

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: BROWN, STEWART

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 17 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: S BROWN

Date: 21/01/2018

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

My statement is in relation to my attendance of the fire at Grenfell Tower in the early hours of the morning on the 14th June 2017 at around 01:50 hrs.

In my statement I will mention the following people who are employed by the London Fire Brigade (LFB). Watch Manager Paul WATSON from Hammersmith, Watch Manger Andy MCKAY from Wimbledon, DAC Pat GOLDBORNE, Fire fighters YAMIN, LUNDQUIST and Ricky NUTTALL.

I am employed by the London Fire Brigade (LFB) I'm posted on the red watch at Battersea Fire Station as a Watch Manager. I joined the fire service in 1989 when I was [REDACTED] I completed 16 weeks basic training at the Scottish fire training school in Gullane, which is in East Lothian. I was then positioned to a station called port Glasgow which is on the estuary of the River Clyde in Glasgow in Feb 1990 where I spent two years completing my probation. I transferred to Paisley which is beside Glasgow airport around May 1992. From 1992 until 2007 I was stationed at Paisley but I only remained operational at Paisley from 1992 until round about maybe 2000-2001 because I became a full time Union Official and became heavily involved with the Fire Brigade Union (FBU). I was still attached to the Paisley red watch but was doing less and less operational work. I would still go back for the odd 2 or 3 day per month just to keep up my skills but generally I was doing more union work. In 2005 I became an executive council member of the fire bridge union and stayed there for 7 years, at the same time in 2007 I transferred from Strathclyde to London into the LFB where I was posted to Knightsbridge fire station initially after a two-week conversion course. I spent two years at Knights Bridge then transferred to Chelsea to become part of the FRU to obtain the Fire Rescue skills. I spent 4 years there before being promoted to a crew

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manager. I was moved to Wimbledon red watch where I stayed for 18 months before being offered temporary promotion at Clapham. I went to Clapham for 6 months, whilst there I completed the promotion process for watch manager and was promoted to red watch Battersea on the 1st January 2016 where I have been there ever since.

On the night of 13th June 2017 it was our first night shift. I started work at 8pm that night and carried out our usual routines. Usual routines would be roll call to make sure everyone was there, to assign duties, and the trucks fire fighters will be riding that evening. The fire fighters would then test their breathing Apparatus (BA) set. An inventory is completed on both trucks to make sure all the equipment is there. If any equipment is missing it would either, be reported to myself or the Crew Manager and then logged on the computer. A fire fighter would also sign for the inventory on the computer. There would be a general clearing up of the station and getting ready for the night shift.

The appliances at Battersea are a pump ladder and a fire rescue unit (FRU). The fire rescue unit (FRU) has specialist equipment. We also have Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) equipment that are called POD modules these are massive containers which are mobilised for incidents such as rescues in collapsed buildings, nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological (CBRN) attacks on London, Terrorism and train derailments. The appliance is generally crewed with five people on the pump ladder and 4 on the FRU. I think that on the evening of 13th June there were 6 on the pump ladder and 5 on the FRU making both appliances were fully crewed.

The mess manager would have been cooking. I can't remember what we had to eat that night, we would generally eat around nine o'clock. After dinner we sit down and talk about some operational issue or have lectures for a couple of hours. I can't remember what was discussed that particular night. The fire fighters would have been stood down from about 11'o clock this is then free time until 7 o'clock the next morning unless we are mobilised. We have beds in the station so are free to go to bed after 12pm and have a sleep. I didn't do this initially because I was studying for promotion so sat reading for quite a while. I hadn't been in bed that long when we got the shout which came over the tannoy H271 to mobilise at approximately 01.30 in the morning.

I don't remember who was assigned as duty person for the watch room that night. They went downstairs to take the tip sheet from the printer and acknowledge the message, this provided details of the job we were assigned to. I was handed the tip sheet and I think the duty man said it says make pumps 20. I might be wrong it might have said make pumps 25 but I think it was 20. Which means they needed to increase the response to 20 fire engines to attend the incident. So we were part of the extra response after the initial

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engines to be mobilised. I instantly thought wow this is something. I acknowledged the address which was off our stations ground and quite a distance away. I'm not sure if it stated we were going to a high rise building.

I'm not sure if it told us the rendezvous point was Sirdar Road or if I was given that information over the radio by control. I think on the tip sheet it said to approach via Earls Court Road and the West Way roundabout. I was thinking about the time we were going to get there, what we had and analysing the information, getting everyone on the truck and out of the doors as soon as possible and then off we went with blue lights and sirens on. Whilst on our way I relayed the information I had to my crew. I looked at the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) which is a computer that normally mirrors what is on the tip sheet but with an added box which flashes up if a new message comes through, or the information on the tip sheet is amended it flashes up red and changes back to black once you have acknowledged it. It kept flashing up within 2 or 3 minutes of us leaving the station it was clear that something was going on that was unprecedented. Control via radio was just going mad but the MDT wasn't mirroring what I had on my tip sheet there was no further information on the MDT it was a blank screen. We were unable to access any information regarding the address which may have been gathered from a 72D visit. I will explain what a 72D visit is fully further in my statement.

We have had problems with the vision system over the last couple of years. I therefore contacted control and asked if I could have the information sent back via the MDT and I don't actually think I got an acknowledgement because it was just too busy. I had enough information to deal with what I had to deal with, I knew the address, I knew it was a 20 pump fire, I knew that we were going to be working as soon as we got there and I knew roughly the rendezvous point so that was enough for me to get to the scene of operations. I had no background knowledge of Grenfell or the area. I had not worked in that area before. On route about 5 or 10 minutes later whilst travelling up Earls Court Road I could see a lot of black smoke and flames and knew something was seriously wrong. At the West Way Roundabout Shepherd's Bush, I could see a lot of smoke but couldn't quite see what was going on. I think we then turned right and then first or second left which took us into the estate and chaos. It took around 12-15 minutes to get there, we arrived around 01:45 hrs the very latest. There were a lot of people, fire fighters and police officers running around. The driver had parked our engine 20 yards behind the fire engine in front of us and we were at least a 1/2 (half) mile away from the Tower. Access to the base of the Tower was horrible, access was totally blocked with cars, and there were very, very narrow roads. I think cars were on either side or fire engines that were at the initial attendance. I don't know how many engines were there before

