

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: BUNDEY, THOMAS

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 7 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: THOMAS BUNDEY

Date: 02/03/2018

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

This statement relates to the incident at Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017 and covers the actions I took and instructions given on the night. This is a written account from an interview conducted by DC Luke BACON and PC Richard GREENGRASS at Croydon Fire Station.

I am firefighter Thomas BUNDEY attached to Red Watch at Croydon Fire Station and have been an active firefighter since JULY 2010. Previously I was posted to Norbury Fire Station for 5 years with Red Watch working at a two appliance before transferring to Red Watch at Croydon for the past year.

Croydon has a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) in which I have been trained and am qualified with extra skills. This means that I am able to perform lines rescues, heavy machine cutting and lifting. I am qualified to wear Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) which allows 50 minutes to an hour of breathing air enabling more time working within an incident such as buildings with strange layouts, tunnels and in this incident high rise buildings, basically anything where you require time to get to a location. The sets are twin cylinder, there are gauges that show your air supply and this is usually set at a start average of 270 bar pressure.

We have general awareness, familiarisation and technique training for high rise buildings as there are a few on our ground. We look at high risk areas such as rivers, transport hubs or any tall buildings on the ground. On our ground we have a 36 floor building. Periodically we would go find the inlet for the dry riser, there would be a knowledge of how many hose lengths are needed to get from the water inlet to the

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building, we look at the fire lift, speak to the staff there. Post the Grenfell incident we now have a high rise grab bag with the equipment required for these buildings. Additional branch, hose holding handles, sleeves to mark branches and hoses. We would use EDBA for these type of buildings. There is a tower in the yard but this is only 4 floors so doesn't really give the exact situation, we train in search rescues, bridgeheads, dry riser locating and setting up. There is line training at Croydon for high rises, fire and search sectors for where fires are located. Before this incident I had no knowledge of Grenfell Tower but have had high rise training. I can't remember specific training dates before fire but it is done quite regularly since the Grenfell fire and pops up in our training. I've previously been to fires in blocks of flats located on different floors but not to the magnitude of this particular incident, nothing as narrow and tall as that building.

In this statement I will refer to the firefighters I worked with at the incident; Crew Manager FEARNLEY, Firefighter NWAGWU, Firefighter HOOPER, Firefighter McCLELLAND and Firefighter T DOTCHIN. I will also reference the route taken from Croydon Fire Station to Grenfell Tower, the area and route around the tower and the areas within the tower I worked in.

On TUESDAY 13th JUNE 2017 I reported for night duty at 20:00hrs at Croydon Fire Station attached to Red Watch. We had role call and I was posted as riding the back of the FRU, this was my first proper posting to this appliance since completing my qualification, I then put my kit on the truck and performed an equipment check on my Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) known as an A test, this involved checking the air bar pressure, checking the air flow from the cylinders and testing that the alarm warning system is working correctly. We had a usual briefing at 22:00hrs where we talk about training that we've done, have a refresher on policies and sometimes do training that has been scheduled in. I don't remember what we spoke about on the night during this briefing.

At about 4am the bells dropped in the station signalling that we had a shout. I was the first one up and went to check the TIC sheet from the printer, it showed a 40 pump fire at Grenfell Tower. I thought this was obviously a big decision made by someone for this many pumps. We have had some calls lately that have needed less pumps than have been sent. The call sheet was long listing all the pumps going, lots of FRU deployed. I handed the TIC sheet to the driver and in less than a minute we were in the truck and on our way to the area, I've no idea of that area of London but FF NWAGWU was the driver that night and

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he roughly knew the area and route we would take. We arrived at the incident after about 10 minutes.

The route taken took us past Streatham and near to Norbury in the direction of Tooting, I think we went to Kings Road but can't be sure. It was a clear sky without many clouds and the sun was starting to come up, FF NWAGWU said we were getting nearer so myself and the other firefighters in the back were looking out for any signs of the fire location, maybe the building and a couple of windows alight somewhere in the distance, all we could see was a big dark cloud in the sky, initially I thought it was a rain cloud due to the size. There was a break between the narrow buildings and through them I could see smoke and realised it was coming from the tower and that the tower was fully alight. At the time my initial thoughts were; shit I hope no ones in it or everyone's at least got out. Then you start thinking crap I've got to go in there and running through things in your mind like who you're with, what you have to do and what you're going to have to go through to do the best you can and hope no one gets injured. We had no idea what we were turning up to until we got there, spoke to people, realised there are still people in the tower to be rescued and that what's in front of you is going to be a bit nasty.

