

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: CUTBILL, TIMOTHY

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 6 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: T CUTBILL

Date: 25/01/2018

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

I am a crew manager with the London Fire Brigade(LFB). I was interviewed on audio disc by Dc Amanda WEBSTER and Pc Roger REID from Operation Northleigh, Metropolitan Police Service on Tuesday 5th December 2017 at Edmonton Fire Station regarding my attendance at Grenfell Tower , Lancaster West Estate, W11 1TG on Wednesday 14th June 2017. This statement is a summary of the information I gave during the interview.

During the interview I referred to my original notes I made at Paddington Fire Station on Wednesday 14th June 2017. I exhibit these notes as TCC/1.

I joined LFB eight years ago and have been a crew manager for two years. I was Red Watch, night duty starting at 20.00 hours on Tuesday 13th June 2017 at Edmonton Fire Station when we received the call to attend Grenfell Tower. The appliance I was assigned to was FRU (fire rescue unit). This is a fire appliance that carries specialist rescue equipment and carries EDBA (extended duration breathing apparatus).I believed we received the call to attend Grenfell Tower at approximately 04.00am (Wednesday 14th June 2017). I heard the tannoy message to mobilise, the lights at the station come on and the appointed driver of the appliance makes their way to the watch room to collect the slip of paper (which gives details regarding the call out). Another colleague is always present in the watch room as well and between this person and the driver they work out where the call is. The appointed driver for our appliance was Fire fighter (FF) BOULTON. Our call sign was A346.I went straight to the appliance to check MDT (mobilising data terminal) MDT stated "40 PF", this means forty pumping fire appliances

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had already been called to the incident. I had never seen anything this big before and my first thoughts this must be a big incident. I had never been to Grenfell Tower so I started to try and locate where it was, using LFB and Google maps. In the appliance with me were, Driver FF BOULTON, I sat beside him in the front of the vehicle. In the rear of the appliance was FF WRIGHT and FF VANGO. I “booked” that we were mobile via MDT , this means that we have left the fire station. I had worked out a general route but was organising directions as we drove along ,colleagues in the back were checking the news to try and obtain more information regarding this call out. In our appliance was a MDT and a radio. On the way we were given a RVP via the radio in the appliance. This message informed us that the RVP was Clarendon Road junction with Dulford Road W11 3AB. As we were driving along and at some point we were very near to the Tower, I recall some five minutes away, but I cannot relocate exactly where, I saw my first view of the Tower, I thought this is a very well developed fire and I had concerns that the Tower may collapse. However in my mind I knew the theory was the same, you put the fire out and rescue people. This was just on a bigger scale.

When we arrived we parked at Clarendon Road junction with Dulford Road W11 3AB. There was no one else there. Other appliances were parked in this road, two in front and a further appliance pulled up behind us. We were blocking the road. We seemed to be some distance away from the Tower, I am not sure exactly how far but as we got out of the appliance, another crew that were passing said “I would put on your BA kit “.

Normally in situations like this you would always try and find the Command Unit (CU) but as we seemed to be some distance away I knew this would take time We started walking with our BA kits and our nominal role board Nominal Role Board , is always handed in at an incident so the CU know exactly who is present. I saw a passing station manager (SM) and as he was heading to the CU he said he would hand in our nominal role board. I cannot recall his name. We saw lots of EDBA wearers waiting on a grass area outside Kensington Leisure Centre which is to the East of Grenfell Tower, so we headed there. Once there we headed to the West side of Grenfell Tower, this was a holding area for crews. I believe we waited around fifteen minutes , I cannot recall the sector number of this holding area. I recall looking at the Tower and thinking it was “well alight”, there were water jets set up by the play area, debris was falling off the building, little and big bits. Some of it was floating, my view at this point was from the West side and I believe from approximately ten floors up, the whole Tower was alight. There was a spare EDBA wearer in front of us so she joined our crew, so we were now a crew of five. I cannot remember very

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much about this fire fighter, except she was female, I do not know which station she was from. or her name. An LFB officer who was managing this staging area informed us that we could go into the Tower. We had to do this one at a time with a police riot shield for protection This was due to all the falling debris When I reached the Tower, I then waited for my colleagues to make the same journey under the police shield I recall that the police officers were going backwards and forwards with their shields in order for LFB crews to reach the Tower safely. Our entrance into the Tower was on the West side via a doorway

Once inside , we waited on the ground floor near the lift lobby, I remember seeing water coming out of the lift shafts and the floor was really wet. It was really busy here, with lots of LFB staff, perhaps twenty. I recall around this time, LFB staff smashing glass on the main entrance door of Grenfell Tower, I believe this was to help with ventilation in this area, the Entry Control Board (ECB) was here. I also recall seeing Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls being written on the foyer wall , with details such as which flats had been searched.