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us but it was make pumps 20 there could have been maybe 10, 12, 15 maybe even 19 fire engines there before us the road was full of fire engines. The base of Grenfell was built up, it shouldn't have been, as there was no space to manoeuvre any fire engines. There were grass mounds at the back of the building where I later set up the marshalling area. There was a school that had been built and it was literally meters away from the base of the building. There were no flat surfaces to put a turn table ladder up, there was no flat surface to put any of our ladders up it was too slippery and too slopped. There was a canopied area that you could walk under and a grass mound and round the back was a grass mound with a path going round it. The only place to put a fire engine when you drove round was where a turn table ladder was already parked which was on the side of the building where the fire started, there was a grassy mound there. There was no access for any other appliances.

Grass areas can get bogged down and appliances can sink in the mud. We wouldn't necessarily put a fire engine that close to the building. But what we would do is put a turn table ladder there. But when the turn table ladder puts it jacks out it would then sink into the grass it needs to be hard standing. Because the trucks are so heavy the four jacks are required to be extended out from the side of the truck to give it a stable frame to then extend the big ladder up. There is a whole load of things that a turn table ladder driver and officer in charge would look for on the road surface not even on grass. They will look for it on roads like drains, certain surfaces that might not seem hard standing enough, there are a whole load of risks they have to look out for.

A crescent shaped road lead to a big leisure centre, a little road that lead you to the block of flats, there is a grass area and paths coming up the leisure centre and one that goes all the way around the back of Grenfell Tower. Exhibit SSB/1 is a drawing of where we parked and where I set up a BA Marshalling point in relation to Grenfell Tower. On the fourth side the building was all shrub land, so no access there. At the back side 3 was an all grass area with fences there was no access for fire engines as such it was difficult in get in and at side 2 was a massive concrete covered area with a flat roof that you could walk under.

I said to the crews put a breathing apparatus set on each, grab as much equipment as you can, I think I said bring the sets, bring the thermal imaging camera, breaking in gear and 5 hose as much as we can carry and we will take it up to the scene of operations and have a bit of a tool dump, (equipment dump). We took everything off the truck including the nominal roll board and walked maybe 50 yards forward turned the corner and walked around the crescent shaped road and was confronted by the right hand side of the building probably 6-8 floors alight, the flames were licking up, up, up it was just red, it's difficult

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to describe. I have not seen anything like it before, not on a high rise block only on TV. It moved up as I was looking at it from here it moved up this side and then it stopped and started to move back down the front face. It started to consume a lot of the Front face and for some reason it started to go back up and then it went round the side. As per my diagram exhibit SB/1 it started on side 1 then moved to 2, 3, and 4 in that movement it went up and down and up and down and up. It just seemed to go up so far and the wind would catch it and then the cladding would catch fire. The whole area somewhere between 2 and 3 became totally compromised. All the cladding was falling down there. Blocks of cladding 3 or 4 ft. wide were falling narrowly missing quite a few people. It would have killed someone if it had hit them. Generally, when I arrive at a large incident there is a Watch Manager at a control command unit, I would go there with my crew, book in where I would be assigned a role at the job. This is not what happened on this job.

I couldn't find the command unit to book in. I had the nominal roll board which is a flat metal sheet with the call sign of our appliance H271 and the crew named. The officer in charge number one, number two is the driver and then the other 4 members of the crew. This should have been handed into command to provide them with a tally of who is at the incident and what trucks are in attendance. This would also marry up with our system at the station called stars which is a staff attendance system.

I got to where ambulances and a turntable ladder were parked. The ladder was half up, I'm not quite sure what was going on but at this point there was cladding falling off the side of the building. Its hose was charged and plugged in, it had been used at some point but I hadn't actually seen it. I think they managed to reverse into the covered area and get it away before cladding fell onto it.

There was no senior officer there to give me guidance at all so I took it upon myself to run this whole area and there was a lot of fire fighters turning up at this point with Breathing Apparatus sets on their backs going oh my God what the hell is happening here, a lot of swearing as you could imagine. There were a lot of residents, I don't know whether the residents were from Grenfell or from other blocks of flats in the surrounding area. To the side of the Tower was a canopy with a concrete stairwell leading up onto a flat roof. There were fire fighters on this flat roof with lengths of hose pointing jets at the building. There were people hanging out of Grenfell windows. There was already a scene of operations in Grenfell Tower which is what we call a Bridge Head, for the attack on the actual fire. I could see that through the glass panels on the 1st floor Mezzanine type floor in the building a Bridge Head had been set up there. A Bridge Head in a high block of flats is usually set up two floors below where the fire is. This is our forward command position in the building. Our command and control generally would always be outside.

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I didn't speak with anyone in command until about 05:30 hrs. I never had any communication with a direct line manager above me so I have no idea how the command changed through the incident. I was doing what according to the fire brigade terminology as freelancing which is against policy. LFB would tell me not to do that and it is drummed home that under no circumstances can any free-lance at a fire/job you have got to be under the control of someone. But I was free lancing no one knew what I was doing. I only spent a couple of minutes looking for someone in command before making the decision to go ahead. I didn't see the point in wandering around looking for someone I had to do something there and then. I am not sure where our nominal roll board went, it should have gone to one of the command units to book in. It would have been brought with us. I am not sure if I had it. The driver in theory would have had it with him. I don't know where it went, I am not sure whether we booked in anywhere to be honest, and I don't know if they were aware of who was there from my station.

As there was no one here to give me any guidance I was thinking to myself get on with it Stewart you are big enough and ugly enough to think what is required if there is no one here to help me. I have been on enough courses to know what I am doing in terms of being in command of that area.

I started to set up a structure to allow me to communicate with the Bridge Head. I found out who was in charge of the bridge and spoke to Watch Manager Paul WATSON from Hammersmith who told me what resources he needed.