There was a rendezvous point (RVP) being talked about on the radio but lots of locations were being given, as FF NWAGWU knew the area he could tell that the RVP for us wasn't that close so didn't suit. We did find a road to park in but I don't know the name, there were loads of trucks and FRU's already parked up in the street and we could see the tower from here. We got our sets off the truck and went to the tower, this took about 5 minutes. The tower was a fully alight by now, every floor and window looked either dark or had flames visible, there was a person hanging out of a window that we were told was the 6th floor. He had flames either side of him, I think he got rescued at some point but not by us. I'd never seen a building fire this big or experienced anything like this before, I don't think anyone in the job has.

We walked down an alleyway towards the tower, then down a sort of corridor and through a metal gate which opened up to a grassed area where the leisure centre was. We went in and were in there along with 100's of other firefighters. Our OIC FF FEARNLEY went to book us in with control, to get our instructions and inform them we are an FRU with EDBA. When he came back we were told to stick together and wait on the grassed area for if or when we were needed. The leisure centre was bedlam inside. We made sure we would be ready to go in when asked, everyone was checking all the kit and protective clothing they had on to make sure there were no issues. A request then came to get more

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cylinders and a second set bag from the truck, these can be used to rescue a firefighter if needed. FF HOOPER went to get this for us to take in to the tower.

We went along a covered underpass or loading area near the tower, the leisure centre was now behind. We were kept in a holding area at the base of the tower, there were about 70 - 80 firefighters here in either standard duration breathing apparatus (SDBA) or extended duration breathing apparatus (EDBA). We were sat against a wall waiting here for a while just watching the tower that was now to the right of us burn. It was surreal and at times it was easy to forget that there was a fire in front of you until the wind would blow a bit of smoke in my direction or you looked up at the higher floors where the flames were. My view was limited as the movement we have from our kit is limited, with BA sets on and a helmet you can't really look up. When I did I could see the first few floors that were untouched, all the smoke from the fire was going up, and there was lots of burning debris and soot coming down from the tower but not falling near us.

An LFB officer in a white helmet who I didn't know was standing at the end of a line with police near him holding riot shields, the officer came and said they needed 8 EDBA wearers. One of us heard this and we went forward, I was in a crew of 4 with FF McCLELLAND, FF DOTCHIN and FF NWAGWU. I think about 8 firefighters were going in at this point, we were told we would be going to the tower which was about 20 metres away with two firefighters and a police officer under a shield, there was burning debris around. For our safety the officer was very stern telling us not to trip up, to move quickly and safely across the area.

There was a makeshift entrance that looked like it had been cut for us to use going into the lobby area on the ground floor, there was a fire lift in the lobby but didn't appear to be in use by anyone, we went through to another room being used as a holding area and sat for about 30 minutes here while waiting. I didn't see any sprinklers in the building or alarms but I can honestly say I wasn't looking for them. The conditions were bad in the holding room with water halfway up our boots, it was coming through the ceiling and down the walls, there were still more firefighters coming in this holding area after us, after a while we were told they needed 2 crews of 4 EDBA wearers. We left the holding area near the lift, went left to the lobby area where we got our brief from and Entry Control Officer (ECO) who told to go to the 12th floor for search and rescue and to fight the fire if possible. The ECO told us to leave casualties where

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they were and to try to get people out alive. No floor higher than this had been searched yet.

The ECO said there may be water up there but wasn't certain, we asked if there were hoses or comms on that floor but got no answer and were told "just do the best you can". We repeated all of this information back to the ECO so that we were sure of our orders and each firefighter understood what we had been told.

We took some equipment that was lying around near us. I had a haligan bar used for door entry and FF McCLELLAND picked up a thermal image camera (TIC). We gave our tally in at ECB that was on the ground floor, this shows who we are and our air pressure, we then walked up some glass sided stairs to a mezzanine area that had glass around it. This part of the stairs had water cascading over the sides and led into the first part of the main stairwell going up the tower. The main staircase was very narrow with loads of hose covering it all the way up so you couldn't see the stairs. There were maybe 15 lengths of hose laid out going in or coming out of the stairs, some were not in use either because they'd burst or weren't fully charged. The hoses that were fully charged and full of water on the stairwell so were solid and easy to trip over. These didn't look like they were being used by anyone as a hose will normally snake when in use so it moves around, these were just still and wrapped all around the stairs. There was a hose running directly up the middle of the stairs, I'm not sure how far that went up, if this was being used by anybody or was even connected to a dry riser. It was narrow and awkward to move on the stairs as there were people going in and out. I noticed that some fire crews had no BA on.