I cannot recall the time we were given our first briefing, but it was by Group Manager (GM) Richard WELCH, he gave us the following information, that a FRU crew from Bethnal Green were missing, they had been committed to the Tower, sent to the eleventh floor but there had been no radio communication with them. We all have personal radios that we wear and this is how we communicate with each other once at an incident. Although when using BA we also use Barie communication which is specific to BA

I relayed this information to the rest of my crew. I started to think about the task we had been given and that I should listen out for DSU, this is a distress signal unit, an alarm that is connected to each BA set to attract the attention of other BA wearers that an individual is in distress. We were cancelled by GM WELCH shortly after his initial brief as the FRU crew had been found. This made everything seem more serious, as fellow colleagues had been missing within the Tower and confirmed that the situation must be challenging.

GM WELCH then gave us our next task, I believe it was to make our way up to the eleventh floor, to search for casualties and proceed further up the Tower if we could. GM Pat GOULBOURNE who was the Entry Control Officer on the ground floor, also briefed me aswell. I confirmed with my crew that they understood the task that we had been given. From this point, as we leave the entry control point, as a crew of five, we start our BA equipment, put our face masks on, flashoods and gloves, our individual tally's are

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handed in. BA tally allows the entry control officer to know when an individual is low on air and should report back to the entry control officer. Someone fills out the entry control board, I cannot remember who this was but it would not have been GM GOULBOURNE. I then said to my crew, we are going a long way up, if you need to swap, let me know. I was confident with my crew, I know four of them very well, the fifth crew member, I didn't know, but I knew we would be able to manage. Apart from our BA equipment, we had two TIC (thermal imaging camera), this is a camera that detects heat and identifies temperatures, it captures continuous video which can be downloaded. One of these was from our appliance and the other we were given at the Bridgehead. I did ask about "breaking in" equipment but was informed that we should be able to pick this up once we were up the stairwell and on the communal floors. I was told that there should be enforcers and hooli (hooligan) bars. I checked that the TICs worked, they are battery operated so I simply switched them on and off.

We then made our way to the third floor, which is where the lobby area is that leads to the internal stairwell. I remember thinking that as we left the ground floor, it just seemed dirty and there were hoses everywhere. As we proceeded up the internal stairwell, we were in single file, I was in front, I am not sure of the order of the rest of the crew but they were behind me. Other crews were coming down. There was water on the floor, which made it slippery and our visibility was not great. We proceeded up the stairs by staying close to the wall, this was the only way it was manageable. Our visibility, on a scale of ten, saying ten was pitch black, I would put it at a four. I could see the floors numbers at first, which helped, each floor number was by a door (leading to communal landing where the flats are). I would say this number was no bigger than five inches. However the higher up we went we could not see the flat numbers, it had become too smoky and they were all covered up with carbon deposits. I cannot recall at what floor level this happened, I noticed other crews had tried to rub off the carbon deposits

Until we reached the ninth floor, our journey was quite straight forward, as stated before, we kept to the wall, so other crews could get down, at some point we could not see the floor numbers, we reached, what I believed was the ninth floor and this is when we come across our first casualty.

Although our brief was to go further than the ninth floor, I was not happy to keep going, this casualty was lying on the floor by the door between stairwell and communal landing (where the flats are.) The door was propped open by this casualty, this meant that potentially dangerous gases and smoke could spread from this area and travel to other floors. This communal landing area 'was full of smoke. This casualty appeared to be female and, the only other description I can give was that she was black and a

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large build. She also appeared to have burns on her. Myself and one other firefighter checked for signs of life such as her pulse. I also used the TIC to check the temperature of the gases leaving the lobby, in this area it was 650 degrees, this is a considerable amount of heat. I came to the conclusion that this casualty was deceased. I was concerned about this area, there was a lot of smoke and gases building up, I tried to shut the communal door, but we couldn't without moving her.

We moved her to the stairwell, as the lobby areas was full of smoke and very hot, it took four of us to move her body. I also checked this communal area with the TIC to ensure there was no one else there. I could not see anyone, and since we had moved the body I ensured the door was closed.

We then carried on with our brief, we did not stop on the tenth floor but made our way to the eleventh floor. I stayed by the door back to the stairwell so we could not get lost. I kept low on my knees, as I found this was the best place to be it's cooler and visibility is better.

