

<p>1 Thursday, 18 October 2018 2 (10.00 am) 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to 4 today's hearing. 5 We are going to hear further evidence from people 6 who were inside the tower at the time of the fire. 7 Yes, Mr Millett. 8 MR MILLETT: Good morning, Mr Chairman. 9 My next witness is Mr Farhad Neda. Can I please 10 call Mr Neda. 11 FARHAD (SHEKEB) NEDA (sworn) 12 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Sit down if 14 you like and make yourself comfortable there. 15 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? 17 Yes, Mr Millett. 18 MR MILLETT: Good morning, Mr Neda. 19 A. Good morning. 20 Q. Can I start by asking you, please, to give the chairman 21 your full name. 22 A. My name is Farhad Neda. 23 Q. I think your first name is Shekeb, but you are known as 24 Farhad? 25 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 your first statement, which is IWS00000886. 2 Is this page 1 of your first statement? 3 A. Yes, it is. 4 Q. If you go to the last page, which is page 29, you can 5 see a signature. Is that your signature? 6 A. Yes. 7 Q. It's over the date 6 June 2017. Should that be 2018? 8 A. Yes, I believe so. 9 Q. Thank you. 10 Have you had an opportunity to read this statement 11 recently? 12 A. Yes, I've gone through it. 13 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true? 14 A. Yes. 15 MR MILLETT: Thank you. 16 There are no exhibits to this statement, 17 Mr Chairman. 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. 19 MR MILLETT: Mr Neda, I think you've also produced a second 20 witness statement to the inquiry dated 16 October 2018, 21 two days ago, and that is IWS00001134. 22 Can I ask you, please, to turn to page 3 of that 23 statement. 24 Is that your signature? 25 A. Yes, it is.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 Q. Can I start by thanking you very much indeed for coming 2 today to give evidence to the inquiry and assisting the 3 chairman in his investigations. We really appreciate it 4 and it's enormously useful to us to have you here, so 5 thank you very much. 6 I appreciate going through some of the events of the 7 night may be difficult for you at times, so if at any 8 stage you want a break, just say and we can take 9 a break. 10 I'm going to ask questions in chunks of 45 minutes, 11 so at 45 minutes, subject to the chairman, we will stop 12 and we can have a break. 13 A. Okay, thank you. 14 Q. Is that okay? 15 A. Sure. 16 Q. Okay. 17 I should also say something else. At times, when 18 you're answering, it may be that it looks like I'm not 19 listening to you because I'm not looking at you, but I'm 20 looking at my screen or my notes. I am listening very 21 hard to what you're telling us, it's just that I have to 22 keep following it on the screen. Just so you 23 understand. 24 A. No problem. 25 Q. Can I start, then, by asking you, please, to look at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 Q. Above the date of 16 October 2018? 2 A. That's correct. 3 Q. Have you had a chance to read this statement recently? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true subject to 6 some material we're going to look at shortly? 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. Can I start, then, Mr Neda, with some background. 9 Your family home was flat 205, Grenfell Tower. 10 A. Yes, that's right. 11 Q. On floor 23 of the building. 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. Is it right that you grew up there with your mother and 14 father? 15 A. Yes, that's right. 16 Q. Your father was Mohamed Saber Neda. 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. In June 2017, can you tell us who lived in your flat 19 with you? 20 A. So it was my father, my mother and I. 21 Q. Were you in good health at that time? 22 A. I was, yes. 23 Q. Were your parents in good health? 24 A. My father was healthy. My mum suffers from a muscular 25 disease.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 Q. Did you rent the flat?</p> <p>2 A. Yes, through the council.</p> <p>3 Q. From the council?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Can I ask you, please, to be shown MET00012593, and go</p> <p>6 to page 12.</p> <p>7 This is a layout of the 4th floor at Grenfell Tower</p> <p>8 after the refurbishment, which is repeated from floor 4</p> <p>9 to floor 23 inclusive, just so you know. It's</p> <p>10 a standard plan.</p> <p>11 Flat 205 would be flat 5 in the north-west corner of</p> <p>12 the tower; is that right?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Looking at this plan, is this an accurate representation</p> <p>15 of the layout of your flat at the time of the fire?</p> <p>16 A. Yes. So there's just a slight difference by the</p> <p>17 entrance. There's a wall on the plan which was a bit</p> <p>18 different.</p> <p>19 Q. Can you just explain the difference?</p> <p>20 A. I can show you up --</p> <p>21 Q. By all means do. We have a red dot function that comes</p> <p>22 up.</p> <p>23 I wonder whether, Ralph, you could just expand</p> <p>24 flat 5 or 205 for us, just to make it clearer.</p> <p>25 Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 Is this the sign that you're referring to?</p> <p>2 A. It looks pretty much like that's the sign, yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Which lift was this sign next to, do you think?</p> <p>4 A. As far as I can remember, it was to the left of -- on</p> <p>5 the left -- by the left lift. So closer to flat number</p> <p>6 203.</p> <p>7 Q. I see. And that's on your floor?</p> <p>8 A. Yes, that's on our floor, yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Do you know or do you remember whether this sign was to</p> <p>10 be found anywhere else in the tower at the time of the</p> <p>11 fire?</p> <p>12 A. I hadn't noticed it. I mean, the only two floors that</p> <p>13 I would go to were the ground floor and the 23rd floor,</p> <p>14 so I wouldn't be sure.</p> <p>15 Q. Do you remember ever seeing a temporary piece of paper</p> <p>16 with fire safety advice on it stuck by the lifts on the</p> <p>17 ground floor?</p> <p>18 A. No, I don't remember.</p> <p>19 Q. How long before the fire at Grenfell Tower, so the night</p> <p>20 of 13/14 June 2017, do you remember seeing this sign?</p> <p>21 A. Well, it was put up after the refurbishments had</p> <p>22 finished, so I would say it wasn't there for -- it was</p> <p>23 less than a year that it had been up.</p> <p>24 Q. Was it there at the time of the fire, do you remember?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 A. Okay, so this was the entrance way. This wall here</p> <p>2 didn't exist, instead we had a wall going here, so this</p> <p>3 was sort of a large storage room (Indicates).</p> <p>4 Q. Just for the transcript, the wall that comes out from</p> <p>5 the -- the east wall by the front door, transversely in</p> <p>6 an east-west direction, wasn't there, and it was</p> <p>7 replaced by a longer wall going south-north, directly</p> <p>8 from the right-hand side of the front door.</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Is that right?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Thank you very much.</p> <p>13 Can I then start with some questions about fire</p> <p>14 safety awareness before we turn to the events of the</p> <p>15 night.</p> <p>16 If you go, please, first of all, to page 20 of your</p> <p>17 first statement, and look, please, at paragraph 120.</p> <p>18 You say there:</p> <p>19 "120. Recently, not too long before the fire, the</p> <p>20 TMO put up a sign by the lifts which advised that the</p> <p>21 lifts should not be used during a fire and also</p> <p>22 confirmed that there was a stay put policy in the Tower.</p> <p>23 I think that the sign was on every floor of the Tower."</p> <p>24 Can I just show you first, then, a picture, which is</p> <p>25 INQ00000093.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 Looking at the top part of the sign, it says:</p> <p>3 "Fire Action - GRENFELL TOWER."</p> <p>4 Then there's some words which aren't highlighted,</p> <p>5 but it says:</p> <p>6 "There is a 'stay put' policy for residents unless</p> <p>7 the fire is in or affecting your flat."</p> <p>8 At the time of the fire, did you have any particular</p> <p>9 understanding of what that meant?</p> <p>10 A. Well, from reading that, I would've thought not to leave</p> <p>11 our flat if there was a fire.</p> <p>12 Q. Did you ever actually read the sign?</p> <p>13 A. I do remember reading it, yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Apart from that notice, do you remember any other</p> <p>15 information from any organisation being given to you</p> <p>16 about what you should do in the event of a fire in the</p> <p>17 block?</p> <p>18 A. No, not directly to me.</p> <p>19 Q. In general terms, Mr Neda, as at June 2017, what was</p> <p>20 your understanding as to what you as a resident should</p> <p>21 do in the event of a fire in the tower?</p> <p>22 A. So having read the sign, I thought it would be safe to</p> <p>23 stay inside our flat. I mean, we always used to do fire</p> <p>24 drills at school and everything, and we used to have to</p> <p>25 leave the building straight away, but I thought that the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