There were a number of fire fighters making their way towards me on mass. I was near a little wall and a path leading up towards the leisure centre. I told them all initially to sit round about the point I have marked on exhibit SSB/1 and I set up what we call a Breathing Apparatus marshalling spot. There were a lot of determined fire fighters who were trying to get past to the Bridge Head because fire fighters being fire fighters wanted to go in and rescue people. However the Bridge Head was full.

This situation where I was trying to create this BA marshalling area was frustrating because I knew that I had to try and create some sort of command and control and fire fighters were just ignoring me. I could understand someone above me questioning what I was doing when I hadn't been told to do that. There were fire fighters trying to freelance and I was trying to stop them, I was freelancing so it was a bit hypocritical of me, but there was no other way. Where was I going to go? I knew there was senior officers in the Bridge Head but I didn't know where anyone else was I couldn't see anyone. I kind of thought I will just be officer in charge for the day. I did see white helmets I did see senior officers around but they were too busy to be talking to me.

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I can't remember his name but a crew manager helped me. There needed to be a structure and command system in place here so I stopped everyone going into that small space. I gathered them around and said "Guys and girls you are going to have to just stay where you are, I will ask you to come through in 4's 5's 6's as required, but I need you to stay here". So after a couple of times having to shout these instructions out they did stop. Because of the cladding and whatever else was falling off the side of the building and to stop people going through that area we set up a little cordon with the do not cross tape. I don't remember what time this was but the fire started to come round as it spread up the building it then started to come back down and then it went round. I was in charge of this whole area from when I arrived at around 01:52 hrs until about 05:30 hrs. There were a couple of other people who came to help throughout the night but then they disappeared because there was so much going on.

As the fire progressed, I was doing what I was doing but I felt a bit useless and wanted to go into the Tower, but kept saying to myself no you are doing exactly what needs to be done. I still wasn't aware of where the command unit was there was probably one near to where I was working, and I think at one point we had 6 or 7.

When firefighters and people started coming out of Grenfell or fire fighters were bringing people out, I had an issue with the LAS. I think whoever was in charge of LAS in this area stopped them going in. I can understand why the LAS were under instructions not to go through the area because they didn't have hard hats but we were having people coming out of Grenfell practically on fire their clothes were smoking they were so hot. They weren't actually on fire but their skin their bodies were burnt and I was asking the paramedics to go in and they wouldn't. To a certain extent on reflection I can understand why because there was stuff falling down we have got our helmets on. They had loads of stretchers and they started getting things set up like area casualty handling area.

After ½ hour or so I realised that this whole BA marshalling holding area just wasn't sufficient enough so we moved them all back along the side of this massive big recreation centre. I gathered the fire fighters together and told them on my instruction and my instructions only you will be told to come back down here in 10's. People were desperate to jump the queue. I said I don't care who it is but you need to organise yourself, you are all going to get a BA wear in here just organise yourself and come down here in 10's. At this point they were asking for standard duration breathing apparatus (SDBA) sets which we carry on the pump ladder. On the FRU we have Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) set which lasts longer but I was only dealing with SDBA at that point.

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Grenfell continues to deteriorate it goes on and on and on and more stuff keeps falling, fire fighters were coming up and down here to the holding area. There are residents appearing on the flat roof who we were trying to get down. This whole covered area which wasn't a car park, it was an access area with a little gate which lead to the park at the back. At some point throughout the night I believe it became compromised to an extent that it couldn't be used. I wasn't aware of this at the time because what I was doing was communicating with the Bridge Head and they were telling me to send people through so I was bringing them from the recreation area to the holding point to then send them to the Bridge Head on the instructions of Paul Watson.

I wasn't quite sure what was happening in terms of these people that were getting sent to the Bridge Head. They were getting sent past my cordon and along the area that had been cordoned off. We were trying to keep them away from all the cladding that was falling, it wasn't falling straight down it was bouncing and on fire. I don't know who had tasked him but there was a fire fighter with a litter covering hose reel jet putting the fire out as the debris was falling.

When the BA wearer left this area they were told to go to the Bridge Head and book in with Watch Manager Watson or whoever was in charge of the Bridge Head. Now that for a fire fighter is a very simple task (it's not difficulty). But for some reason it was taking longer than expected and I couldn't work out why and to this day no one has been able to tell me what was going on. It was so chaotic I think by this point there was an access area, they were trying to gain access through I think a door which I eventually went through later on at around 05:30 hrs.

Until then I was controlling communicating with LAS, Met police and anyone else that wanted to speak to me. Senior officers were coming up to ask what I was doing I was telling them. The commissioner arrived at one point I don't know what time that was but the look on her face was just astounding as if to say my God I don't believe this and then she disappeared I don't know where she went after that. So at some point I am not sure when it happened but let's say about 04:00 hrs but it may have been earlier there were calls for EDBA wearers.

I don't know how many EDBA sets we had at the incident but it clearly wasn't enough. I know from my own experience later when I climbed to the 9th or 10th floor the BA sets were just not lasting long enough to get anywhere close to the 23rd floor and I think the officer in charge of this area and the officer in charge of the incident realised that and started committing EDBA sets and wearers.

Another holding area ahead with all the EDBA wearers was set up. They were all told the exact same brief that when you are needed you will come down here to report to me and I will send you with a

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briefing. Quite early on in the incident I had been given, by one of the residents and a fire fighter a very detailed drawing of what someone thought was the sort of floor layout in the Tower. There were two lifts, a stairwell and 6 flats (3 on each side). I was told that when you come out of the stairwell this whole side of the building is on fire so when you come out of the stairwell turn right and go to the flats there and it was search and rescue and firefighting. So that was the brief I was giving every single person. Go to whatever floor you are given come out of the stairwell turn right and there are three flats do not turn left that was the briefing I was giving up until 05:30 hrs based on information that I had been given.

