

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: ELLIOTT, SCOTT

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 5 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: SCOTT ELLIOTT

Date: 06/03/2018

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

I have been asked to make this statement in relation to my involvement at the fire at Grenfell Tower on the 14th June 2017. I have been spoken to by DC Lou JONES and DC Peta JAMES. I made notes at the time of the incident but I did not refer to these throughout my statement taking process. Despite this I produce these notes as exhibit reference SCE/1. I was supported by a Union representative Steve FOY.

I joined the London Fire Brigade in November 2011. After completing my training, I was posted to Tooting Fire Station in March 2012. I have remained there for the duration of my service. I am considered competent in my role as a fire-fighter (FF).

In addition to my basic training, I have completed High Volume Pump training (although I no longer hold this qualification). I have also completed the hose layer training. This is basically a specialist truck which is full of hose that lays it out behind it. This is normally used for high volume water incidents. I am Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA) trained but this is standard training for everyone. For Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) you have to complete extra training but this is not something I have done. I completed my refresher course for the SDBA 2 weeks ago. We should complete this every two years. This involves a 2-day course; the first day is classroom based where we look at theory and go over a case study. Day 2 is practical input and assessment. For the assessment we are given a scenario to part-take in and carry it out as if it were a live incident. I was given a fire in a house in a basement. My brief was to fight the fire and conduct rescues. The instructors follow you through the

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incident and pass or fail you. I passed.

We also part-take in realistic High Rise (HR) fire training. This similarly is conducted reasonably regularly. We have a tower in our yard and we conduct drills in that which are practical. Our Watch Manager (WM) will set up the drills and some are a HR scenario. We have lots of skills to keep up so the drills vary. We do our practical training on day shifts and on nights we cover things like policy updates and lectures. I have completed the Back 2 Basics training which I believe are at 6 month intervals but I have done three of these. On Back 2 Basics training, we attend for the day but a variety of subjects can be covered such as, one can be HR, one can be basements, another RTA's. So different aspects were covered.

I have physically attending HR fires. I have never been to anything that stands out like Grenfell Tower did. I have never attended an incident where fire has jumped from one compartment to another. The fires I attended behaved as they should have done, they remained within the compartment. I am not sure how many I have been to in total, but I would say less than 5.

Prior to the incident at Grenfell Tower I had never been to it before, I have no knowledge of it and have no knowledge of any plans surrounding it.

On the 13th June I was on a night duty shift which started at 8pm and was due to finish at 0930am the following morning. I started my shift in the same way as normal at Tooting Fire Station. My role for the night was on the back of the pump (call sign H352). We did our roll call and all our checks on the equipment, which is standard practise. I do not believe we had any other shouts that evening and I went to bed at midnight. At Tooting we have a pump and a pump lad appliance. At some point in the early hours the pump ladder got a 'stand by' shout related to Grenfell Tower. This means they attend another Fire Station and wait there. They were due to go to Paddington Fire Station. I knew it was a stand by call because it is announced differently on our tannoy system. It is my understanding that on the way to Paddington they were diverted to Grenfell Tower. Not long after this, when the incident increased to make pumps 40', we received our call. I think must have been 1-1.15am. FF Adrian TOPPIN was the driver so as part of his duty he would have got the Tip sheet. He and Crew Manager (CM) Daniel MORRISON would then have discussed it and checked the route etc. etc. but I did not play a part in this. At this point I wouldn't have known the incident we were attending was not on our ground.

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I boarded the Pump and sat in the back with FF Jim HISCOCKS and FF Ollie HENLEY. CM Daniel MORRISON was in charge. At this stage I didn't think it was anything special, other than the fact it was a 40 pump fire which is rare. We didn't know anything about the incident. I do not recall the route we took or how we approached the incident but FF Adrian TOPPIN drove us there. I remember when we got closer we all saw the Tower. It was dramatic even at this stage. I could see that one side of the Tower, it was completely on fire. We were struck by it.

As we drove nearer the scene we had some issues with roadworks and had to go back, but we managed to park somewhere off of Dulford Street. I am not sure where but it was East of the Leisure Centre. I believe we arrived on scene at about 1.30am. There were lots of members of public standing around videoing the fire when we got there. We all got our BA sets on and ran towards the Tower. We had not been told to do these we just wanted to get to the scene and assist. When we got there, people were coming out of the building and were being stretchered out; there were loads of trucks parked up; it was chaos.

I could see the fire was raging on the South and East sides. There were lots of people about but I saw a few people I knew at the incident; FF BADILLO from North Kensington Fire Station. FF Neil SAUNDERS from Tooting Fire Station and some others from neighbouring stations. There was just so many there. I initially helped the ambulance crews move casualties. I cannot recall specific casualties. All the ambulances were parked in a line down a street West of the Tower. I assisted by carrying stretchers and casualties to those ambulances. As we got there, there were a lot of people who were talking on their phones to other people still in the Tower. Some officers were given the phones by the members of public but this didn't happen to me.