2 (Pages 5 to 8)

<p>1 sign would be an accurate -- I thought they had put the</p> <p>2 sign for a reason, so might as well follow it.</p> <p>3 Q. Right.</p> <p>4 You said just a second ago in your last answer,</p> <p>5 "I thought the sign would be an accurate ..."</p> <p>6 Did you mean inaccurate?</p> <p>7 A. No, I thought it would be --</p> <p>8 Q. Or --</p> <p>9 A. Well, I thought it would be a good policy to follow.</p> <p>10 I thought it was thought through. I didn't think they</p> <p>11 would put it up for no reason.</p> <p>12 Q. All right, thank you.</p> <p>13 Can I turn, then, to the night of the fire itself.</p> <p>14 Can I start by asking you, please, to look at page 3</p> <p>15 of your first statement, and go, please, in that to</p> <p>16 paragraph 13.</p> <p>17 You say there:</p> <p>18 "13. I, my mum and my dad, had arrived home in the</p> <p>19 early hours of the morning on 14 June 2017, from</p> <p>20 visiting my aunt's house. Our two families had eaten</p> <p>21 together</p> <p>22 "14. I thought we had got home at approximately</p> <p>23 between 12:30 am to 1:00 am in the morning. The CCTV</p> <p>24 still image from the lobby entrance area on the morning</p> <p>25 of the fire shows that we got to the entrance area at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 Q. How do you know that both were working?</p> <p>2 A. Because we were waiting in the lobby for the lift to</p> <p>3 arrive and the numbers were showing on both lifts.</p> <p>4 Usually if one of the lifts were out of order, it would</p> <p>5 say "Lift out of service".</p> <p>6 Q. Where would it say that?</p> <p>7 A. On the little screen where it shows what floor the lift</p> <p>8 is on.</p> <p>9 Q. I see.</p> <p>10 Then you say at 16:</p> <p>11 "16. As soon as the lift doors opened onto our</p> <p>12 landing on the 23rd floor, my mum and I both heard the</p> <p>13 vents/extractor fans in the landing area of our floor.</p> <p>14 They were making a lot of noise. This was not new and</p> <p>15 did not surprise us, as it was something that had</p> <p>16 occurred before."</p> <p>17 Before we discuss that together in a bit more</p> <p>18 detail, can I just ask you one or two questions about</p> <p>19 your floor.</p> <p>20 First, can I ask that the witness please be shown</p> <p>21 two pictures side-by-side, which are BLA00002513, and</p> <p>22 BLA00002514.</p> <p>23 I should just tell you, these are photographs of the</p> <p>24 communal lobby on floor 6, and I wanted to ask you about</p> <p>25 what you can see at the far end on each side. One is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 12.52 am. My image shows me entering the Tower at 12:51</p> <p>2 am and my mum entering 11 seconds later at 12.52 am.</p> <p>3 There is a further image of the three of us getting into</p> <p>4 the lift at 12:52 am. We got back only 2 minutes before</p> <p>5 the fire started in flat 16 on the 4th floor."</p> <p>6 Just a few questions about that paragraph.</p> <p>7 First, when you first entered the tower, did you</p> <p>8 come through the main entrance?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. While you were in the main entrance, do you remember</p> <p>11 whether you heard anything?</p> <p>12 A. No, I didn't hear anything. It was quiet, it was late</p> <p>13 at night.</p> <p>14 Q. You didn't hear any noise of fans or vents?</p> <p>15 A. Not immediately when we got into the building.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you remember smelling anything in particular at that</p> <p>17 point?</p> <p>18 A. No.</p> <p>19 Q. You then say at paragraph 15:</p> <p>20 "15. It was a normal evening when we entered the</p> <p>21 Tower and called a lift from the lobby area at the base.</p> <p>22 We got into a lift and went straight up to our floor."</p> <p>23 Do you remember whether both lifts were working at</p> <p>24 that point?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, they were.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 taken from one direction, from the direction to the</p> <p>2 right of the lifts, and the photograph on the right-hand</p> <p>3 side is taken, as you can see, to the left of the lifts,</p> <p>4 looking in the opposite direction. On each wall, at the</p> <p>5 far end, you can see what look like vent coverings.</p> <p>6 Are those vent coverings or vent entrances things</p> <p>7 that you had on your floor?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Were they on both sides of the lobby on floor 23?</p> <p>10 A. Yes, so exactly like that. On our side they were up</p> <p>11 higher and then on the other side it was low.</p> <p>12 Q. In this photograph we can see a white detector on the</p> <p>13 ceiling. Did you have one of those on floor 23, in the</p> <p>14 lobby there?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Did you know what that was?</p> <p>17 A. I presumed it was a smoke alarm -- fire alarm.</p> <p>18 Q. A fire alarm?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Did anybody ever explain to you what it was?</p> <p>21 A. No.</p> <p>22 Q. Going back to paragraph 16, when you got out of the</p> <p>23 lift, or when the lift doors opened, you say you heard</p> <p>24 a noise. Do you remember whether the noise was coming</p> <p>25 from both sets of ventilation entrances or shafts or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 only one?</p> <p>2 A. I wouldn't be able to say.</p> <p>3 Q. Do you remember where the noise was loudest in the</p> <p>4 lobby?