The communal area as before was searched with a TIC a couple of flats were looked into not all the flats just a couple I remember one flat door was open and I can recall an enforcer having to be used to gain access to another, FF VANGO broke the door. I made the decision that we should not go too far into the flats, as we had no firefighting equipment with us such as hoses. Firefighters were looking in with a TIC, it was not what I would call a thorough search. Also at this point I could see a "neutral plane", this is when smoke rises, however smoke has to come down and as it does, and meets the cleaner air, there is a distinct layer that you can see, this is known as the neutral plane. This was at floor level. When you see this, there is a very slim chance of anyone surviving, as we had been called to Grenfell Tower at 400am and it was now some time after, I thought there was a chance of a "flashover", and this is only something you can control with water and as stated early, we did not have this facility with us and this is why our search was limited. A flashover is the transition of a fire developing within a compartment to the phase when the whole compartment is on fire.

This communal area was pitch black, using the scale that I referred to earlier I would say it was ten. You could only see using a TIC. This change to what I would describe as complete darkness came as soon as you left the stair well and went into the communal area. I would put the stairwell at five/ six on the scale.

We then proceeded up to the twelfth floor, again we used the TIC in the communal area, we could not see anything, as I had seen "neutral plane" on the previous floor I know there was minimal chance of survival so we did not check the flats. We then made our way to the thirteen floor, and we came across

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our second casualty. I would describe this casualty as being between floors, the twelve and the thirteenth and again, the casualty appeared to be female and was lying on a landing area, that separated the two flights of stairs between the floors. Myself and FF BOULTON checked her for signs of life, we tried to find a pulse, looked at her chest for signs of breathing. All checks were negative. I could see smoke damage around her mouth area, there was black marks around her nostril suggesting smoke inhalation. I cannot give any further description of the deceased female. She was not blocking any doors so we could leave her where she was.

At this point FF WRIGHT started to leak air from his BA equipment , I am not sure why this happened but sometimes the communication device on the BA creates a leak, it could have been down to this, but all I know is that he was losing air quicker than everyone else. We were not panicking as such, he was reading the digital gauge on his equipment. The tally left at entry control point also indicates when you are low on air. Our communications, our radios were not working so we could not communicate with the Entry Control officer to inform him, of our situation. Also there is an Entry Control Board, here they press a button and that lets you know your air is low and that they want you to come out.

All five of us, started our descent downwards towards the Entry Control Point. I told FF Wright to go to the Entry Control Officer and inform them of his circumstances, which he did. We then met another EDBA crew, I cannot recall their brief but I decided we would assist them. We got as far as the sixth/seventh floor and realised we were low on air. I believe we did not get to where we were heading. We checked our gauges and I made the decision that we should return to the Entry Control Point.

Our Journey down, the conditions were very much the same, we had some vision in the stairwell and we proceeded in single file. There were always other crews trying to get past, crews coming down always have priority as they have less air, so you always move for them

We made our way to the bridgehead /ECP and reported back about the location and position of the two casualties I believe I spoke with WM DE'SILVO from Chelsea At this point our BA sets were now turned off, we got our tally's back. FF WRIGHT was waiting for us here. I made sure my crew were OK and we came out of Grenfell Tower, the female firefighters who had assisted our crew then left at this point, I presume she went to find her original crew. We dropped our sets, sat down and had some refreshments. I think we rested for about half an hour. After this short break, we got new cylinders for our BA sets and carried out a " Fireground A Test". We were now in the grass area by Kensington Leisure Centre, East of the Tower. As we were now back to the four of us, I checked that everyone was happy to

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be re committed to the Tower again, I know they were all capable and they are what I would consider physically fit. I was confident they would tell me if they were not OK.

As a crew with our EDBA sets, we then went back to the holding area, which was to the West of Grenfell Tower. We seem to sit there for awhile, I remember seeing a casualty brought out, an adult male he was being carried out by two firefighters. I believe his picture, has subsequently been in the press. He was the only person I saw being evacuated. I had no idea of the time but it was daylight. There was a ramp area where we were waiting, and here there was lots of EDBA and SDBA crews waiting. There was also lots of police and LAS. The nearer you got to the staging area the EDBA and SDBA wearers were divided up. The officer who was managing this area would ask for say four EDBA or six SDBA crews. They were trying to find "fresh" crews, ones that had not been in the Tower, however if none available they would take a crew who had already been in. They would check that you were ok to be re committed. Fresh crews always get priority. Again to make the journey from the staging area to the Tower, we had to individually be escorted by a police officer holding a riot shield. I don't recall looking at the Tower so I cannot give any details as to how it had changed or not. We entered through the same entrance as before.

