

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: HAYWARD, STEPHEN

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 8 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: STEPHEN HAYWARD

Date: 10/03/2018

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

This statement is in relation to the incident on Wednesday 13th June 2017, the fire at Grenfell Tower. I was on a night shift, started at 2000Hrs, I am on red watch, my call sign was E34. I was riding the pump ladder.

Prior to this incident I had never been to Grenfell before or the surrounding area.

I joined London Fire Brigade in April 2003. The training at the time was four months and involved general firefighting, for example how to use the fire appliances, how to use the ladders correctly, fire science, the behaviour of fire.

I was first posted at Erith fire station and spent thirteen years before being posted to Deptford where I currently am. I have been at Deptford for a year and a half.

I am trained to use the Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA). SDBA is a cylinder of air on your back which lasts approximately 30mins. It is basically an item of equipment that we use to aid our breathing in an atmosphere that we wouldn't normally be able to breathe due to smoke. We also carry out station based training which is where we would go through various aspects of our job, this would be in the form of lectures, going through the PowerPoint, we will address policies, we will also perform drills in the station yard, we have a tower that we will use to simulate certain scenarios.

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I have never worked for the Fire Safety department.

I have never been on a Section 7(2)d familiarisation visit to Grenfell Tower or a similar high rise block of flats in the same area before the 13th June 2017.

A familiarisation visit is where we do visits to certain places that maybe of interest to us due to certain reasons. An example would be a high rise block of flats. We literally familiarise ourselves with the area, looking at where the best way to approach in the fire appliance would be, if and where can we get an Ariel appliance in, if there is any issues with access etc. We would have a walk around the building so we know the layout, positioning of any fire fighting dry/wet riser prior to having a call there. The whole watch will attend each visit, that way everyone knows what is to be expected of the area on a call.

We tend to do familiarisation visits once a year, although it is a continuous thing.

I have been referring to my notes that I had made on 27th June 2017 during my free recall and I will exhibit this as SJH/2. The reason that these notes were not made at Paddington after we had finished at the incident was due to the time we had been relieved from the incident and we were due back on duty the same night.

I started work that night at Dockhead Fire Station at 2000Hrs, we had roll call, which is just to make sure everyone is there, has the right PPE and personal equipment. We are then detailed as to what everyone will be doing. On that night I was to be riding on the back of the pump ladder with Breathing Apparatus. I then carried out the normal duties as I would at the beginning of a shift, checking that the equipment on the appliance is there and working. I also checked my Breathing Apparatus set (BA) to make sure that it is working. There were five of us that evening. I am unable to give all the names of the Firefighters due to them not being my usual crew. The names I can remember are:

Watch manager Ben HORNE

Driver Chris JAMES

Fire fighter Steve HOYLE

Fire Fighter Jeopaul Trez DA SILVA

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I was at Dockhead due to being sent on out duty. An out duty is when another station is short of crew, stations that have more FF's than needed are then tasked to go to the station with less FFs to cover. Hence the reason why I was at a different station to my base station. It was a normal night, up until we were mobilised to the Grenfell Tower incident, It was just after 0200Hrs that the bells went down and we were mobilised. . We didn't know what we were being sent to and the extent of the incident. Originally we thought we were being sent on a relief.

A relief is when there is a prolonged incident and further crews are needed to take over from crews that have been at the job for a while. Due to the fact that we are so far from Grenfell this was the reason we thought we were on relief.

We have then realised we were not and this call was actually a forty pump fire. We have a mobilising system, whereby a bell will go off in the station and we will get a print out from the printer which will state where we need to go and what other appliances or personnel are going and who else is there. I didn't personally see the print out as the designated duty person (watchroom attendant) deals with this.

It was only when I googled the address we realised the seriousness of the incident. It was the fact that we didn't know what was going on or the location which made me check the address. The fact it was a forty pump fire isn't normal. Someone had posted a video on twitter which had come up on my phone so I opened the link.. Upon viewing the clip I said to the Governor "I think that its fucking going Gov", showed him my phone and even he was like "fuck". So we have made every effort to get there as quickly as possible. I have never been to an incident on that scale before. Nothing that has involved that many people.

Whilst in the truck we kept hearing further calls coming through on the radio of the other crews being mobilised. We were on status 2 in the truck. There are various statuses concerning the radios, status 2 is when you are on your way to an incident. When you get to an incident it is then you change the status to status 3.