</p> <p>5 A. Well, when we got out of the lift, we went left towards</p> <p>6 our flat, so for me it was that side. That's the side</p> <p>7 I could hear the most.</p> <p>8 Q. So you go left and then left again?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Looking back on it now, can you describe for us the</p> <p>11 sound you were hearing?</p> <p>12 A. So it sounded just like wind was going through the</p> <p>13 building, so it was as if it was coming from the floors</p> <p>14 downstairs, just all shooting up towards the 23rd floor.</p> <p>15 And then every few minutes you could hear the fans sort</p> <p>16 of closing. So it had like -- I think it was</p> <p>17 a mechanical sound of the fans opening and closing. But</p> <p>18 it didn't happen too much, it was like every 5 minutes,</p> <p>19 it would happen once.</p> <p>20 Q. Could you hear that opening and closing sound from the</p> <p>21 lobby and from your flat or just from the lobby?</p> <p>22 A. Yes -- no, from the flat as well.</p> <p>23 Q. The opening and closing sound -- sorry to ask you to go</p> <p>24 into so much detail -- can you just describe that</p> <p>25 opening and closing sequence sound for us?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 Q. While in the lobby, how loud was it?</p> <p>2 A. In the lobby, we would have to probably raise our voice</p> <p>3 quite a bit to be able to speak to each other if we were</p> <p>4 standing in the lobby.</p> <p>5 Q. So was it as loud as a vacuum cleaner?</p> <p>6 A. Yeah, I think about as loud as a vacuum cleaner, yes.</p> <p>7 Q. In paragraph 18 you say:</p> <p>8 "18. Since the council had undertaken the</p> <p>9 refurbishment work in the Tower, the air vents in the</p> <p>10 lift area of the landing would go off regularly. They</p> <p>11 would start opening and closing loudly about once a</p> <p>12 month. When they opened we would get huge gusts of wind</p> <p>13 going through the Tower, particularly on to our floor.</p> <p>14 On one particular occasion you could hear it from</p> <p>15 outside the Tower. It often seemed to happen on a</p> <p>16 Friday and would not be sorted out until the following</p> <p>17 Monday. When we got on to the 23rd floor they were</p> <p>18 going off loudly and it would have been impossible for</p> <p>19 us to sleep with such a noise."</p> <p>20 I've read that all to you because, again, there are</p> <p>21 one or two things in detail I want to discuss about it.</p> <p>22 At paragraph 18, you say there you got huge gusts of</p> <p>23 air through the tower. Where in the tower would you</p> <p>24 feel these gusts?</p> <p>25 A. In the lift lobby area.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 A. It sounded like a motor was turning. I mean, that's the</p> <p>2 best I could describe it.</p> <p>3 Q. What would change when the vents went from closed to</p> <p>4 open or went from open to closed in terms of the sound?</p> <p>5 What would change?</p> <p>6 A. So the wind would stop coming up, but that would only be</p> <p>7 very briefly and it would open again.</p> <p>8 Q. I see, okay.</p> <p>9 Did you observe, did you see, while you were in the</p> <p>10 lobby, anything happening with the doors, the shutters,</p> <p>11 if you like, to the vents, did they open and close?</p> <p>12 A. I didn't pay close attention to it because they had</p> <p>13 a sort of white mesh which was going over it, so you'd</p> <p>14 have to put your eyes through the little holes to be</p> <p>15 able to see that.</p> <p>16 Q. While you were in the lobby, did you notice any movement</p> <p>17 of air coming from one direction or another direction?</p> <p>18 A. No, I didn't notice it.</p> <p>19 Q. Still staying in the lobby for the moment, do you</p> <p>20 remember how loud the sound was?</p> <p>21 A. So it was loud enough for us to be able to hear it from</p> <p>22 our living room while our front door was closed. So our</p> <p>23 living room's probably the furthest point away that you</p> <p>24 could be from the fan within our flat. So we could hear</p> <p>25 it from there, clearly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 Q. Would you feel them anywhere else in the tower when</p> <p>2 these vents were going off in this way?</p> <p>3 A. No. No, you would just be able to hear it, not feel it.</p> <p>4 Q. Do you remember where these gusts of air that you've</p> <p>5 described would be coming from?</p> <p>6 A. From the air vents. I don't know where the source of it</p> <p>7 was, but where it would the end up would be in our lobby</p> <p>8 area through the air vents.</p> <p>9 Q. On the night, when you heard this sound and these vents</p> <p>10 going off as you got out of the lift, do you remember</p> <p>11 the same kind of gusts or feeling the gusts at that</p> <p>12 point?</p> <p>13 A. Yes. So it was a little bit windy in our lobby area.</p> <p>14 It was warm air, I presume because it was summer. We</p> <p>15 were just getting air from outside coming up.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you remember which vent in the lobby the gusts or</p> <p>17 wind that you're describing were coming from?</p> <p>18 A. So it was the ones on the left side, in between flat 206</p> <p>19 and 205.</p> <p>20 Q. So the ones nearest your flat?</p> <p>21 A. Yes, that's the ones I felt it from.</p> <p>22 Q. Was the wind coming out towards you?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Was it strong or weak or can you describe?</p> <p>25 A. It wasn't too strong, no. Just enough to feel it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