I wasn't in communication with anyone else. Our communication systems are awful our hand held radios are abysmal. Imagine the scale of events that night and we have got 6 channels and I think we only use 2 or 3 of them which is just impossible. Breathing apparatus was on channel 6 and there was a large amount of BA wearers that night all trying to talk to the Bridge Head. Someone would have been on Channel one for communications. I was trying to communicate with that Bridge Head officer on channel 1. We have got another 5 channels that officers can use, fire fighters can use channel 3 for specific tasks it's not enough as everyone wanted to say something. Sometimes fire fighters forget to go on channel 6 but at least they were still in communication with someone. When you are doing specific tasks you haven't got time so especially when you are under so much pressure you are walking over bodies you are being confronted with family members all that sort of stuff. So it is a major gripe that we just do not have proper communications and on that night it was a failing for me big time. I was on my radio constantly wanting to know what resources the Bridge Head wanted and it was difficult to communicate. It would have been nice if could have had direct communication but that just wasn't possible on the night. It was a dangerous situation not having proper communications. One of the big things hammered home to me in terms of my fire service career is we are out there doing our job but our fire control operators that are based in Merton are technically our eyes and ears and they feed us so much information. We have got this all singing all dancing communication system called vision mobilising system and we can usually keep in contact with the few fire control operators that are left in control because they have been depleted in numbers. I think there was only 7 on that night it was ridiculous or 12. How they coped that night I don't know. Imagine how many fire calls that came in that night 12 people. Two or three of them. One officer in charge, one supervisor and then 10 control operators all working throughout the night taking all these FSG calls. I know there is a command unit that can take some of the pressure off.

We have got these communications between the fire engines on the fire ground and our control room in Merton but yet we have got the worst communications between our control systems at the fire ground and

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the fire fighters that are going to risk their lives in a burning building. It is so bad that if I was to radio another officer from one end to the other end of Wandsworth fire station they wouldn't be able to hear me. As soon as it has gone through two or three concrete walls the signal is lost. We could talk to people on the moon in the 1960's for goodness sake.

At some point during the night there then started to be a little bit of confusion as to who was in control and who was asking for resources but I tried to get that back on track by just speaking to Paul and we did get it back in order.

From about 05:30 hrs too probably about 05:50 hrs I went over to the rest room to use the toilet, the Salvation Army van was near there. I had a cup of tea and a cry I was on my knees crying.

Prior to having the cup of tea, I knew I was probably going to go in to the Tower and as I have a problem with my knee and my knee brace was on the truck I walked back to get it because when I have a knee brace on its absolutely fine. I thought if I am going to be climbing stairs then I need it, I don't think I would be able to do so many stairs without it. On the way back I meet one of the resident, a guy maybe 35 late 30's who I would describe as Egyptian, North African or Moroccan who grabbed me and said he was trying to communicate with someone on the 21st floor he had family members in there and did I know if they were alive or not. Our protocol is obviously until you know not say yes or no. So he gave me a couple of names including his name and telephone number on a piece of paper which I cannot remember now. I said stay here and I will come back in a few minutes when I have found out the information for you.

There was now a command unit there which I didn't know until in entered was giving Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls. I will explain later on in my statement what FSG is. I walked back up to this command unit which was full of senior officers. Although I have got a white helmet I am not a senior officer. Vary rarely would a Watch Managers get invited onto command units at this sort of scale of incident. They are generally senior officers or Station Managers and above who are having either silver meetings or gold meetings, with partnership organisation like police, LAS and local authorities.

I knocked on the door and said can you do me a favour could you tell me if floor 21 had been searched and if anyone had been found. There was a board on the wall with a list of floors. They had a system in place that I wouldn't be able to explain now how it worked, but at the time it was reasonably clear. It had floor numbers and there were tick boxes, it said searched no person or searched and how many found.

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Whoever I spoke to said we are struggling to get people up there at the moment. I walked back to where I met the guy, but he was gone. So I put the bit of paper in my pocket there was nothing I could do, I wasn't going to find him that night.

I gathered myself together and went back over to the fire ground where I found a couple of my crew. They had been in the Tower and were in bits but wanted to go back in again. I then spent the next half an hour trying to find the rest of Battersea's crew. I realised my FRU from Battersea were there they hadn't been mobilised to the incident long after us. I think they were mobilised on make pump 40 which would also generate a certain amount of officer and fire rescue units. Sometimes there is a tipping point whereby after so many fire engines have been mobilised to an incident then a fire rescue would be mobilised. Then a command unit will be mobilised and it's on done on the predetermined attendance for each type of incident but that can be manually overridden. I think between having my cup of tea and going back and finding my crews the sun was coming up and we were just sitting there going oh my god what is this all about. I was just waiting around as someone else had taken over the BA area. I felt as though I had done my bit there I just wanted to gather my thoughts and I knew that people were still going in.

Something had happened with the EDBA sets and I believe they had used all the sets so had to get cylinders charged. I don't know how that happened but I think an operation support unit was sent away to get them charged and also brought back spare EDBA sets from somewhere. There was a truck load of new sets, I was told there was a problem and the batteries were dead on them. Which created a bit of an issue for us as they would not be able to communicate with the telemetry system between BA set and BA board. I don't know whether they were recharged somehow but we were faced with an issue of there being a lack of EDBA sets so had to reuse what we had.

We had to do what we call a fire ground A test which is a quick change of cylinder make sure the set works, do the necessary checks on the set to make sure there is a seal and then its ready to go again. They were also struggling for EDBA wearers as not everyone is trained to wear them.

On a pump ladder as a fire fighter joining the fire service you would be trained to wear SDBA which is what you would use in a day to day business of putting out fires. I don't know when EDBA sets were introduced. I have been in London for 10 years we didn't used to have them when I worked up in Strathclyde we just had SDBA. The SDBA have one cylinder and EDBA have a twin cylinders so it makes it last longer maybe about 10 or 15 minutes sometimes a little bit longer depending on the breathing rate of the individual you can make it last 20-25 minutes longer if you are not over exerting

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yourself. So this is a lot heavier because it has an extra cylinder on it apart from that it is exactly the same set.