It was only until we were within view of the tower we saw the full extent of what we were going to. Once we had seen it, we really wanted to get there as soon as possible. It seemed to take ages getting to it. From looking at the tower in the appliance, I can only describe it is carnage. Getting closer there were a lot of other appliances in the area going to the Tower so we followed them on route. It was difficult to actually

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get to the site, we went around a few times as there were roads we couldn't get down. Most of the roads leading to the Tower are residential; there were a lot of cars parked on the roads which made it harder for us to get the appliance down them. The roads that maybe we could have gone down were blocked by Police cars or other fire engines.

We eventually parked up a short distance away from the Tower on Walmer Road. I have marked on the map where we parked. This has been marked with E341, on exhibit SJH/1. From this point I can see the fire. The Tower looked alight from what I assumed to be from the fifth floor, south east corner going up and angling across the building. I could see the fire moving up and across the building.

I was taken aback and wondered how it had got to this. How buildings are meant to be, fires like this shouldn't be happening. It was evident how quickly the fire was catching to other parts of the building. I couldn't see the other side of the building at that time. The flames of the fire were orange. It was about 75 metres from where I was standing to the tower and looking at the East side of the building. I could see people still in their flats and at their windows. These people who were in their flats looked calm and looked as though they were waiting to be rescued. There was lots of people screaming and shouting, whether it be FFs shouting at public or other FFs or Police officers at the public asking them to move for their own safety. I can only describe it as organised chaos.

It was about 0230Hrs when we arrived. We were told to go to the Command Unit, again I have marked this on exhibit SJH/1 as CU8. Where we will be told what it is they want us to do. At the Command Unit we were instructed to get our BA sets on and make our way to the holding area in front of the leisure centre.. Peter JOHNSON was the person that gave us this brief. I do not know of his rank. Having been given that brief we have gone back to the Fire engine and picked up our BA sets and made our way to the leisure centre. I believe there were a couple of holding areas around the tower. It was a case of waiting at the holding area to be committed before going in. We had been in the holding area for quite a while. I have marked the holding area on exhibit SJH/1 as that on the map. This was by the Kensington Leisure Centre.

From looking at the Tower again nothing has obviously changed, it was still spreading. The fire hadn't died down and it would appear to have been getting worse. . The whole side of the building from Walmer Road is what I had a clear view on. This side was pretty much alight.

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About 10 of us were instructed to move from this area and make our way down to the foot of the tower, we were told that we would be going through to a second holding area at the other side of the tower to where we were. It is then that somebody had jumped from the tower and struck the fly over section that we were stood under, we were making our way past where the garages are. This person's leg struck a FF who was 5-6 people ahead of me. The person's leg had struck the FF's BA set. We were asked to remove the FF's set and he was taken to seek medical care. I didn't personally see this person fall, so I can't say where they had jumped from. Due to where I was positioned I could only see what was directly in front of me. The FF's set had to then be carried back up to where the holding area by the leisure centre was. I have marked on exhibit SJH/1 as set where it was laid. There were four of us in total who took the set off and then back to the leisure centre. The area that the person landed and where the set had been taken had been cordoned off and the Police had taken control of the area.

We were then moved to a different area. This was on the other side of the building to where we were initially and I have marked this on exhibit SJH/1 as holding area. We have spent a lot of the time just watching the building before doing anything

There were FF's bringing out casualties as well as deceased people. They had put tents up on a grassed area to the left of the leisure centre where they were laying the deceased. I have marked the area on exhibit SJH/1 with tents.

Where we had been moved to on the other side of the tower, we were regularly being covered with debris falling from the building. As the wind had been blowing North West. I can only describe the debris that I saw as looking like insulation, some was light, wispy stuff, other times it was quite thick. There was also aluminium sheeting that was coming down.

I believe it to have been roughly 0500Hrs that I was committed to the incident for the first time. Prior to being committed we were waiting in the holding area for quite a while due to EDBA wearers (Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus) taking precedence due to the fact that they are able to last under air a lot longer than SDBA. We entered into the Tower via the side of the playground holding area. We gained entry to the Tower with the assistance of the Police using riot shields to protect us due to the falling

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debris.