I was still in my set at this point and someone in charge asked for four BA wearers. He took four of my crew, which left me by myself. I was then put into a BA holding area by the Leisure Centre. After a time, another officer came over; I was tasked along with another 2-3 FF's to get more EDBA cylinders. We went off down to the Grenfell Road and Bomore Road area where we looked on all the appliances that were parked up. We found some so brought them back to holding area at the Leisure Centre. After this I was sat watching the fire for a time. I could see an Aerial appliance parked on the East side on the grass spraying water on the Tower (I do not think this was a London appliance). I saw people at the windows in

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the Tower who were shining their camera/phone lights. The fire was not burning in a uniformed way i.e. straight up. It went floor by floor, so for example it was fire, fire, fire on three floors, then a break where people were in the windows and then fire above them or beside them. There were bits falling off the building which looked like cladding floating off. I could see sheets of it peeling off and then the stuff inside burning. So many things were falling off, some were smashing down to the ground and some just floating down. There was fire both inside and outside of the Tower. At this stage I didn't notice anything about the windows but later when I was inside the Tower I notice they've gone.

Someone then came to the holding area and asked for more BA wearers. I put myself forward and some other fire-fighters were moved to under the flyover, in front of the main entrance. We waited here under the flyover due to the debris falling. I could see people being dragged out of Grenfell Tower by other FF crews. These crews were passing the casualties to officers in the lobby, they then ran out the front door and were passed to us. We would then run them South and down to the ambulances. Once we had handed them to the LAS we went back and repeated this. Some people were half walking and half dragged. All the time I was doing this I had my set on. Although I do not recall any specific details about any of the casualties I assisted with, I can say they were all adults. In fact, the only thing I can recall about them is that one was a black female. I remained in this task for a while. By now I think I had been on scene for about 1-2 hours. The debris was still falling down; it looked like a scrap yard and it was knee height in some places.

I remember under the flyover where we were waiting, I saw a body in a bin store area which had been left there. I think it was a black person. bins were under the flyover on the right as you moved away from the Tower. The person was laid out straight but not sure if they were on the front or back. It did look like they had been placed there due to them being laid out.

At some point during the early hours there was a Tactical Withdrawal from the building. I heard this via my radio but this didn't affect me because I was not in the building. It is very difficult to place the time on a time line. I know I didn't move from where I was which was in the holding area.

We were told we were going to be committed into the Tower so we were moved to another holding area by the playground on the West corner. There were both EDBA and SDBA waiting here. I noticed that the

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West side appeared to be less burned. I waited at this point for ages, at least an hour. FF TOPPIN from my crew came and found me. They had been worried due to us being separated from the start. As he found me an officer in charge asked for SDBA wearers. We both volunteered.

We moved forward to where the riot police were assisting with getting people in and out of the Tower by using the shields as cover from the falling debris. You went in one on one with the riot officer, tucked in behind them with shields above our heads. As we went in there were little bits hitting the shield but nothing major. Additionally, there was a safety officer watching the building and when there was a break in debris falling we were told to go so we ran in.

When we arrived at the Tower we entered a room which then lead to the lobby area. This was in four inches of water but clear of smoke. There were a number of Officers in there and BA crews coming out. We went to the lift lobby area where there were chairs and sat in there. I didn't hear any alarms or anything sounding. There was a break in crews being committed due to an issue with water supply. FF TOPPIN and I were the only SDBA, everyone else waiting was in EDBA sets. The Officer in charge was a black male, who's name I believe was Pat. He asked for SDBA and FF TOPPIN and I were briefed to follow a specific length of hose all the way to the branch. This was to see if it was suitable for fire-fighting and if it was then we were to use it and assist crews.

If it was not suitable then we were to sort out why it was not. We followed the hose up the stairs. Initially, visibility was reasonably good but it was chucking water down on our heads. The further we climbed we could not see any floor numbers on the walls because they were all black. You had to count to work it out but we gathered we reached the 11th floor. We had our torches as it was dark, they did help but they don't work as well in smoke. The higher in stairwell, the smokier it got. Aside from it being dark and smoky the stairs were really wet and there were hose lengths everywhere. The hose goes up the middle predominantly but as FF's need it, the hose gets pulled over to the lobby and the more its used it gets tangled up.

The hose we were following was attached from the ground floor and not from the riser. There were two crews ahead of us, both EDBA trying to get into 11th floor for casualty rescues. We stood behind them and due to their communications not working, I was relaying their messages down to the Entry control

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(EC) via my hand held radio on Channel one. They were problems on Channel 6, ordinarily we would be on Channel 6 but I tried channel 1 which was the fire ground channel and got through.