When you join the fire service you are trained in SDBA. When you join an FRU station you would be expected to complete an EDBA course. Apart from the weight which you have to take into consideration the only thing that is different is the back plate and the cylinder and some of the procedures in terms of it lasting longer. Everyone in Battersea fire station is trained so would anyone in a Fire rescue station in London and there are 14 of them. All would be EDBA trained including the ones that were on the pump ladder that night because we integrate the crews over different shifts. I might be on the FRU one night and then pump ladder the next. So the pump ladder would more often than not have EDBA trained personnel. Anyone not EDBA trained and wanting to transfer to Battersea would at some point be sent on an EDBA conversion course. The majority of fire fighters that were at Grenfell that night would only have been SDBA trained. If I had of only been SDBA trained, I have to be very honest as there were a lack of EDBA wearers I would have grabbed a set and gone in no one would ever have known. Our policy and procedures went out of the window that night. If anyone would have said to me why did you go in when you are not trained Id have said stuff you go away and shut up.

Whatever time it would have been between me leaving my post and 7.30 am there were a lack of EDBA wearers. As I am EDBA trained I thought they need people so I may as well go in. EDBA wearers were told to rendezvous to the side roughly in this area marked on drawing exhibit SSB/1 behind some trees where we were put in another BA holding area. At this stage most of Grenfell had been consumed by fire, when we got the call to say we were going in. We were being escorted by police with riot shields along a little path and into the building because debris was still falling. Water was pouring down every space in the building it was very smoky there was glass everywhere it was an environment that we generally try to avoid for a health and safety perspective, but as I said most of the procedures weren't adhered to that night.

We were put into a little holding room out the back which was in 1 ½ ft. of water deep and there were around 12 firefighters stood in there cold and wet waiting to go up. I admit I was very nervous. I phoned my partner, I phoned my mum and told them what was happening as I wasn't sure that I was going to come out alive. I also phoned my dog sitter and asked them to give my dog a cuddle. The conversations that were going on, was this is our 9/11.

I like to think generally I am a good governor. We have a bit of a thing in the fire bridge about mobile phones. We try to encourage fire fighters not to have mobile phones on them. Fire bridge policy is that it

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should be in your locker whilst you are at work. More often than not people have them on them and I tell them that as long as they are on silent and they are not interfering with our work processes then it is fine. On that night I was in the specific area and I was getting a lot of shit. Not in a nasty way but other fire fighters were saying you told us to leave our mobile phone on the truck, which I did, but I had my mobile phone on me. I don't know how many people did it but fire fighters were making phone calls to their partners from my mobile phone. They were quite thankful that I had my mobile phone that night and I was glad I had it as well. Everyone was having similar conversations.

From the holding room we were then being taken across to the stairwell up to a flat landing and then another stairwell this become the mezzanine area where we were briefed to go in. I think there was about 3 or 4 maybe 5 BA boards set up which were communicating with the fire fighters. I remember seeing Patrick GOLDBOURNE a friend of mine who is a DAC and Andy MCKAY a Watch Manager from Wimbledon, there were other fire officers but I cannot remember their names.

It was chaos up there, it was like Niagara Falls. These were the very words of Patrick GOLDBOURNE. He said we have got no other way of getting you to these floors so you just have to go in, which was fine by me. Our structural PPE, our firefighting equipment, our tunic and leggings are not designed to get wet, then be in a hot environment it's not nice when your clothing gets that wet because you can steam yourself to death. So we were putting our self at a massive risk.

Myself, firefighter YAMIN, firefighter LUNDQUIST and firefighter NUTTALL were given a brief, we were sent in as a team of four and I thought we were told to proceed to floor 12 take hold a jet, extinguish the fire in the four flats and then see what else you could do between floors 9 and 12.

We reported to the Breathing Apparatus (BA) control officer before being committed. The BA board will tell the entry officer how many wearers have been committed, where they are how many minutes each fire fighter has been on the job, this information correlates with the system that's on your BA set, it's a communication system. All the sets being used inside the fire being used by fire fighters are constantly communicating with this board they are only married up when we report to the BA entry control officer. When I originally wrote my statement, I thought I had gone to floor 10, 11 and 12 but there is a little bit of discrepancy between myself and the three other guys I went in with. So it was roughly between the 9th and 12th floor that we went too. We were given a brief to go to the 12th floor, search and rescue we were committed at around 7:45 or 08:00.

I remember going up the stairs and there was chaos. On the 6th or 7th floor there was a really, really large casualty/fatality and people were just walking all over him or her. It was someone who was at least 20

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stone they were wrapped around the corner of the stairwell and there was hose on top of them, there was no way that we could move the person. I think they had probably been there for quite a while. I am not sure whether they were dead or alive but I stood on them. I knew that hundreds of people had done what I had just done and I did not have time to worry about that because I had been given a brief.

The conditions on the first to around the 5th floor was smoky with visibility a few steps in front of me. By the 6th floor it started getting smokier. The stairwell was very narrow probably only 4 ft. wide, very tight narrow stairwell, steep stairs with little landings with a metal railing on the outside wall. The smoke was building up, until practically zero visibility by the 7th floor.

The noise was deafening. Mainly through the intensity of the water but also voices of fire fighters in BA. By the time I reached the 6th or 7th floor I was exhausted those EDBA sets are heavy and I was tired from the weight of the water. I am not that fit so I was struggling, I thought I'm not sure how effective I am going to be up here. I had three other fire fighters with me so that takes the pressure of a little bit. If there is only two of you then there is more pressure on one of you to do and the other person to look after the one doing the work and then rotate.

If you can imagine standing under a very, very, very powerful waterfall that's how much water was pouring down on top of me there was no way of avoiding it the water was pouring down my back into my fire clothing. Even though it was a warm evening and I was going to go into fire and it is going to be warm I did not want to get wet, it is a health and safety risk. I was soaking within the first two floors. The realisation was there is no point in turning back now just get on with it. Not from a bravado point of view, I don't want to turn back just in case people slag me off, it was like I've got a job to do here there are people in danger, if there's people up there then I am going to go up there to help. The thing that concerned me from a health and safety prospective was the access to the floor when I was getting soaked. Both the fire brigade and the fire brigade union would say we should not enter in those conditions however it was impossible not to. The reason we should not get so wet then enter into intense heat is because it creates an effect of a boil in a bag situation.