4 (Pages 13 to 16)

1 **Yeah.**
 2 Q. Do you remember whether you were ever at any stage in
 3 the main ground floor lobby of the building at the same
 4 time as the vents were activating as you've described
 5 it?
 6 **A. I'm not sure, because when we got in, I couldn't hear it**
 7 **from downstairs and I couldn't feel anything, so I'm not**
 8 **sure.**
 9 Q. What about on other occasions when these vents were
 10 going off?
 11 **A. There was one occasion, which was a few months before**
 12 **the fire, where the problem had got so loud that you**
 13 **could even hear the vents going off from outside the**
 14 **tower.**
 15 **So this was at the point, I believe, when we were**
 16 **still using the walkway as the entrance during the**
 17 **refurbishments, and I don't know where the sound was**
 18 **coming from, but you could just hear it clearly from**
 19 **outside the tower. It went on for I think over**
 20 **24 hours.**
 21 Q. During that 24-hour period, do you remember whether you
 22 could feel air moving in the main lobby of the building?
 23 **A. I can't remember in the main lobby, but on our floor we**
 24 **could definitely feel it. I think it was so strong that**
 25 **it would cause the doors to the stairwell to open and**

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1 **close a little bit very slightly. It would move the**
 2 **doors that you would go into the stairwell from.**
 3 Q. Really? Okay.
 4 Do you remember being in the stairwell at any time
 5 during, for example, that 24-hour period you've
 6 described?
 7 **A. No, I don't remember.**
 8 Q. Do you remember being in the stairwell at any time when
 9 these vents were going off at any time prior to the
 10 fire?
 11 **A. No.**
 12 Q. Okay.
 13 You've said in paragraph 18 at the very top of
 14 page 4 that you would get these gusts of wind going
 15 through the tower, and you say "particularly on to our
 16 floor".
 17 When you say "particularly on to our floor", do you
 18 mean that the noise and the wind and air movement you
 19 were experiencing were worse on your floor than other
 20 floors?
 21 **A. I presume so, yes, because we were at the top floor, so**
 22 **I couldn't see anywhere else that the vents would lead**
 23 **to. From what I could see, everything would just come**
 24 **up to our floor.**
 25 Q. Did you ever have an opportunity to make a comparison

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1 between the noise and air movement on your floor and the
 2 air and noise on lower floors?
 3 **A. No. No.**
 4 Q. Okay.
 5 On the night of the fire, when you came out of the
 6 lift and stood in the lobby, was the noise that you
 7 heard coming from the air vents louder than you'd heard
 8 in the past?
 9 **A. No, it was about the same as what we would usually get.**
 10 **Because it happened so often, it -- the only time it was**
 11 **louder was that 24-hour period while the refurbishments**
 12 **were going on, but other than that it always used to be**
 13 **consistent.**
 14 Q. You go on in paragraph 19 to say:
 15 "19. There had been previous occasions when the
 16 fans had gone off and I had telephoned the Tenants
 17 Management Organisation (the 'TMO') to complain about
 18 the noise. It would normally take the TMO a few days to
 19 come out to the 23rd floor to fix the problem."
 20 First, did they come to the 23rd floor to fix the
 21 problem or did they fix the problem elsewhere in the
 22 tower?
 23 **A. I think it was elsewhere, yeah.**
 24 Q. So when you say that they came out to the 23rd floor to
 25 fix the problem, did they do anything on the 23rd floor,

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1 do you remember?
 2 **A. I'm not sure. I would never see them working on the**
 3 **problem, I would just notice it being fixed. So, for**
 4 **example, if I would leave in the morning to go to work,**
 5 **in the evening I would come and the noise would be**
 6 **finished.**
 7 Q. Did you ever see them working on the problem?
 8 **A. No, I never saw them working on it.**
 9 Q. So you don't know where they worked?
 10 **A. No.**
 11 Q. Did you ever find out what they actually did to fix the
 12 problem?
 13 **A. No.**
 14 Q. Do you know who came from the TMO, which person or
 15 persons?
 16 **A. No.**
 17 Q. Did you ever discover yourself what was actually causing
 18 the vent system to start operating like that?
 19 **A. No, we never really followed up. We were just happy to**
 20 **get the noise stopped.**
 21 Q. Do you remember whether other residents of the tower
 22 complained to the TMO about the vents operating in that
 23 way?
 24 **A. I'm not sure, but usually whenever I would call the TMO,**
 25 **they would say, "We've had complaints about this**

