

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: DAOUD, TRISTAN

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: TRISTAN DAOUD

Date: 12/12/2017

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

This statement refers to my actions on the morning of Wednesday 14th June 2017 when I attended Grenfell Tower due to a fire at the location.

This statement is also a summary of my interview that took place on Saturday 18th November 2017. I was interviewed by DC Matthew LONGDEN and PC Andre HOWARD and I rely upon the information that I gave during that interview.

Throughout the statement I will make reference to other people and shall endeavour to explain their roles and positions within the fire brigade. I will also explain my own role and the training I have received if it is relevant to this particular incident.

I will now explain a bit about myself. I have been a firefighter for 7 1/2 years and I am based at Chiswick Fire Station which we call G37 and I am on Red Watch. During my career with the fire brigade I have had training around attending high rise building fires and there are a few high rise buildings on my ground and on my neighbouring ground. I have attended high rise building fires before and these have mainly been on Acton's ground. I don't remember ever having to wear BA at one before.

Although I cannot recall when I last received any training specifically to do with high rise buildings before the Grenfell Tower fire, I know that the training is usually held a couple of times a year at least. This is sometimes more frequent as the training will be initiated if there has been a recent change as well.

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During this training we often do a high rise drill and this is to assist us with finding hydrants quickly and we also carry out regular site visits. The site visits are just us checking that everything is in working order, and making sure that everything is in place in case of an emergency at the site. Some dry risers have been known to be stolen or damaged for example. The site visits are usually to areas that the fire brigade have assessed as high risk sites or highly populated, and whilst there we also carry out a walk through drill.

We also go over the high rise procedure in meetings (e.g. where a bridge head is to be set up, what equipment we would need to take up - so making sure there is enough hose (usually enough for 2 lines of 45), BA (breathing apparatus) for 2 crews, break in gear, IEC (first aid kits), keys, thermal imaging, plans of the building and BA board (a laminated board that we use to monitor fire fighters BA). This has recently changed and since the Grenfell Tower fire the equipment has been put into a bag ready for when the call comes in. This means that we can just grab the bag. The last meeting we attended was mainly about the addition of this grab bag.

In addition to the above, we also conduct familiarisation visits to buildings. At these visits, we would check for the locations of dry risers and where we would plug in hoses to charge the dry risers. We use the dry risers to pump water into the building for use on individual floors in that building. Some taller buildings use wet risers which already have water in them. These familiarisation visits are a way of making sure that we know how the fire lifts work and where keys are located etc. All this information is then logged onto a computer and onto our MDT (mobile data terminal) which are located in the front of the fire engines and available to us en-route to incidents. I have found that the MDT is not 100% reliable so we always need to know this information ourselves through local knowledge as we can't always rely on the computer, but when they work they are an assistance if we have to go to an unknown area.

I have noticed that there is a board on the front of some high-rise buildings that helps show what equipment is needed in case there is a fire in that building, where the hydrants are and how much hose might be needed to get to the furthest flat etc. I can't remember seeing one of these at Grenfell Tower but it may have been noted by the crews who first attended.

There is other training which we have too, not relating to high rise buildings, and this is also normally

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also held twice a year. I have visited many buildings but never had to use BA before. I have visited many high rises on Acton's ground. I had never been to or heard of Grenfell Tower before nor was I aware of a pre-prepared firefighting plan at the tower.

My understanding of the "stay put" policy is that it is advice that is given to people who are trapped by the fire and they are told to stay where they are as it is possibly safer for them. This is the same policy for all buildings including high rise buildings.

My understanding of the command unit is that this is where the job is run from. This is like a mobile office where senior officers work from. They have all the plans, they know where the hydrants are and they have the strategies. We take a nominal role to them so that they have a register of who is there.

I will now explain what happened on the night of the fire as far as I can recall.

