and this is super-heated and therefore heat a person up like a boil in the bag, this is not a good combination.

I felt that we could not do what we needed to do, we could not make entry as you would have to step on the lady and you can't do that. You could get into the fire if that woman had been moved, damaging the body for me was a no no for what we wanted to do on that floor. It just did not need to be that way so I said that we went down to tell them plainly in person to get across the nature of the request. I did not want to give this over the BA comms as they had enough to work on it was so complex and with so many teams deployed. We all withdrew as a team and we knew we would have to come down soon enough and there was a team right behind us waiting to be committed to our position. I had a brief exchange to the officers who took over from us and I explained what my plan had been and that I was going to explain about the lady.

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I was quite cross, I remember going down the stairs and I had strong words with a Group Manager. I said to him you have to do something about this poor woman, we have to get her down to another floor as the crews are worried about stepping on her and they can't do their job. You are going to do some damage to the body you have to commit a team to get her moved. From what I found out later they did send a team up and they moved her down another couple of floors to try and help. She was quite a bit lady and they could not get her down any further.

In effect that was us complete, we then were escorted out of the building and it was starting to get light by about 4am, dawn time. After that we were trying to help tidy up and help out where you can. I knew that I was not going to go back in due to the number of people that were there by that time. So we just got refreshments and we were around to help out.

We had done what we can do, there was enough people to take over there was about 40 appliances and loads of people. I was looking to get our sets serviced and also after a second wear it was about getting hydrated and also having something to eat.

Word got back at one stage that there was about 100 people still inside, I remember thinking no there can't be. We then start to focus on looking after each other and re-group with the rest of the watch. After two wears of the BA you should not be committed back into the fire, as your core worms up and this could have been that I was suffering and so I was getting frustrated. It is a policy that after two wears you are not committed again, but I would have gone back in should I have had too.

I couldn't say a specific date of your last high rise training, however we do train for these things fairly regularly and within a couple of weeks of the fire we had some training on high rise fires. Also we had High rise bags and we were training with new equipment, the emphasis is on getting the train with that kit. At Paddington on the Red Watch we are always out training as we have a couple of new guys so we spend a bit more time training on these things. Before Grenfell we had a high rise fire about a month before on north Kensington's ground which was in the middle of the night in a high rise. It is the most realistic training that we can do as we all have towers so it is something that we can put into place frequently. We can all carry up the equipment and do those simulations. I am considered to be competent in all areas which includes High Rise Fires.

What happened was a combination of events which led to this, you can't say one area is specifically to blame. There are loads of issues that have come into play to make that have allowed this unfortunate event to happen. In all honestly you could go from central government to say there is not enough funding to putting reviews on the back burner. On a Brigade level we have had to make cuts in funding and these

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have been made which have made it harder for us to effectively fight this fire, in regards to having an aerial appliance. In the past we would have had an aerial appliance that would go to every high rise fire. However when loads of fire alarms would go off we would have appliances running around LONDON and then the number of accidents would go up. So to prevent this that changed the policy so that only a certain number of appliances would get to the fire and they would call on other machines. That policy in hindsight was completely flawed. Building regulations without the proper inspectors employed by the councils to enforce these regulations with everything privatised then the standards have dropped. We as a brigade we use to do the fire inspections and that has been taken away from us. It is a combination of everything and it all comes back to funding.

I must admit that this incident has made me angry, for something like this to happen in the rich borough in the country which is all down to money. Because of the cuts over the years it has made it clear to me how vulnerable things can be when situations get like they were at Grenfell.

I did not see anyone injured and to the best of my knowledge I am not been injured. I think I have sufficient support from the Fire Brigade Union and I am aware who to speak too should I need assistance. Following finishing at Grenfell I returned to Paddington and got changed and went to my mother's home. Which is where I stay when working in London. We were supposed to be debriefed, I did not want to wait for another half an hour I just wanted to get a shower and go.

I don't believe that I have ever been to Grenfell Tower, I don't know about any pre-planned fire plan. At any incident you would not necessarily know the only information that you would get is from information on the tower block itself or info from the Mobile data terminal. That is the type of information that you could check on the way to the fire, info like fire lifts, hydrants any risks and also if there was an information plate on the building indicating if it was flats or maisonettes. This is the type of information that you would find out before you arrived. You would never go in with no information you would always ask and find out.

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