On getting into the Tower we were then in another holding area just outside of the lifts. There were around twelve FFs in that area with me but there were also constant FF's coming down and out from the stairs. The visibility in that particular area was fine, there was no smoke. There was a lot of fire fighting equipment on the floor mainly hose, there was also a lot of water and glass. The glass was due to the windows in the lobby area being smashed. This ground floor in the lobby was being used as a Bridge Head.

A bridge head is a dedicated area usually set up two floors below the fire floor on a high rise incident to provide safe access and egress for firefighters and also for them to be able to rig and receive and relay information in a relatively safe environment

It was here where we were given our brief, this was to search fifth and sixth floors and attempt to locate any saveable life, there was no fire fighting media for us to use so we would not be attempting any fire fighting. This was with another FF who I have no idea of their name or station. We usually stick with our own station crews but on this occasion we were split up due to the scale of the job. We had been tasked to work with whomever was there at the time.

Once we had been given our brief, we repeat this back to them just so that we and they know we have understood what needs to be done. I then donned my BA set, turned the air on, then handed over my set tally to the person at entry control for them to put it on the entry control board. This is so that the entry control officer knows how much air I have in my cylinder, if we encounter any problems as we can press a button on our set that will set off an alarm. The tally also has my name on it so they know who is in the building.

We do have personal radios so in theory we are able to relay back to control once we have completed a brief. They are then able to write on the entry control board that this has been completed and any other information that we relay can also be noted down. They can also task us with another brief depending on whether we have enough air.

I say in theory as with this incident we were told that there were no communications. It is normally a vital

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piece of equipment. So Its not the best situation as if something does happen you ideally need to be able to get in contact with someone and let them know.

We will normally test our communications before we leave the bridge head, with the entry control officer. In this case we were told of the lack of communications so we didn't. Going into an incident without communications is a breach of policy. I understood that. The overriding factor for me was the fact there were people in this building that needed to be rescued.

Myself and the FF I was with made our way up with an enforcer and a sledge hammer. I was carrying the enforcer. This was just in case we had to break into any of the flats. I did find the layout of the tower quite confusing. As there was a mezzanine level and we didnt know if it was classed as a floor or not. Its only until we had gone up the first flights of stairs and in and seen other FF's we find out which level we are on. There were no markings on the wall that I could see to indicate what the floors were. I noticed that FFs had marked on the walls in china Graff pencils which floors they are.

Travelling up the staircase it was quite difficult to walk, there is a lot of hose on the stairs, finding footing was hard, due to the fact its very difficult to stand on a charged hose. There was a lot on the stairwell. The actual stairs were very narrow. The stairs were concrete; the width of the stairwell I believe was about 3 foot in width. The visibility at the time was fine.

At the fifth floor we opened the door to the floor lobby area and it had instantly been shut by someone because of the amount of smoke that was coming out of this area into the stairwell, they wanted to keep the stairwell free from as much smoke as possible.

We entered the fifth floor and it was quite smoky. There were some flats that the fire had been through and burnt out, in these flats there was just rubble and a shell of a room. I have no idea of the flat numbers. Some of the flats were quite clear due to the fact that the windows had gone and the rooms were being ventilated.

On the fifth floor we didn't find anybody so we then proceeded to the sixth floor. On this floor it was smoke logged although there wasn't any real sign of fire. During our search we were shouting out, calling out to make ourselves heard but there was no response.

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Both floors were both heavily smoked logged. The stairwell visibility was fine in comparison to the actual floors. We had done our best to clear these by calling out and searching. After searching those floors we made our way out and began our decent to the bridgehead due to the FFs air I was with beginning to run low. Myself and the other FF met another crew who had been escorting casualties out. This was between the sixth and fifth floor, although I could not tell you the flats the casualties had come from if at all. The crew we met were EDBA wearers, so we took the casualties from them so they could return back up again. I believe the casualties were both oriental, one male, one female and were both in their mid-forties.

We brought them down and left them with the people who were dealing with the casualties at the time, located at the bridge head.

As the casualties were now being treated I reported to the entry control point, collected my tally, shut down my set and relayed where we had been and what we had done.. We then left the building again under the police riot shields and made our way back to the holding area to change our cylinders to be ready to go back in again if needed.

Whilst outside I did hear various explosions coming from the building. This was relayed back that it was believed to be gas. Although there was no proper confirmation of this. There was then some worry that the gas was still on and supplying the building. If I remember rightly the gas board was then brought in to dig up the road and isolate the gas from getting to the building.