On the morning of the fire I was on duty at Chiswick fire station, G37, and was in bed when the order came in. I can't remember the exact time this happened but I collected the order from the printer in the Watch room. The details on the order include basic details of the incident, what crews are in attendance already, the address and any hazards there may be. All I remember from the order is that it was a 10 pump fire. I have never been to a 10 pump residential fire before. Normally fires that big are warehouses or non-residential addresses.

I was driver for appliance G371. I remember it took a while to find the location on the map with it not being on our ground. I knew I could get to Westfield which was nearby, so thought I would head in that direction and get advice whilst we were on the way. On my appliance was the Watch Manager Alan MOORE, Firefighter Steve O'DONOGHUE and 2x firefighters who were standby's from other fire stations as we were short of personnel. These were Vince from Heston and Aggy from Willesdon. I cannot recall their surnames.

As I drove to the fire, I can't remember looking at the MDT as I was concentrating on driving the whole time. Aggy had an A to Z map and also knew the ground well and gave good directions. We came from Westfield Shopping Centre which was on our left and then went straight over a big roundabout. We went

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along Holland Park Avenue, turning left onto Royal Crescent opposite The Hilton hotel, which led to St Anne's Road and then onto Latimer Station and down a side road to Grenfell Tower. This road was shut because of roadworks or utilities I think and so we had to go back on ourselves. I got as close as I could using some other roads and could see firefighters running around. In order to assist with the explanation of my route, I supply a map from Google which I exhibit as TDD/2. Whilst we were on the way to the incident it became a 20 pump fire and this is unheard of for a fire to go from a 10 pump to 20 pump fire that quickly.

We got to the incident within 10 minutes after leaving Chiswick fire station. We probably arrived between 0125- 0140 hours but it was after the initial flat fire. It seemed like chaos and I think when we got there it was declared a 40 pump fire. I parked behind an Acton's pump (G26) which seemed to struggle to get closer. This was possibly on Grenfell Road, but I am unsure. The roads were small and tight but I had to look for a space which didn't block the road in case other emergency vehicles needed to get passed.

As I parked I could see the flames in the background, the tower was alight on one side and about a third of the tower was on fire. It was chaotic with people running around shouting "We need hose and branches". I got some hose and branches together from our appliance whilst I got dressed into my firefighting clothing. This is because I was driving and so I wasn't in my clothing which is standard procedure for drivers. I then heard someone shout "everyone in BA" so I put my BA set on with Steve and also got some break in gear thinking that it may be needed and a thermal imaging camera and hose and then walked towards the building.

I got to the entrance to Grenfell Tower and could see lots of other BA wearers there already. The mezzanine/entrance area on the ground floor was full of other BA wearers and was basically a big lobby area, with stairs on the right-hand side going up to the mezzanine level. Whilst there someone asked for an entry control board and so me and Steve went outside to get one and came back onto the building. I think there was an aerial set up putting water onto the outside at this point, and some debris was coming down but it didn't affect the entrance. Once back inside there was still a lot of BA wearers waiting and so I said let's look outside and see if there is anything we can do. Outside a crew was setting up a 135 ladder and so we assisted them with setting that up. They were hauling it aloft up to the walkway and said they

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needed assistance. I could see a box on the wall was open on the left hand side with a fob inside it, which I took. The box was obvious and may have been opened by the first teams to get there. I then tried to open some doors on the ground floor with the fob and a door did open. This door was the closet door to the box and I think it led to the other side of the building to a meeting room which had 2 narrow glass windows round it. There was a smoke vent in another room and I notified someone about it when I went back to the entrance, but I cannot recall who it was.

After this I then went back inside and queued for entry alongside the other firefighters on the mezzanine level. There were about 20 firefighters in the queue in front of me and I saw lots of people coming out, both other firefighters and members of the public who were possibly residents. Some were alive and walking, others looked lifeless. I got to the front of the queue and was tasked to go to Flat 95, Floor 12 by a Watch Manager from Hammersmith. I knew it was a Watch Manager by markings on their uniform. I was given a yellow post it note that had written on it 'Floor 12, Flat 95'. The Watch Manager gave me this and told me to go and check the flat so I took an axe with me so that I could break in if I needed to, and I also still had the thermal image camera. There was no mention of FSG (fire survival guidance).