On the walk up I saw the stairwell walls were covered in soot and looked black, this made working out what floor we were on difficult, I rubbed one of the floor number signs and saw it showed we were on the 8th. On the 10th floor stairs there was a very large overweight body tangled up in the hose and with one of the feet underneath the handrail. The body was laying halfway down the stairwell covering about 2/3 of the walking space, we tried to give as much dignity to that person by not treading on them but moving around was difficult due to the position. On each floor we were checking our air to make sure we had enough to continue, this is just something we do as routine, we all had plenty of air left and I think the lowest reading in the crew was 200 bar pressure.

We initially got up to the 13th floor and realised we had gone too far so turned back for the 12th. On the 12th floor stairs we got our heads together to decide how to go in, we had no hose or water available and

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had no signal on our radios or telemetry connecting us to the ECB to give our location. The stairwell environment wasn't too bad now, it wasn't great and did feel hot but I felt it was safe enough to be in if we needed to get back down in a hurry. The door to the 12th floor lobby was closed, normally we would test a closed door to check the heat behind it by spraying it with water and checking for the amount of steam that comes off. This wasn't possible as we didn't have a hose or water to use. The door was opened towards us by FF DOTCHIN and FF McCLELLAND, straight away black smoke poured out all over us and filled the stairwell, no flames were seen but we immediately closed the door to stop the smoke. We had a chat about how to go in as we only really had the TIC to see where the heat was so the decision was made to try and go in to see how we would cope. The door was opened again and I was the 3rd person going through into the lift lobby area, it was too hot, normally heat comes in waves from a fire but this heat was constant, I could feel it on my neck, ears, it was instant heat all over. There was thick dark smoke restricting how far I could see, I went in crouched down near the floor and was pushed back out straight away by the firefighters in front of me due to the extreme heat. The crew then decided it was too hot to work in there, we had to risk assess this and didn't believe there was anything we could do on this floor so left and moved up to the 13th floor.

We got to the door leading to the lobby area of 13th floor, this was black with soot covering it, and I'm fairly certain I saw a small body sort of pushed in the corner of the stairwell but no one else noticed it, it wasn't a child, just a small frail old person shape. We again checked our air supply. As there was no one around us from the 10th floor up we were on our own so we made our entry to the lobby area again as a 4 man crew, I was last in this time as I opened the door this time pulling it towards me and held it whilst the rest of the crew went in. I used the haligan bar to wedge open the door so that it would be easy to locate again in the smoke if we needed to get out quickly, normally a hose would be used to hold the door as it can be used to follow back out if there's a problem but we still didn't have one available to us. This may have made the stairs worse by holding the door open but after what happened on the floor below it wasn't worth the risk closing it. I entered the lift area through the smoke and turned to the right from the stairs, looked up and saw flames, there were flames everywhere. It was hot and I don't think anyone would survive in those conditions. There was nothing we could do without water and a hose, you can't fight a fire or attempt rescues without the stuff you need. We were screaming at each asking what can we do. We scrambled around in the lobby area for a while then I remember being pushed back out to the stairs by someone, grabbing the bar as I went through the door and we all fell in a heap on the stairwell. I

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remember seeing the display on the TIC either on this floor or when we were on the 12th and the temperature was around 800°C. We were on our own up here without radio comms, no one knew our location and it would have been a mistake to try and go higher as we knew the fire had spread up here, if it broke through to the stairwell then we would be above the fire and the floor we were first sent to so we decided as a crew to get back down and started to walk to the entry control.

On the way back down FF McCLELLAND had some broken radio communication come through at about the 10th floor telling him that there was a person at a window on the 6th floor so went headed there, the dead body we passed on the way up was still on the stairs. We got to the 6th where there were already several firefighters from Croydon searching. The floor was clear and we were actually able to get into the flats on this level. The smoke was lighter here too as the fire had been put out. None of residents or the person spotted could be found and our air pressure was 150bar now so we went down to the ECB, this had now moved to the glass mezzanine area where we had a debrief and told them our locations, the conditions plus the fact there was no water. We then left the tower, went outside to change our cylinders and performed a 'Fireground A' test on our BA sets, this differs from the check at the start of the shift as it indicates we have already had one wear from the set but still checks that it is working correctly. FF McCLELLAND was suffering from heat exhaustion and needed helping out of the tower, he had been 1st through the doors on each floor and with low air supply he was weak and wobbly so needed clean air.