I could hear my own in/out breath, the communications set in my helmet and people talking in my ear. My fellow fire fighters saying are you there are you there. Adrenalin was rushing so I wasn't going to hear much. Even in a normal standard fire people do struggle to hear, it was hard to find time to take stock of the situation. I was in constant communication with my fellow fire fighters and made sure they were with me at all times.

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I followed my brief, I took my crew up to the 12th floor initially and we accessed it. There was no indication on the stairwell that we were on the 12th floor, someone counted it and we spoke to other fire fighters and they said yes this is floor 12. When I opened the landing door I suddenly had a flash back to the little plan that I had been giving out as a brief. I could see the two lifts but I could not believe the rest of the scene that was in front of me. It was as if a bomb had gone off, a big bomb.

I exited the stairwell to the right and went to the furthest flat on that landing first. I could see an entrance to a flat and the whole room was on fire. I worked my way back around this side and could see from the entrance that all flats were on fire. I walked back along the corridor and it was the same again every single thing was on fire everything.

It was at a very late stage in the fire. It had burnt most things down, but was still going, the heat up there was intense but I just knew if anyone was in those rooms there was no way they would have survived. My crews were trying to gain access to these flats to see if there were any bodies in there. I could get to about 10 ft. into the hallway of one of the flats. But there was no point so went back round to the crews who were all doing the same as me trying to gain access. But I don't believe they got any further into the flats than 10 ft. I would have found it hard to believe if they had, because they would have been walking on piles of rubble, ash and flames.

We had compromised water supplies; the hoses were everywhere, no one knew what hose was going where it was just like spaghetti everywhere. That tends to be the case at a fire quite a lot of the time. Usually you can have some degree of control over it but it was chaos. There was a charged hose going into the floor and doors were wedged open, fire doors were wedged open with the hose going in. When we eventually found the branch opened it the water pressure had dropped so there was nothing in it. I tried to communicate with the Bridge Head to tell them we had no water but was unable to.

Everything I could see between floor level and 3 ft. high was just piles of rubble and furniture and little flames. It had been burning so intensely especially on the right hand side of the building where the fire had started originally. There were two or three flats in front of the lift. I remember the one to the right especially being like a nuclear bomb had gone off. There was nothing in it just a pile of rubble ash and burning embers, and really, really hot. There were partition walls there from what I can remember. The next flat was the same, and then at one point at I have to admit bizarrely I got a little bit disorientated and lost. I knew this corridor wasn't that big the access to all these flats wasn't that big. All this area was completely black with the flames and smoke there was no clear way of seeing where I could go back out, it felt like I was in a room with no exit. I had to retrace my steps by using my arm to go along the wall

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pushing and pulling anything I could find, until I could find the door to the stairwell. Although I could still see I was just going along pushing and pulling anything that I could find until such time as I could find the door and it pulled open and that was back on to the stairwell. So I pulled the crew out to go to the other floors.

The intensity of the fire with the flame and heat in each property would have resulted in everything burning. Those front doors if they were fire doors and had 30-minute protection then you have got 30 minutes. If there were solid hard wood doors they may have given an hour's protection. But when I went in it was 5 hours later so everything had collapsed. The fire had gone from the window and consumed the whole flat. It had reached the front door and consumed them. When it reaches the front door and the area where the lifts were it was all concrete so there wasn't anything there to burn really. It had kind of burnt itself eventually because there was nothing in that concrete area other than two lifts, a dry riser and a bin chute, door to the bin chute and doors to each flat that's all that would be in that area.

We made our way with difficulty back down to the other floors I believe 9, 10 and 11. I think it was the 10th floor which had been affected by fire but didn't seem as badly decomposed in terms of the fire as the other floors. I couldn't understand why it wasn't quite as affected it seemed strange. Although we had EDBA on we had no water, we had been given a specific brief to go to these four floors, we had done what we had been asked to do and I made the decision to leave the building. We could quite easily have gone up to floor 13, 14, 15 max but couldn't communicate with the Bridge Head to let them know what we were doing. Communication was still awful, I wasn't prepared to do that.

I gathered my crew together and said let's make our way back out, a decision a couple of the guys weren't happy with. Especially Ricky NUTTALL who wanted to continue up further. By the point of when I said to the crews we are getting out that was me I had, had enough. I know they are fitter than me and wanted to stay longer. But I was boss, I'd made a risk assessment of the area we were working in and a conscious decision that if there were anyone in there they would be been dead. I justified it by saying we have been given a specific brief, we don't have communication I am not going to put my life or your life or anyone else life in danger at this stage in the operation it wouldn't be justifiable. I wasn't going to be walking through flames to try to find someone when I didn't have water. I didn't know the dangers that were in there, I didn't know if the floor had collapsed. If there had of been a child in front of me holding her hands up saying help me help me help me, then I would have gone in.

It was 8:00 o'clock in the morning when we went in the building was pretty much consumed by 03:00 hrs. I decided it would be better going downstairs regrouping and maybe being sent to another floor

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probably without me. We have got a general policy from the LFB which is 2 BA wears at a job from a physicality point of view because it is quite tiring. At a fire you would generally ask for more resources rather than recommitting officers. I don't know if that was adhered to. I only had one wear, but others were in and out so I don't know whether people were keeping notes of how many times fire fighters were actually going in the building. We have got enough resources well we used to have enough resources in London. LFB believe they have enough resource.