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1 **before." So I assumed that other people were**
 2 **complaining about it as well.**
 3 Q. Did you ever discuss this problem with any of your
 4 neighbours?
 5 **A. I can't remember.**
 6 Q. Can I just go back a step to paragraph 18 in your
 7 statement, where you are describing the previous
 8 occasions.
 9 When you say you could hear the noise outside the
 10 tower --
 11 **A. Yes.**
 12 Q. -- how far away from the tower could you hear that noise
 13 on, let's say, that 24-hour occasion when it was
 14 particularly bad?
 15 **A. So at that stage we were using the walkway to exit from**
 16 **the tower, and we had a little staircase that we've come**
 17 **up from the ground floor to the walkway. You could hear**
 18 **it up to the staircase. So, yeah, even when you're at**
 19 **the staircase, you would be able to hear it. When you**
 20 **would go down, you would go around the corner onto**
 21 **Grenfell Road, so walking towards the sports centre. So**
 22 **as you get to about the corner of Grenfell Road leading**
 23 **to the sports centre, that's when you would start to**
 24 **stop hearing it.**
 25 Q. I see.

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1 **A. Yes.**
 2 Q. About 50 yards, 40 metres away from the tower or so?
 3 **A. Yes.**
 4 Q. Do you remember there being an air vent, or some kind of
 5 vent, above the new main entrance to the tower?
 6 **A. I can't remember. I think there was something like**
 7 **three or four horizontal lines which looked like air**
 8 **vents. I'm not sure what they were. I think it was**
 9 **located somewhere between the walkway level and the**
 10 **3rd floor. I can't remember exactly the position.**
 11 Q. Did you ever notice a vent noise or fan noise coming
 12 from those horizontal bars as you've described them?
 13 **A. Only on that one occasion where the noise was very loud.**
 14 Q. You could hear it coming from that, could you?
 15 **A. I think it was coming from there, yeah. That's the only**
 16 **place that seemed plausible.**
 17 Q. Moving forward -- not very far, but moving forward
 18 nonetheless -- you say in paragraph 20:
 19 "20. My mum and I looked at one another and one of
 20 us said, 'We will not be sleeping tonight', referencing
 21 the noise. We knew from previous experience how
 22 difficult it was to sleep with the howling noise created
 23 by the ventilation system."
 24 I am interested in this howling.
 25 It's difficult to describe it, I know, but were

Page 22

1 there parts of the sound that you heard? I mean, could
 2 you hear it in, as it were, different parts of sound?
 3 **A. Yes. So sometimes it would be just a gust of wind, and**
 4 **then sometimes it would feel as if it was trying to push**
 5 **through a small gap, so that's when it would start**
 6 **making the howling and the whistling sort of noises.**
 7 **Just like wind, just normal wind.**
 8 Q. In terms of the mechanical sound, did you ever hear
 9 a high-pitched whine over the top of the rest of the
 10 sound?
 11 **A. Would you be able to describe the noise better?**
 12 Q. Probably not!
 13 All right, let me try a different one. Did you ever
 14 hear a low sort of base, or feel a low base hum, when
 15 the vents were working?
 16 **A. I'm not sure.**
 17 Q. Okay.
 18 **A. Yes.**
 19 Q. Going to paragraph 21, you say:
 20 "21. I went into our flat. I got changed to get
 21 ready for bed. My mum told me to call the TMO's
 22 emergency number to let them know that the ventilator
 23 fan was going off in the landing area. There is a 24
 24 hour emergency number to call."
 25 I think you then, as you say in the next paragraph,

Page 23

1 called the emergency number, sometime between 01.00 am
 2 and 01.15. I'm going to come to that in a moment.
 3 Before we do, can I ask you, when you got inside the
 4 flat, did the volume of the sound that you heard outside
 5 in the lobby change?
 6 **A. So the volume decreased a bit, but it was still loud**
 7 **enough to hear. We could still hear it clearly from**
 8 **inside the flat.**
 9 Q. You could hear it from the outside?
 10 **A. So from the outside of the flat, we could hear it**
 11 **loudly. From the inside, we could hear it clearly. The**
 12 **volume was lower, but we could hear it clearly.**
 13 Q. Do you remember where your father was at this stage?
 14 **A. I believe he was getting changed in his bedroom.**
 15 Q. Then you say you made the call. Do you remember where
 16 you were when you made the call?
 17 **A. So I was walking around.**
 18 Q. Inside the flat?
 19 **A. I walked from my bedroom to the living room and back.**
 20 **I have a habit of pacing up and down when I'm on the**
 21 **phone.**
 22 Q. Yes, I know what you mean.
 23 And you were inside the flat?
 24 **A. Yes.**
 25 Q. Was the door closed?

Page 24

1 **A. It was, yes.**
 2 Q. We have a transcript of the call. In fact, we also have
 3 the audio of the call. What I'd like to do is just play
 4 the audio of the call together with the transcript
 5 side-by-side to you, just to get you to confirm the
 6 conversation. Are you all right with me doing that?
 7 **A. Yes, sure.**
 8 MR MILLETT: Okay.
 9 I don't know whether this needs a trigger warning,
 10 Mr Chairman. It might do. So I just ought to say --
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: This is not a call that relates to
 12 the fire.
 13 MR MILLETT: It is not a call that relates -- well, only
 14 potentially and indirectly. But, yes, there's no fire
 15 and you can't hear or certainly can't see fire on this,
 16 but I should make it clear for those who are about to
 17 hear this evidence that, because it brings back the
 18 night, people might find it distressing.
 19 Can we have on the screen the transcript and then
 20 get ready the audio to play.
 21 So there's the transcript. What we'll do is just
 22 play the audio. It's 1 minute and 17 seconds and it's
 23 timed at 01.10 am on 14 June 2017.
 24 So, Ralph, if we can just play the audio.
 25 (Audio played)

