

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

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

Statement of: MEEK, ASHLEY

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

Occupation: POLICE OFFICER

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This statement (consisting of 3 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: ASHLEY MEEK

Date: 12/10/2017

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

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This statement refers to the incident at Grenfell Tower that I attended on the 14th June 2017. At approximately 0045 hours I was on duty and in full uniform. I was the driver of a marked police van. I was with PC 233WW BAKER and we were both carrying tasers. We attended a call to Grenfell Tower after an off borough request for more units to assist with fire in a tower block that was becoming a large scale. Upon arriving at the location I could see from a distance that the tower block was largely ablaze. I drove down Clarendon Road following the fire brigade and I then followed it round to Walmer Road I then parked the police vehicle on the pavement so I did not block the road for any further arriving emergency service vehicles. Myself and PC BAKER have then exited the vehicle and made our way down Bomore Road towards the tower Block that was on fire which I now know to be Grenfell Tower. Upon arriving at the junction of Bomore Road and Avondale Road. We had been given no direction as to where to go and who to speak to so we tried to find someone for direction. I could see large amounts of people outside of the Kensington Leisure Centre and I could hear people screaming and shouting. There were other police officers from Kensington and Chelsea borough at the location. I could see the tower was burning heavily and there was a strong smell of smoke in the air. There were lots of members of the public close to the tower. We spoke with some of the officers at the scene and it was decided that the members of the public that were gathered near the bottom of the tower and around the Leisure Centre needed to move back for their own safety due to debris that was coming from the building and to allow emergency personnel room to be able to work effectively. Myself, PC BAKER and the other officers have

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2018

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then started asking the members of the public who were a mix of residents from Grenfell Tower and other local residents. We had to shout loudly to get people to move back into Avondale Park Road at the junction with Bomore Road. There were large amounts of people who were upset and angry that they were being moved back. I explained to people that it was for their own safety and we needed space to be able to get more emergency services in place. The members of public have eventually started to move away from the tower and Leisure Centre away to Avondale Road. I could hear people screaming from the tower block. Once we managed to get the members of the public into Avondale Park Road a cordon has then been put up across the road junction of Avondale Park Road and Bomore Road. The cordon was then run down Bomore Road to the junction of Walmer Road. Myself and PC BAKER have then assisted in getting members of the public through the cordon area to where they needed to be. After a short time we made our way back to the junction of Avondale Park Road by the Leisure Centre. There were a lot more officers and emergency services. We were joined by a serial from Lambeth and the sergeant was PS SEAL 33LX. The London Ambulance was using the area to triage and treat injured or ill patients coming out from Grenfell Tower. There was numerous people shouting and crying at the cordons and they were very emotional which was understandable. There was a group of males at the location who were shouting and getting angry saying we were not doing anything and neither were the fire brigade. Myself and other officers tried to explain that the fire brigade was doing all they could as well as us. The males have then pushed through the cordons and made their way towards the Leisure Centre. I made my way after them along with another number of officers to try and get them out of the cordoned off area as there were ambulance crews treating people. The males were very animated and angry but eventually they were taken away from the location by friends and back to Avondale Road. Whilst back by the Leisure Centre I could still hear people screaming from the tower block which was now heavily ablaze on numerous floors of the block. I could see large amounts of debris falling from the building. It was decided that the cordons needed to be pushed back further as there was going to be ambulances coming down Avondale Road to Bomore Road to take the injured members of the public away from the location to hospital. Myself, PC 233WW and the officers from the Lambeth serial have then asked the members of the public to move back into a road called Threshers Place which was off Avondale Road approximately twenty metres from the junction of Bomore Road. The public moved back but they were obviously very upset at this stage due to the fire getting spreading rapidly across the building. Whilst I was at the cordon I was approached by a female who passed a mobile phone to me and said that it was her daughter on the phone and she was on the 11th floor trapped inside the building. I took the phone from the female and I spoke to the girl

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trapped. She stated she was on the 11TH floor in her flat with her young daughter and was trapped as the fire was outside her door. I asked for her flat number and the part of the building she was in. She stated she was in her daughter's bedroom and had covered the door with wet towels. I told her that I would pass the information to the fire brigade straight away. I told her to remain calm and that help would be on the way. I passed the phone back to the female and I have then called control so they could pass the information to the LFB. I gave the control room the flat number and floor number and number of persons trapped inside. The information was then passed on. I stayed at the location for quite some time to keep people from entering the cordoned off area. I have then moved towards the Leisure Centre to go and speak with one of the sergeants. Whilst there I could see that there were a number of deceased inside tents and in the Leisure Centre itself. I could see the building was almost entirely ablaze and I could hear people screaming still from the building. I have gone back to the Junction of Avondale Park Road and Threshers Place to maintain the cordon. There were still numerous people at the cordon and they were crying, shouting angry about what was happening as many were residents from the tower or had friends and family from the block. I heard over the radio that people inside the block were being advised to get out of the building themselves as the fire brigade could no guarantee they would be able to get to everybody trapped inside. Whilst at the cordon I could still see debris falling from the building and I could hear people screaming from the tower block. I was again approached by the same female that passed me her phone about her daughter who was trapped. She asked me to speak with her daughter again who was still trapped inside. I spoke with her again and she said she was still trapped inside her flat and could not get out due to the fire at the door. She said the room was starting to fill with smoke. I tried to keep her calm and I explained the fire brigade were doing everything they can to get to people. I said if she could self evacuate then do but if not to do whatever she could to stay safe. I passed the phone back to the female who carried on speaking with her. I felt helpless speaking to the female as I could not help and could not reassure her in the most difficult of situations for her. I stayed at the cordon for quite some time. Whilst at the scene the Salvation Army had arrived on scene to assist the emergency services. Again whilst at the scene I was approached by the female and she informed me that the female I had spoken to had got out with her young daughter and had been rescued by the fire brigade. She gave me a hug and I said I was very happy she was out with her daughter. I remained at the scene until approximately 0600 hours when myself and PC 233WW were told we were able to leave the scene by PS 33LX as we were a borough unit. Myself and PC 233WW BAKER made our way back to our vehicle and left the scene back to our borough of Wandsworth.

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Page 4 of 4

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2018

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