We went into a lift area as before but there was now a generator in there, pumping water up the staircase. We waited in the kitchen area/caretakers room. Here an officer asked for EDBA wearers. My crew and another crew then proceeded to the fourth floor, this was where the bridgehead had now be moved, we were a crew of four but we were split into pairs. I was partnered with FF Wright. We were briefed to fire fight and search and rescue and make our way to the twelve floor. The fact that the Bridgehead/ Entry Control Point had moved was good, as we had less floors to travel up under air. This area was more compact and there was no smoke and I would describe the air as clean. However getting to the Bridgehead was difficult, there was lots of water flowing, we are always advised not to get wet, the water absorbed into our PPE (personal protective equipment) turns to steam and burns. I would describe us as getting wet and would use the word "soaked ". I cannot remember who gave us this briefing but the situation was the same as first time, we handed our tally's in, switched our BA on and made sure our face masks, flash hoods and gloves were on. I recall that we were informed that the gas was still on, and that we should not put any gas pipes out.

We took one hose with us, another hose was already up there but not connected to the dry riser. You normally plug a hose in on the floor below where you are going to fire fight but this building was so alight that this would not work. So we took a hose and branch to plug into the twelve floor. As we made

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our way up the Tower, there was lots of hose on the stairwell, some of the hoses had made a massive “bite around bends, this is where the hose makes a loop and you have to go under to move along. There were other hazards such as kit left lying around, water was cascading down the stairs. It was still smoky but we had visibility, we had a TIC with us but we did not need it. I think the fact that doors were open and windows were no longer there helped to clear the smoke. As said earlier we had one hose between us but picked up another one and plugged it into the dry riser.

We went into separate flats to fire fight. I tried to fire fight but the fires kept re igniting, there was ceilings, walls and plasterboard on the floor, there was probably about a foot of this debris, and there was fire underneath. I would describe them as pockets of fire. I really did not have enough kit or personnel to deal with this. There was only two of us, in individuals flats with a hose each. As you went through the door from the stairwell into the communal area, FF WRIGHT turned left , I also went left then straight on. I cannot give any other flat details.

I remember thinking that the water pressure was OK, I don't recall any real issues with it. I would “knock” back the fire and then it would start up again I felt it was a hopeless task. I know there were no live casualties here, as it would be impossible to be alive. Apart from the concrete structure everything had burnt or fallen down.

I started to feel very tired, so I went to see how FF WRIGHT was doing, he was still trying to fire fight so I helped him with his hose. I stayed in the communal landing area , and held the hose, hoses are very heavy and cumbersome, so when an additional person can assist it always makes it easier. I then made the decision that we should make our way down and head to the Bridgehead. Again our journey down, we had to avoid various hazards such as the hoses, and either had to go under or over them. I saw the first casualty that I described earlier, she was now under hoses. We met a crew that were making their way up, they had an orange basket stretcher, they informed us they were going to remove a casualty. After speaking with them, I believed this was the first casualty that I described. There was only two of them and I informed them that she was a big lady and may need additional crew to help them. We made our way to the Bridgehead and here I recognised a colleague, I explained to WM BACK what we had done, I informed him that we had tried to put out the fire, but could not achieve this task without additional personnel and kit. I also let him know that we had left two hoses behind, I gave the location so when further crews go in, they have a location as to where kit is. We collected our tally's. WM BACK told us

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we could leave the Tower, and get some refreshments. We then left the Tower, dropped our BA kit and we rested again. We had now been in Grenfell Tower twice, I can't recall who told us but we were told they were not committing any crews that had been in twice. So we went to the CU, collected our nominal role board and tried to find the rest of the crew.

Myself and FF WRIGHT, met up with FF BOULTON and FF VANGO, FF BOULTON had injured his ankle, he was seen by LAS and went to a local hospital, here he had an x ray, and he had a twisted ankle. I believe he had tripped over a hose. The remaining three of us collected our appliance, which was in the same road but it had been moved so it was no longer blocking the road. I rang FF BOULTON and we collected him from hospital.

We then made our way to Paddington Fire Station where I wrote my notes. Here we were offered the services of a counsellor. I then made my way to Edmonton Fire Station, it was now 6pm in the evening and our next night duty was due to start in two hours. I felt exhausted but decided to stay for this shift. When I look back at that night duty, I cannot think that we could have done anything else. My concern and I believe others thought the same was that the Tower was going to fall down.

I have only been to Grenfell Tower, one other time , since Wednesday 14th June 2017, this was in my role as urban search and rescue, this was approximately three weeks ago to assist police DVI (disaster victim identification) and this was for one day.

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