Lengths of hose had burst from sharp edges or sharp objects hence why the water was cascading down the stairwell. Usually at the scene of operations you may have 4 lengths of hose going in the pump. The pump operator from the street you would be able to tell that hose A, B, C, D had a direct correlation between fire fighter so would know which one to turn off if one hose had burst. A, B, C D. This was different at Grenfell. We had lengths of hose going everywhere no one knew what length of hose was attached to which pump and the dry riser. I didn't know if the hose was attached to the dry riser main I couldn't see it. I wasn't aware which hose was attached to a dry riser I just assumed that it came out of maybe two floors below which is what you would normally do in a Bridge Head. There were hoses everywhere, this is a protected stairwell here but this stairwell is supposed to be protected against fire. It was protected against fire but it wasn't protected against smoke because all the residents and all the fire fighters were in and out leaving doors open or the fire had broken through the doors as every single flat was on fire. I don't know whether any of the doors were fire doors. There was flames and smoke on the landing where the lifts were. We are usually able to use the fire lifts. I never heard of anyone using the fire lifts on that night I don't know if there were fire lift in Grenfell that we used initially. Normally this area is clear of smoke and flames so you can work from here in clean air and work your way up to the fire. But every single floor was affected by the fire and there was smoke in the lobby and smoke in this protected stairwell hence why people were being overcome by smoke. This was the reason fire fighters were having to start their sets up and walk up from the ground floor to whatever floor they were briefed to go to. They were having to walk up this protected stairwell in BA using their air in their set so by the time they had got to the scene of operation half of their cylinders had been used.

I remember looking in a bin chute on every floor and there was no smoke no flame nothing in there. Which sort of lead to think that if people had been in there they might have been alright. But would you have wanted to have been in there knowing what was going on around you? Probably not.

It felt like a bit of a wasted BA wear. We had gone up there and we hadn't really done anything or achieved anything. We hadn't put out the fire, there wasn't anything I could do in terms of fighting the

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fire as we had no water, we hadn't saved anyone, and we hadn't found anyone. I know the other guys had been in earlier and probably rescued people but I didn't. The realisation at that time was that a lot of people had perished but there was nothing I could do about it. I was dealing with the BA area rather than actually being in seeing the operations. This is something I have struggled with and have received counselling for to help get over it.

I reported back to the Bridge Head on the mezzanine level and gave the officer in charge a briefing and removed ourselves from the building. I went back over to the holding area and collapsed, I took my set off, rested and waited for further instructions. The next instruction I got was at 10:30 am when we were told to leave the incident.

The following day after I had been to Paddington and completed my report/notes, I went back to Battersea station to change into clean fire gear. I found this bit of paper the guy had given me and I just broke down. I felt guilty that I had not got back to him. I didn't really know what to do with that bit of paper. I had seen the news; they had said a number of people died. I sort of felt that I should try and communicate with the guy. I left the piece of paper in my locker for about a week and it really, really, really, bugged me to the point where I was getting really depressed. Eventually one of the other Watch Managers Ian Simpson came in to take over from me following our last night shift. He asked me if I was alright. I said no not really and told him what had happened. I gave him the piece of paper and said "Do you want to do me a favour and just get rid of it". "I can't physically get rid of it but felt ok giving it to you to get rid of" and that was the end of it. I don't know who the guy was and don't whether his family survived or not. I don't remember the flat number. All I know is that he said floor 21 . I do remember thinking the flat number didn't correlate with floor 21. I don't know if he was getting confused or I was confused.

The following is a few things I would like to clarify in terms of my training, experiences and policy and procedures, my view and understanding of them which have not been incorporated in the above part of my statement.

I don't know what the regulations state now. Years ago before 2002 the fire bridge union used to be involved in the central fire brigade advisory committee. Which was a group of people which were brought together to make sure that buildings were safe. To make sure they were safe for the residents, for the local authority, for the fire fighters. It stopped after a big dispute in 2002 when John Prescott and Tony Blair got involved and modernised the fire service and said it is now up to local authorities, individual premise owners, hoteliers, pub owner to do their own risk assessment. Because they wanted to modernise us and

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do more training, which in essence took our responsibility and our experience away from doing what we were good at. John Presott specifically said I am going to change you because we had that dispute about pay. This is probably a direct result of what he did in those days. It wouldn't have had that cladding on that building if we still had that system in place. That cladding wouldn't have been allowed.

I mentioned earlier in my statement FSG and will explain my understanding of it. The LFB has a policy on FSG calls which is more or less in layman's terms stay put policy. So in a compartment fire like Grenfell if there hadn't been any cladding on the front/face of the building then the stay put policy would have worked. I just assumed it was a stay put policy. Sometime we get called on as FSG trucks but we were not called on as that that night. I don't know what the instructions were that night or who they came from. I wasn't aware of who was making the decisions or when the decision changed.

I know it would have worked because it has always worked in terms of concrete buildings that have individual concrete compartments on each floor. The building is constructed in a way to stop fire spread moving from one room to another within a flat but also more specifically moving from one flat to another either side ways or up and down. In a building like Grenfell I'm pretty sure I'm not 100% sure but most of those high rise blocks would have been built with concrete. The dividing material between neighbours would have been concrete so there is no way that fire would move between those flats. The only reason that the fire did spread is because it was spreading outside and coming in through the windows that's why every single flat was affected. So if flat say 47 on the 4th floor was on fire without a cladded building, I wouldn't move a family from a flat on say the 11th floor. It is a perfectly safe policy.

I personally believe it's the right policy in the right circumstances. For cladded buildings maybe not or probably not and which is why that needs to be looked at. But since the FSG policy came into place then I believe following Lakenhall house fire there was issues about the cladding as well as the stay put. But generally 99% of the time it would be best to stay put, otherwise there would be a flow of people coming down a single stairwell which fire fighters are already using.

If everyone was to come out of the building at the same time it would result in overcrowding, there would be people blocking access to the floors fire fighters need to get to. We have to set up a safe working environment and safe systems of work, we don't need people coming down and interfering and getting in the way. I understand people want to leave the building because they feel unsafe but they are actually better off staying in their flats. If someone calls to say they are in flat 4 and you say that your flat is on fire the fire brigade will alert fire engines who will mobilise and deal with the fire. If a call is subsequently received from 5 or 6 floors up to say I can smell smoke the fire control operator on the other

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end of the line will reassure them it is ok as they have already received a call from the fire floor, and to stay in their flat unless they think the fire is on their floor. Generally, it will be just the smoke that is coming up, so they will be advised to just stay put and the fire brigade are on route and they will deal with it.