The EDBA crews told me it was too hot to get in the 11th floor so I relayed that down and then they came out because they were running out of air. FF TOPPIN, another crew and I took over from them. I saw a body on the stairs where we were trying to get in. Due to the positioning we had to climb over them. The person was quite a big, black female. I believe this was the female artist who has been on the News.

The door off the stairwell to the lift lobby area was still there so we went through it. I saw a Wimbledon crew were in there as well. I went left and to a flat there. It was completely burnt out; the whole thing. It was pitch black in the communal area but as soon as I went to the flat it was bright light. I could see outside as it was daylight. The windows had failed and had gone completely. There was nothing to do in that compartment because everything was completely ash. The flat was still on fire but due to the windows not being present it had vented. I scanned the compartment but could see nothing but ash and everything completely burnt out. I was about to go with the crew from Wimbledon but FF TOPPIN said we needed to get out as our air levels were low and our whistle was going to go off. Due to this we withdrew.

There was a crew coming up the stairs so we gave them our branch. I think at one point we tried to get up one more floor but there was no way we could get up there because the fire was raging. If it is too hot, you can't go in as the heat just burns you. FF TOPPIN and I went back to EC situated on the ground floor. I think this was about 6-7am.

We debriefed and told the person in charge what had happened; this may have been Nick Myatt. There was also a CM who was the designated Communications Operator, he confirmed he had been receiving the communications I had relayed from inside. Other than that there were lots of people with white hats on.

After the debrief, we went back out of the Tower going the same way we came in. We went back to the Leisure Centre to change our cylinders over and then we wanted to get back inside the Tower. We returned to the West side holding area to be recommitted but we were told only fresh wearers were being

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committed at this point. The officer in charge could see from our kit we were wearing that we had already been in. We dropped our sets in the holding area.

We were then tasked with dealing with a burst length on the flyover where the flats were. FF TOPPIN and I changed the length and put the ground monitor back on. This was spraying water on the Tower. We manned that for an hour or so. I believe there was a second ground monitor on the North-East corner which FF Dave LEAN was monitoring with other crew members from Tooting's Ladder crew H351. I then heard on my radio that they were getting Red Watch away so we went back to the Leisure Centre area. Blue Watch were coming on as relief and we were dismissed from the incident. I think we were one of the last of the Red Watch to leave, we were exhausted when we left. On the way back to our truck people were asking about various floors and asking what was happening. None of us really wanted to say anything; I think they knew from the look on our faces. I didn't speak to anyone personally. We were directed to go to Paddington to do our notes about incident. Once this was completed we went back to Tooting Fire Station. I think we eventually got back there at about 5-6pm; we were back on duty 3 hours later. The crew got some food together which enabled us to gather ourselves. When we came back on duty for that night I think we were off the run until about midnight.

I have been asked to explain a few things which I will do now:

- Fire lifts — these are standard lifts but we take control of them via a key. I do not believe there was one at Grenfell Tower. If there was then it was not in operation when I was there.
- With regards safety features within the building, as I said I did not hear any alarms sounding. I also do not recall seeing sprinklers, I do not know whether there was a safety management system and other than seeing a lot of the windows open due to it being a hot night I cannot comment on them.
- I have described the conditions of the stairwell during the above account, but this was the only means of escape from the Tower. It was wet, dark, smoky and on some floors very hot.
- The Dry Riser Main (DRM), this is a dry pipe that runs from the bottom to the top of the building. When we arrive at an incident we charge the DRM with water from a hydrant. This enables FF's to then plug

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their hose into the outlets on the floor they need and fight fire. I believe there were issues with the DRM that night because the hoses were not coming off the riser. They were being run from the ground and up the stairs.

- Fire fighters or Safety Officers would have been watching out for the spread of fire. This is normally the Sector Commanders. I do not know if they have special training for this. In my opinion you wouldn't need training for this. You can clearly see whether a fire is spreading or not and if it is then you would relay that to someone. We do this naturally as part of our job, it's our bread and butter.

- Stay Put policy — this is self-explanatory. People in other areas of building and away from a fire are advised to stay put because this is the safest thing for them to do. This is because a fire is not meant to leave the compartment it is in. Stairs and communal areas might be affected and then that resident/person is at risk. Furthermore, if every resident comes down then they will delay FF's getting to the fire. Compartments are built of concrete and fire is not meant to burn through that. There should also be fire doors at the front door which also prevent fire from escaping and leaving that compartment. If a person is in the compartment with the fire, then our Control will probably tell them to get out and shut door. If they cannot get out, then they are advised to get into another room by a window.

I did not receive any injuries throughout my time at the incident and as such I have not sought medical attention. I did not witness anyone receiving injuries either. I was exhausted when I left but I do not think I had it as tough as some of the other FF's would have had it. That fire kept spreading throughout the incident. To me, it looked like it was behind the covering of the building. No matter what fire-fighting we were on the outside of that building, the water seemed to just bounce off. I do not know what else could have been in place to assist fire fighters that night.

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