I gave my tally to the entry control officer and told him what our briefing was, this was chaos as he was dealing with so much anyway. As soon as we opened the door to a staircase people then started coming out. This was a mixture of other crews and also members of the public as before. Some were kids that were wearing the firefighters BA masks, which is something I've never seen before. I thought to myself that this isn't right and that this is so dangerous. I don't remember the lifts being used and because you can't use the lifts with this sort of fire I didn't even bother to look for one. Also whilst at the incident I couldn't remember hearing any alarms and did not see any sprinklers. There was a lot of noise from the appliances pumping out and I can't remember using any radios.

I then went up the stairwell. It was small and tight meaning that we couldn't all get through and our progress was slow and difficult which held us up. We had to climb the stairs in single file and at the start it was clear and the lighting was good, and I thought to myself that this wasn't too bad. However as we got higher it got darker and the light was really poor or stopped. The smoke was much thicker and I couldn't see anything. In my experience the stairwells are not usually thick with smoke but because people were going through lobby doors opening them, this was allowing the smoke to spread. After going

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up 3 floors we saw another firefighter without a mask on. He asked for directions to the bridgehead floor. I told him to keep on going down further. With hindsight I should have done a mutual exchange of air, and I knew he would have to go through more smoke, but in the chaos I was just focused on my briefing and gave him the basic instructions. He was only a couple of floors from the bridgehead.

Due to the casualties that were coming down slowing our progress, when we were close to the 12th floor I did a BA check by looking at the gauge on my set. I can't recall what floor this was. My air was low due to the levels of smoke. My low level alarm didn't go off but I knew we wouldn't have enough air to complete the task and get to the 12th floor, then back down again. Steve and I both decided to turn back and head back down before our air ran out. We would help any other people down the stairs. Before going down I had to put my axe and hose down on the floor because carrying it made moving harder using up more air from my BA set. There were also other items of equipment dumped on the ground in similar places which would allow other crews to use it as time went on. I gave some of my equipment to another crew that were coming up as they didn't have a thermal image camera. I then noticed a child and two adults were coming down with another crew from a higher floor, so we decided to take them down with us, aiding them. I held a male adult by the arm and Steve carried the girl. There was also a woman behind the man that I was helping, and I think there was another BA crew behind me. I will try and describe them as best as I can. The child was under 10 years old and about a meter high. The male adult was possibly black and about my height or taller. He was pleading for oxygen and this was in a British accent. He said something about children whilst I was helping him, but I cannot remember what he was saying due to all the shouting and extreme noise in the stairwell whilst wearing my BA set. I cannot remember anything about the female as she was behind me at all times.

Going down the stairs, conditions were really bad and I couldn't see anything because of the smoke. The male I was helping kept begging for oxygen but I told him to keep going to encourage him down. It is normally not policy for us to give our BA sets to other people. We went on for what seemed like forever just going around and around on the stairwell until we got to the third floor, and to the bridgehead which had now moved up. The casualties were then taken out by other crews and I went and told the bridgehead and entry control officer that we didn't get to the 12th floor. I could see that an aerial was putting water onto the fire and lots of debris was coming down from the outside of the tower. I didn't take much notice of the debris, but it was both large and small pieces of cladding.