Page 25

1 Transcript of call:
 2 HAYLEY: Thank you for calling Kensington and Chelsea
 3 out of hours. You're speaking to Hayley, how can I
 4 help?
 5 CALLER: Hi I'm calling from 205, Grenfell Tower.
 6 HAYLEY: Hello.
 7 CALLER: Basically in the lift area in the communal
 8 area the air vents are making lots of noise and there's
 9 a kind of electrical burning smell (overspeaking).
 10 HAYLEY: Okay we've got the -- I believe it's to do
 11 with the fire alarms, we've got the fire alarm engineer
 12 on his way.
 13 CALLER: Okay, perfect. That's great, you know,
 14 I just wanted to make sure --
 15 HAYLEY: Has the Fire Brigade been on site?
 16 CALLER: I haven't seen them, no. I haven't seen any
 17 fire or anything. I just can smell like the electrical
 18 burning smell.
 19 HAYLEY: Right, okay. Thanks for bringing this to
 20 our attention. We have had a call regarding the fire
 21 alarms. Have you heard them going off at all?
 22 CALLER: No we just got home like about ten minutes
 23 ago.
 24 HAYLEY: Oh okay. Okay, yeah the Fire Brigade,
 25 apparently they are on their way, as well, so you might

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1 see them shortly.
 2 CALLER: Okay yeah because there's one lift that's
 3 not working, as well, at the minute. I don't know if
 4 that's connected to it or not.
 5 HAYLEY: Yeah it might be because of the fire alarms
 6 because they, they sort of go down all at the same time.
 7 But we will look (Overspeaking)
 8 CALLER: All right thank you very much.
 9 HAYLEY: That's all right, take care.
 10 CALLER: All right, you too. Thanks.
 11 HAYLEY: Bye.
 12 CALLER: Bye-bye.
 13 MR MILLETT: Having seen the transcript, and also now having
 14 heard the audio, Mr Neda, are you happy to accept that
 15 that's the conversation you had with RBKC --
 16 **A. Yes.**
 17 Q. -- about the vents?
 18 **A. Yes.**
 19 Q. Does that mean that we have to read your first and
 20 second statements and your recollection of that call now
 21 differently having seen the transcript?
 22 **A. Yes.**
 23 Q. And the audio?
 24 **A. Yes.**
 25 Q. Going back to your experience, you said in that call,

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1 and we heard it, that you smelt an electrical burning.
 2 I want to explore that a bit.
 3 How strong was that smell at that time?
 4 **A. So it began off quite light and it started getting**
 5 **stronger and stronger. But what I clearly remember is**
 6 **that it was definitely coming from the vents.**
 7 Q. The smell was?
 8 **A. Yes, the smell was definitely coming from the vents.**
 9 Q. So you could smell it while you were still in the lobby,
 10 could you?
 11 **A. Yes.**
 12 Q. Was it in the air coming out of the vents?
 13 **A. Yes, so you could smell it -- as soon as you come out of**
 14 **the lift, you would be able to smell it.**
 15 Q. Do you remember at that point whether there was any
 16 smoke coming out of the vents?
 17 **A. Not at that point, no.**
 18 Q. When you got into your flat, could you still smell the
 19 electrical burning smell?
 20 **A. Not to begin with, we would have to open the front door**
 21 **to be able to smell it. But after a while, the smell**
 22 **started to come inside. So I remember at one point**
 23 **I was standing by my bedroom door, which is the second**
 24 **bedroom as you come into the flat, and I could smell it**
 25 **from there clearly.**