Whilst at the leisure centre I have conducted a fire ground A test. This is where I test the BA set and make sure it is in working order for when I have to use it again. I was also able to get refreshments at this time. I was then moved again from the leisure centre holding area with a group of other FFs and told to go back to the other side where the playground was. I was again in this area for quite some time. Whilst waiting I saw casualties being brought out of the Tower to the ambulance service. I have marked where they were brought to on exhibit SJH/1 with LAS.

I was sent in again at 0700Hrs by Watch Manager MEYRICK. I was with a FF from Peckham this time but again I can not recall his name. We had again entered underneath the Police riot shields due to the fact there was still falling debris.

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Whilst waiting in the lobby the DAC Pat GOULBOURNE addressed us telling us what was going on. He then left and we were instructed to go up to the fifth floor as apparently someone had made a call stating that there was somebody on that floor. We made our way back up the stairs again with no firefighting media or communications, only an enforcer and sledge hammer. On reaching the fifth floor we were met on the stairs by another crew who stated they had searched the fifth floor and there was nobody there and we were to carry on up to the sixth floor

We made our way to the sixth floor, This was massively smoke logged in the lobby area, A lot of the fire was out in these flats, again there was a lot of rubble on the floor, so we did our best to search and then moved out and eventually made our way to the tenth floor. We had been met with a lot of FFs in the stairwell who had been stating which floors had already been searched.

Having got to the tenth floor we made our way into the lobby area it was pitch black and was a lot hotter than on the fifth floor. There was no visibility due to the smoke. Once we entered, we have worked our way around on a right hand wall search, meaning we stay in contact with the wall to the right hand side to make it easier to find our way back out.. Having reached the flats and opened the doors, they were floor to ceiling alight. We did our best to search considering the fact the flats were fully alight. There was no way of telling what the flat numbers were. Literally everything was alight. We didn't have any firefighting media, for example a hose, water and extinguishers so couldn't attack the fire. We did our best to get into the flats as far as we could shouting out, but didn't get any response. It felt like we were in there awhile but I doubt we were. In some areas we were having to literally walk through flames to reach parts of the flats.

We then heard someone from the staircase door basically telling us to get out. What was said was "if there is anybody in there then get out of the floor". Had we had radio communications I would have radioed down to control to make sure that this was the case. I called out to the FF I was with and we immediately left and made our way back down the stairs to the entry control point.

We didn't have any radio communications for the whole time we were in there.

We returned back to entry control at 0722hrs.

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Having left the building we made our way again to the holding area and changed our cylinders again just in case we are needed to head up the tower again. We were then told we weren't going to be used, so I set about trying to find my crew which I did. We were then tasked to set up a ground monitor. We were asked to set up ground monitors at the base of the tower, on the flats that run along which are adjacent to the tower. This was to hit the tower with more water from that level. We then spent the next few hours doing that. I have marked the position of the ground monitors on exhibit SJH/1 with the words ground monitor.

A ground monitor is a bigger version of a hand hose and just sits on the ground and dispenses large volumes of water. Its not something which you hold it just stays on the ground. People do need to direct it whilst it is on. Watch Manager Ben HORNE was in charge of the area where the ground monitors were being used.

I was then instructed to be a safety officer at the garages by Watch Manager Ben HORNE, where they were keeping some of the bodies. I just had to warn people of the hazards as they walked past, telling them where they could and couldn't go. There were workmen working there at the time, I believe they were working on the gas mains and trying to cut the supply to the tower. I have marked this on exhibit SJH/1

That was roughly it until the time we were relieved and this was at around 1600Hrs. We were told to leave our appliance in situ as it was being used as the main pumping appliance to the incident. We had therefore taken another brigade vehicle back to our station.

I made it back to Deptord Fire Station at 1900Hrs.

That night during the incident the Incident Commander was Assistant Commissioner Andy ROWE. I do though understand the command structure of incidents. For example if there is a fire on the ground that I work on then my officer will be in charge of the job. If my station manager is ordered onto the job then they will decide who is in charge, it all depends on who has been ordered to the incident as to who will take overall command.

With regards to the Grenfell incident my Watch Manager was in charge of us as a crew but was not in

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overall charge.

When I initially turned up on the scene I did think that there was a strong possibility that I may not end up going home. Knowing that the tower was well alight, knowing there were people still in there and knowing that I was going to have to go in, due to the state of the tower, I thought there was a chance I would not be coming out.

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