The OIC FF FEARNLEY was informed we would be ready to go back in if needed and we sat by the car park area while waiting, during this time we took on water and rested. I was looking up at the tower and through counting the floors, could see that the 12th was really on fire more than the like the kind of fire you get from a gas main that gives off super heat.

For my 2nd wear we again went from the grass by the leisure centre and under a covered area, passed two fire trucks and there was a bin area where bodies were being stored, these were covered over with sheets. I again had to wait and got separated from my Croydon crew so went in teamed with 3 other FRU firefighters from Wimbledon who I didn't know but were short a man. We were escorted under police riot shields to the tower and stood in EDDBA within the lobby area waiting for orders. The water level around the floor had increased and there was now debris floating around us. We were in this holding area waiting for over 1 1/2 hours with a 20kg BA set on our backs standing up as sitting wasn't an option, this didn't

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seem to be the right thing just having all these people sat around doing nothing. It was very humid, hot and clammy inside here which I didn't enjoy at all, I would have rather been outside in fresh air sat down instead of being uncomfortable standing. I've never had to wait inside a building during an incident before so this was strange, and still there were more firefighters wearing BA being sent in to join us. In total there were 3 holding areas in use, we normally only go near a fire or incident when needed.

A white helmet officer came and said for everyone to take their sets off and go to the bridgehead where entry control was based which was now on the 4th or 6th floor. There were about 15 of us here that were told that all hoses were to be discharged of water so that they could start again with hose management and one or two hose could be set up. We started to break the couplings connecting the hose but some were under so much pressure we just couldn't break them. The ones we could break released so much water and turned the stairs into a waterfall as the upper floors had either burst or they were burnt hose that was being disconnected, this soaked me through and made the job harder. All the hose had to be taken down and put in the lobby areas on the lower floors closer to the ground. This took about an hour to do, we had other officers coming and asking us individually what we had been tasked to do.

There were still EDBA crews going up from the 4th. I realised that I couldn't do anymore due to being so wet and this affected my ability to work effectively, I'd broken as many hose couplings as I could so went to collect my BA set and was escorted out of the tower under police shields. Once outside I went to find my original crew from Croydon.

I'm not sure of the time but it was in the afternoon now, I found my crew getting some food so had a chat about where they had been and what they'd been up to. Our involvement at the fire was now over so we were tasked with going to Paddington Fire Station where we had a full debrief, made our notes and got a change of clothing.

After the incident I don't feel like I did much. In hindsight it seemed a lot of resources could have been used differently and more efficiently. I didn't have the correct equipment to do the job required, a hose would have been nice and helpful. It would have meant we could have searched those floors and done something, fought the fire and maybe made progress to find someone, I've no idea how close we were to actually helping get people out without the equipment. I never saw the end of a hose that I could have maybe extended and taken up, I assume there were branches being used somewhere. The radio

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communications were an issue, it felt strange being in that situation without contact. We had broken radio comms from about the 6th floor up and nothing from the 10th. I don't know the command structure or procedures to follow at an incident that large but there are so many unanswered questions from the fire, hopefully these will be answered by the end of this investigation. This could easily happen again tomorrow although I hope it doesn't. The building had recently been renovated so it should have ticked all the right safety boxes, hopefully policies and awareness around this will change so that it will never happen again.

At the conclusion of the interview I was asked my knowledge as an active fighter of the stay put policy given to people on the telephone. My understanding is as follows:

When a person can't get out of a fire the control on the other end of the phone will tell you to stay where you are as safely as you can and we will go and get you rather than trying to get out yourself. This is good in certain situations but obviously not in others and didn't work with Grenfell. With a house fire, if someone is trapped and a fire is on the stairs then we can get to that whereas if you're on the 23rd floor with one stairwell and the whole things on fire then it's a different situation. It is a good thing to say to people and has saved lives but now Grenfell has happened then who's to say.

I provide one exhibit to the investigation and enquiry. This is a copy of my contemporaneous notes made after the incident. This is exhibit TBU/1 and has a label attached with the seal number MPSZI3114305.

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Form MG11(T)

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