I would say I am a competent trained fire fighter and am trained in firefighting in a high rise block. We have yearly BA one day or two-day refresher courses at Park Royal or Becton training centre through Babcock's. The last one I did was at Park Royal, I can't remember the date of it. We do continuous training at the station, every week on our two day shift we all do some sort of training whether it is BA, or pieces of operational equipment. This is recorded on the station diary. We carry out regular training for High Rise procedures which is ongoing training at the station.

To be signed off within my development in January 2017. I organised a six pump BA exercise at Lambeth fire station which involved basement exercise but in theory it is the same but you are going down instead of up.

I have had a lot of experience of fighting fires in high rise blocks of flats during my service. I have only go two years' service left. I have never ever seen anything like this before in my career and I don't want to see it again. I attended a fire in Shepherds Bush I think in November 2016. So this was a fire quite close to Grenfell. West Way roundabout turn left, but we came in a different direction I think that was a 20 pump fire. It was about 5pm and daylight initially. The fire started moving on the 3rd floor, the flames had licked out of the window and had caught some of the cladding. It travelled up the side of the building to about the 6th floor before we could stop it. I remember being at that fire and had been detailed to go quite late on to go to the 6th floor and there was basically a window frame hanging out. We used the line support from the pump ladder to put a safe system of work in place for the fire fighters to go forward to then pull in this window frame that was just flapping. Although there was a cordon in place for debris falling off so that was my first fire with cladding.

I've seen cladding being installed and just automatically assumed that building regulations had signed it off that it was safe. There is a massive building on my station ground with it. I don't know when it was put on, we have since put in a load of smoke alarms and 24 hours cover. I wasn't aware of any safety measures, sprinkler or alarm systems in Grenfell Tower sprinklers or alarm systems. I wasn't aware of them, didn't hear them, and didn't see anything.

If Compartmentalisation fails it is part of the training, we received during BA training. You would in theory withdraw from the area. If it failed while you were in there you would want to withdraw and

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reassess the plans. Look at where you are going to be going because your access and egress may have been compromised, so you would report back to the officer in charge and explain what had happened. Then reassess whether it was safe to go back into the particular area again. But that is ongoing training we received either directly from myself as the Watch Manager or from local 4 pump six pump exercises or through training we go to annually at Park Royal.

Part of ongoing training is called a 360 degree, which is to go around the building to see if the fire has spread, the colour of the smoke, people might be hanging out the windows at the back, the fire might be more extensive at the back you don't know unless you do a 360 degree to check how well the fire is spreading. That is continually trained to officer and fire fighters. Initially when they first arrived at the incident someone would have been tasked with that. Whether that was a continual task throughout the night I'm not sure about. It was obvious to anyone who was working on the outside of the building you could see it spreading. I don't know if anyone was tasked in this incident.

I mentioned in my statement 72D visits and would explain it further here. A 72D visit is what we call a familiarisation visit to high rise blocks. 72D visits are completed by the respective fire station on that ground. The information obtained from the visits is recorded on the operation risk data base at the station. The type of information recorded is where the entrances are, where the hydrant is, a plan of the building, where the dry risers are, where the stairs are, and a mapping system of the area which you can zoom into. You would go up and down the lifts, all the way to the top to see if there are any access issues, if there is a lift motor room to see what sort of lift, it is just a total familiarisation of the block.

A number of blocks have Premises Information Plates (PIP) which is physical information obtained from the 72D visit. It's a plate placed in a position that is easily accessible and gives us a brief overview of the building, they were introduced in Strathclyde about 20 odd years ago a trial to put in place information for fire fighter to have when they arrive at an incident.

These were trialled in a number of boroughs in London. I don't think they had one in Grenfell and due to the cost cutting they decided with technology they could develop an Electronic Premises Information Plate (EPIP) which can be viewed on the MDT.

So the information for this particular block should now be on the computer. When I pressed the button for Grenfell Tower I should have been able to access the information via the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) and had that information to hand. On the night of the fire I could not access that information because it wasn't on the MDT. It didn't work, it's a rubbish system bought on the cheap.

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I have just completed a 72D on a block near Wandsworth roundabout a massive new development, partially clad with same stuff as that as Grenfell. Every single high rise block has access all around it in a private estate. It's still tight it's got a sort of one-way system going round it. Every building has a road going around it where you could get a fire engine all the way around it. So you could literally surround the whole building with fire engines. Every single building has access around it whereas that is just typical. There is possibly a few in Wandsworth that have access built up to the point where access would be difficult.

I have not seen anything like the access at Grenfell before. Even when I worked in Scotland we had a lot of high rise blocks in the area I lived in but they all had big car parks, giving them space to manoeuvre fire engines and space to put up turn table ladders. The situation we confronted would have been helped if we had of had better access. I don't know whether the dry riser went to every floor. If we had use of the lifts. I don't know why the lifts weren't in operation or what happened there. The communications were an issue they were disgraceful. The communication system we have on the integrated BA set, the BARIE sets are terrible. It's like a little thing that sticks on your head and they don't connect very well, the signal is always rubbish, you lose signal, they are awful. I think that after 2005 bombings there was a decision to upgrade them but they never did.

Lastly I would like to say that without a doubt a lot of people went above and beyond their duty on the night of Grenfell Tower fire. The sheer bravery of not knowing what we were going in to. Potentially thinking the building was going to collapse around about us. I think everyone that entered that building that night was going over and beyond what was expected of them. The cladding should never have been there, for a whole building to be consumed in fire is just scary. To see fire fighters who have potentially seen bad situations, police officers, paramedics, people and residents looking up at that building just their jaws hanging down in disbelief. Fire fighters in tears knowing they have not been able to help was sad. From my personal point of view, I went in very late on. Those first couple of hours must have been horrific dealing with those people that were coming down the stair wells after being told to stay put and deciding I can't because the flames were so intense. Battersea fire station is a USAR station, USAR operatives were taken back to Grenfell in the proceeding days and weeks for body retrieval. I witnessed fire fighters bringing out adults and children in their arms from the Tower who looked dead, they were dragging people out. In the whole area in the first couple of hours there were a lot of people being brought out and placed on to stretchers and there were a lot of people who looked dead, people were also being dragged out. Hopefully some of them were still alive.

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