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<p>1 Q. Really?</p> <p>2 I know it's hard to guess, but how long after the</p> <p>3 call did you start smelling the electrical burning smell</p> <p>4 in the flat?</p> <p>5 A. I would say about 5 to 10 minutes after the call.</p> <p>6 Q. When you were in the lobby, before you went into your</p> <p>7 flat, do you remember whether anybody else came out into</p> <p>8 the lobby from your neighbours' flats?</p> <p>9 A. No, no one did.</p> <p>10 Q. You say in your statement at paragraph 23 -- and,</p> <p>11 indeed, we've seen it in the transcript and on the</p> <p>12 call -- that you'd noticed that one of the lifts wasn't</p> <p>13 working.</p> <p>14 How had you noticed that one of the lifts wasn't</p> <p>15 working?</p> <p>16 A. So during the call, I kept on going outside into the</p> <p>17 lobby area. So at one point when I went out -- this was</p> <p>18 while I was on the phone to the TMO -- I realised that</p> <p>19 one of the lifts, the one on the left side, closer to</p> <p>20 203, where it would usually say the numbers, it just</p> <p>21 said "Lift out of order" or "Lift under maintenance",</p> <p>22 I can't remember which one.</p> <p>23 Q. Did you notice that the lift was out of order when you</p> <p>24 came out of the lifts or did you not look?</p> <p>25 A. When we came out of the lift, I don't think I looked,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 keep on going outside into the lobby area to -- I was</p> <p>2 sort of trying to investigate the smell myself, like why</p> <p>3 was this smell on our floor. Because at that point we</p> <p>4 couldn't see anything. There was no smoke or anything,</p> <p>5 it was just a smell.</p> <p>6 Q. Was that smell something that you experienced on that</p> <p>7 night for the first time?</p> <p>8 A. Yes, on that night.</p> <p>9 Q. So the previous occasions on which the vent had started</p> <p>10 operating in the way you've described, does that mean</p> <p>11 there was no smell that you experienced?</p> <p>12 A. No, there was no smell at all.</p> <p>13 Q. You say in paragraph 28 of your first statement on</p> <p>14 page 5 -- in fact, I'd just like to go back to</p> <p>15 paragraph 27. You say in that paragraph that you went</p> <p>16 to bed after the call:</p> <p>17 "... but the smell of burning was getting stronger</p> <p>18 and stronger and coming into our flat."</p> <p>19 We looked earlier on this morning at the first time</p> <p>20 at which you experienced the smell in the flat, and</p> <p>21 I think you were saying you were standing in the hall.</p> <p>22 Is that right or were you actually in bed by that</p> <p>23 time?</p> <p>24 A. So I was in bed. My mum came into my room and said that</p> <p>25 the smell was getting worse, so I got out of bed and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 but when we were coming up -- while we were waiting for</p> <p>2 the lift, which was literally about two minutes before</p> <p>3 we got up to our floor, because the lifts were quite</p> <p>4 fast, both lifts were working.</p> <p>5 Q. They were working, as you said before.</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. So when you made the call over that</p> <p>8 1-minute-and-17-second period, you were in and out of</p> <p>9 your flat.</p> <p>10 How many times, can you remember, even roughly, did</p> <p>11 you go out into the lobby and then back into your flat?</p> <p>12 A. I think a minimum of three times.</p> <p>13 Q. So quite a lot of pacing.</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Were you holding the door open at that stage?</p> <p>16 A. I think my mum was holding the door open. She stayed by</p> <p>17 the front door most of the time, whereas I was walking</p> <p>18 up and down, yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you happen to know which lift had stopped working?</p> <p>20 A. It was the one -- so if you're facing the lifts, as if</p> <p>21 you would go into them, it would be the left one.</p> <p>22 Q. Was that the one you came up in?</p> <p>23 A. I can't remember now which one we came up in.</p> <p>24 Q. After the call finished, did you stay in your flat?</p> <p>25 A. No. Well, we stayed in, but every now and then I would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 I got to about the door of my room, and that's from</p> <p>2 where I could smell it.</p> <p>3 Q. So when you go on to say:</p> <p>4 "Our front door was closed and the smell had made</p> <p>5 its way into my bedroom."</p> <p>6 At that point, had the smell come into your bedroom</p> <p>7 or was it still in the hall?</p> <p>8 A. So it eventually did come into the bedroom. I can't</p> <p>9 remember exactly how long it took, but it did eventually</p> <p>10 come in.</p> <p>11 Q. You continued to hear the vents from within the flat.</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Did the sound that you were hearing ever stop at any</p> <p>14 point that you stayed in the flat on that night?</p> <p>15 A. I think up until the point where we noticed there was</p> <p>16 a fire in the building, I was paying attention to it and</p> <p>17 I could hear them. After that point, I think I started</p> <p>18 worrying about other things, so I stopped paying</p> <p>19 attention to the sound of the vents.</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: Okay.</p> <p>21 Mr Chairman, we've had just over 45 minutes.</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: I'm going to change to a different topic.</p> <p>24 Mr Neda, is it convenient to you to take a break</p> <p>25 now?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