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We went to put our BA back on the truck as this is what we would do after we have worn it, and went to go out the entrance to do this. There was a senior officer there that was stopping us leaving the building because it wasn't safe. We went into a side room and there were 2 other firefighters with a sledgehammer thinking about going out through another way, through some large windows. One of those firefighters I knew as Charlie CORNELIUS from Kensington. I went and asked the senior officer if it was OK to smash through the shutters and windows, and he agreed and said that if it creates another way out then go for it. So firefighter CORNELIUS smashed through the window and shutters. The shutters were metal and difficult to get through and so I tried to operate a switch to open them and said to the others "hold on a minute", but I think the shutters had already been damaged by then. The windows were 2 1/2 - 3 meters tall and a similar width to me which meant they were easy to walk through due to their size. This was on the left hand side of the building as you look at it from the entrance, and that side of the building wasn't affected by the fire.

As I climbed out of the window I saw another crew dragging someone along the floor which was odd, because I couldn't see how they could have got out that side, and I wondered how they got there. Because of this I just assumed that this person may have jumped from a window. We came out of the building near to a children's playground. Normally when we go into a fire and then come out of the building the fire is almost out. However, this time the fire was still raging and that is when I knew something was wrong and I couldn't believe it.

When we came out of the building Steve and I were lost and didn't know the quickest way back to our appliance. We walked around for a while going back round the block as we couldn't go back the way we came to get to our appliance to drop our BA sets off. This was just to get it out of the way. It took us a good few minutes to get back to our appliance because we had come out of the building via a different exit. We also found some other firefighters who then asked us for some first aid kits. I think they were treating people for smoke inhalation. We got back to our appliance and saw lots of appliances all parked up around ours. Ours had not been moved but it was blocked in. I got some IEC kits from some of the other engines which are like backpack first aid kits, and also picked some water from an OSU, and then carried them all back to the tower the way we had just come. This took us a while as we were tired and I remember that a member of the public helped us carry bottled water. I had never seen this person before.

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During this as we got nearer I could also see a cordon had been set up by the police.

I could also see riot police running around as they were carrying their large shields. I spoke to Watch Manager Matt GREGORY when I was walking back to the appliance who said that it was all kicking off, and that people were angry. Because of this I assumed that there was a lot of trouble, hence why the riot police were there. I didn't see any trouble there myself and I think this may have been part of the evacuation of the area. The riot police also helped the fire brigade by holding their shields up to help stop the debris falling on us, ferrying firefighters to and from the tower.

From leaving the building and getting back to the playground area took about 20 mins. When we eventually got back to the playground area I walked around to the window side of the building and was told to set up a 1st aid station. This was near the playground (but it did move during the incident) and I stayed there as I didn't know how to get to the other side of the building. I recognised that it may be dangerous with the fire, but it was certain that people would require first aid, whether it be firefighters or others. The conditions by the tower were bad and the whole building was a light on all four sides and most of the floors. I could smell fire/smoke, and could see stuff falling down off of the building. Some falling items were spider webs or long strands of melted plastic about 3 or 4 meters long floating down from the tower, burning in the air. I was given a few tasks to do and I also went and got more hose and a lightweight portable pump and also moved the monitor closer to the playground. As I set up the first aid area, I opened first aid packs and got the oxygen ready along with some tarpaulin too. I was also mentally prepared to do CPR as I expected some casualties. I think most of the casualties were coming out of the other side of the building and were taken to the LAS staff, but some casualties did come out my side. I remember the police and ambulance service were running casualties out on what looked like cloth stretchers. Only one casualty seemed critical and I remember thinking that I would have to do CPR, however I think the crew bringing him out must have already done this as they placed him in a bag. I remember this as the firefighters were dragging him out. This person looked dead. I also helped a firefighter change a cylinder on his BA set. During this time, I don't remember giving any 1st aid and I was there with Steve and some other firefighters who I didn't know, there were some police officers there too. I then got asked by someone to take some hose into the building, which I did and I went into the building via the window that was smashed earlier. However, once inside the building I got separated from Steve and came back out. The ground floor was extremely busy and full of firefighters and people.

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Once outside again, I spoke to someone who told me how to get to the other side of the building and was told to walk under a walkway. I can't remember what time this was but it was starting to get light. As I got to the other side I could see that the fire on the outside of the building had almost burnt itself out, and also on the other side of the building I could see a lot more stuff and equipment was set up. The Salvation Army were there, the leisure centre was open and there was food and refreshments available. I was tired at this point from going up/down the tower and setting up the 1 aid area, so I decided to have some food. I noticed that the sky was getting lighter at this point. I also noticed that the tower on this side looked completely different and that it had burnt most of itself completely out. I stopped for about an hour whilst having some food and drink and afterwards I felt much better and less tired. I felt more refreshed and less tired. I then went and looked for my station crew but couldn't find anyone but I spoke to another Crew Manager, Dave DAVIES from Hammersmith, who said I should probably wait by my appliance for the others and that my Watch Manager was safety officer in a different building. I took his advice and went back to wait by our appliance.

When I got to my appliance it was connected to a hydrant and was pumping out water to another appliance, but without anyone there looking after it. This should normally be supervised in case there are any problems. I noticed that it was pumping out water faster than it was filling up, and only had 350 litres of water left inside, which is around 1/4 of a tank and appliances normally hold about 1400 litres. With water being pumped out faster, it was at risk of drying up whilst still being connected. This can cause problems and issues with the appliance. In order to change this I followed the hose coming from our appliance to see what it was supplying with water. This then led me to an appliance from North Kensington's ground. I asked their pump operator to reduce the pressure so that my appliance could slowly fill up again, and also said that they were over running the supply and they needed to change this otherwise my appliance would run out of water. They agreed and said that they would reduce the pump pressure. I can't remember what their appliance was supplying with water. Our procedures state that an appliance must have a pump operator at all times and because mine was missing one, I stayed with mine and became the pump operator. It was a task that I decided to do myself. The reason for this procedure is so that the pressure and supply can be always maintained and the pressure can also be adjusted if needed. I did this for about 30 mins to an hour and stood about a meter away from the back of the engine so that I could monitor the lights and make sure that everything was all OK.

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After around an hour, everyone from my appliance returned and came back to the appliance. We all briefly told each other what we had done. The 2 standby firefighters said that they got quite high up the inside of the tower, to about the 20th floor, and my Watch Manager said that he was safety officer and that he had to watch the debris falling from the tower to protect other firefighters. We all had some food and drink and then some senior officers came and spoke to us. I remember the Commissioner Dani COTTON spoke to us and seemed shocked that we were still there and that she would organise some transport for us. We couldn't leave as our appliance was still pumping water as well as also missing gear and equipment. In addition to this we were also boxed in by other appliances and so we realised that we would have to leave it there.

We waited around for a while, maybe an hour, and then the police came along and someone said that the police would give us a lift back to Paddington Fire Station in their police van if we wanted, and so we got a lift with them. At Paddington we were instructed to complete some notes about the incident and these are the same notes that I exhibit as TDD/1. We were also spoken to by DAC Sabrina HATTON-COHEN who was at Paddington fire station, and said that we didn't need to work the next night shift because we were due to return to work at 8pm that night.

After completing my notes, we then needed transport from Paddington back to Chiswick fire station where we were based, and we waited for the LFB minibus which had gone to Addington or Orpington first. Due to the time it would take for the minibus to get back to Paddington our Watch Manager spoke to DAC HATTON-COHEN and she offered to give us a lift in her vehicle back to Chiswick. All of us did this. I eventually finished my duty at 2000hrs that same day, which is the same time I was due to start my next shift. Due to this and the fact that DAC HATTON-COHEN said we didn't need to work, I decided to go home to rest. None of the other station managers seemed to offer this and I think Aggy worked the shift through his own choice.

That night it was really hot weather and I didn't know how the fire was reacting whilst I was inside the building. This is because I didn't know what was happening outside and the fire spread was quicker than would I thought. I assumed that when I came out of the tower the fire would be out. I am also unaware of any changes to the "stay put" policy that was issued that night.

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