<p>1 THE WITNESS: Yes, sure. 2 MR MILLETT: Okay. 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, then we shall take a break 4 now, Mr Neda. 5 I am going to suggest that we come back at 6 11 o'clock. 7 Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence 8 while you're out of the room. 9 THE WITNESS: Sure. 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Is that all right? 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like to go with the usher, 13 then, please. She'll look after you. 14 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good, 11 o'clock, then, please. 16 (10.50 am) 17 (A short break) 18 (11.00 am) 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Neda? 20 THE WITNESS: Yes. 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Happy to carry on? 22 THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you. 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett. 24 MR MILLETT: Mr Neda, thank you for coming back to us. 25 We're going to move on to the events of the night in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 one that the Fire Brigade would usually have. 2 Q. You don't know who had that key so that if you needed to 3 open it, you could? 4 A. No. Before the refurbishments, we had someone 5 downstairs, a concierge or security kind of person, 6 I presumed he had access. But after the refurbishments, 7 there was no one there, so there was no access up there 8 for us. 9 Q. Do you know whether the gate was locked on the night of 10 the fire? 11 A. It was locked. 12 Q. Did you see it and look? 13 A. No, I don't think I looked, but prior to the fire, every 14 time that I would see it, it was always locked. I don't 15 think I had ever seen it open since they fitted it in. 16 Q. Did you or anybody else on that night, to your 17 knowledge, try the gate to see if it was unlocked? 18 A. I'm not sure. 19 Q. Can I then go back into your statement and pick up the 20 evidence at the point at which you're in your flat, in 21 your bedroom, and you are starting to smell the burning. 22 When you smelt it, was it the same smell of burning 23 that you had first smelt outside the flat when you were 24 there? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 a bit more detail, but before I do, can I just ask you 2 one or two questions just going back a little bit. 3 When you first went into your flat, having come up 4 the lifts and gone through the lobby, did you notice any 5 sound of the vents coming from elsewhere other than from 6 outside the flat? 7 A. No. No, I didn't. 8 Q. You didn't hear any sound coming from above you, did 9 you? 10 A. No. 11 Q. Do you remember whether on the 23rd floor there was 12 a gate that would take you, if it was open, up to the 13 roof? 14 A. Yes, there was. It was locked for quite a while. 15 Q. It was locked for quite a while? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. Do you remember when it was first locked? 18 A. It was many years, so I think well over 5 years, it had 19 been locked. The gates didn't exist when we moved in. 20 I think they were only put there to stop homeless people 21 sleeping in the stairwell. 22 Q. Who had the key to that gate, do you know? 23 A. No. It looked like one of those -- it looked like 24 a special key. So it wasn't a normal key that would 25 open the gate, it would be one of those workmen keys or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 Q. An electrical smell? 2 A. Yes. 3 Q. When you say an electrical burning smell, I know it's 4 difficult to describe these things, but can you describe 5 the smell? 6 A. So, it's -- say if you had like two open wires and you 7 would touch them and you'd get a spark from it, it would 8 be that kind of smell. 9 Q. At that stage, do you remember, did you see any visible 10 signs of smoke inside your flat, at that point, when 11 you've come out of your bedroom and you can smell -- 12 A. No. 13 Q. Did you look out of the window at that point? 14 A. We did look out of the window, yes. We couldn't see 15 anything. 16 Q. You didn't see any visible signs of smoke outside the 17 flat at that stage? 18 A. No. 19 Q. You then say, if you go to page 5 of your statement, 20 paragraphs 29 and 30: 21 "29. When we next looked out onto our landing, we 22 could see that both of the lifts were now out of order 23 and we could also see that people were slowly coming out 24 of their flats on to our landing. Something just 25 started to seem not right."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 How long do you think -- it's hard, I know -- after 2 the call to RBKC that we've seen earlier this morning 3 that took place? 4 A. I don't think it was longer than 15 minutes after the 5 call. 6 Q. When you say "we next looked out onto our landing", who 7 is the "we"? 8 A. My mother and I. 9 Q. When you did that, do you remember what the conditions 10 in the lobby were like at that point? 11 A. It was still clear. We could see clearly everything. 12 Q. Was the noise from the vents still going? 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. Could you still smell the electrical burning smell? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Was it stronger at that stage? 17 A. Yes, it was getting stronger. 18 Q. Could you still feel the air or breeze coming out of the 19 vent? 20 A. I think so. I can't be 100 per cent sure, but I think 21 so. 22 Q. Do you remember which neighbours came out onto your 23 landing? 24 A. I believe flat 206 had come out. The younger lady that 25 lived in that flat, she had come out.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 I said, "I think the best thing to do is leave now." 2 Q. Did you look out of the window at that point? 3 A. I looked out but I couldn't see anything. I didn't lean 4 out to try and get a better view, I just looked at the 5 standard view that I had. 6 Q. Do you remember which window you looked out of? 7 A. It was my dad's -- so my parents' bedroom. 8 Q. Okay. 9 Just so we're clear, and I should have asked you 10 this earlier on, but can we just have the diagram of the 11 flat back up, please, which is MET00012593, page 12. 12 Can you just identify for us which of the two 13 bedrooms was yours? 14 A. So my bedroom is the one closest to the lounge. 15 Q. Okay. So the one halfway down the hall? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. Which window do you remember looking out of, just on 18 that diagram? 19 A. So the window on the right-hand side. The far right. 20 Q. The far right? 21 A. Top corner. 22 Q. Your parents' bedroom? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Looking north? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 I don't remember looking at the faces of other 2 people, just because I had that weird feeling, so 3 I don't know if it was that I was nervous and I was just 4 pacing up and down, trying to look to see what was going 5 on, so I didn't really notice who else was there, but 6 I'm sure there was about at least two or three other 7 people that -- they at least opened their doors. 8 Q. Did you speak to them? 9 A. No. 10 Q. Were they in their night clothes or were they, as it 11 were, dressed to leave? 12 A. No, no, everyone was in their night clothes. It seemed 13 like they had just woken up. 14 Q. I see, okay. 15 You go on to say in paragraph 30: 16 "30. I do not remember all the details but it got 17 to a point where we decided to leave our flat and we 18 wanted to make our way down the stairs." 19 Do you remember what it was that prompted your 20 decision to leave? 21 A. So I remember, at one point, my dad was looking out of 22 the window, and he said, "I think there's a fire 23 downstairs". We still couldn't see the fire, but 24 I think my dad, he must have leant out of the window to 25 have a look, and I just trusted what my dad said.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 Q. You say you didn't see any signs of fire at that stage? 2 A. No, I didn't. 3 Q. Did you hear anything? 4 A. I think I started hearing like people talking. So it 5 was like when you would open the window, you could hear 6 people outside. You couldn't make out what they were 7 saying, but you could hear them. 8 Q. At the point you made the decision to leave, having done 9 so, do you know how long that was after your 10 conversation with RBKC we looked at earlier? 11 A. I think it was probably about half an hour after. 12 Q. At page 5, paragraph 30, you go on to say: 13 "We (me, my mum and my dad) got dressed again and we 14 left the flat, locked our front door and we even went 15 into the staircase. At that point we saw people from 16 downstairs coming up towards us. These people were our 17 neighbours from lower floors." 18 Just taking this bit by bit. 19 When you went out, having made the decision to 20 leave, was anybody else out in the lobby at that time? 21 A. I can't remember. 22 Q. Could you still hear the air vents going? 23 A. I stopped paying attention at that point. I wasn't 24 paying attention to the noise of the air vents. 25 Q. Do you remember what the air conditions were like in the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

1 lobby at that time?
 2 **A. We could still see. I think there was very little smoke**
 3 **that had started coming in from the vents, but we could**
 4 **still see clearly, make everything out clearly.**
 5 Q. You said smoke coming in from the vents.
 6 **A. Yes.**
 7 Q. Is that something you remember?
 8 **A. Yes, that's something I remember. That's how the smoke**
 9 **got onto our floor. I remember that clearly, because**
 10 **I was looking -- so even after this occasion where we**
 11 **tried to leave initially, I kept on going out into the**
 12 **lobby and coming back in, and I could see that's where**
 13 **the smoke was coming in slowly.**
 14 **So say if you were coming out of the lift, you would**
 15 **be in the middle of the lobby area, you could see the**
 16 **smoke sort of filling in from the two sides and making**
 17 **its way towards the middle, and that's something you**
 18 **could see clearly.**
 19 **It didn't happen all at once, it was a slow process,**
 20 **but you could see it slowly, slowly filling up the lobby**
 21 **with smoke, and you could see that's where it was coming**
 22 **from.**
 23 Q. So just to be absolutely clear, this is at the point
 24 when you leave the flat with your mum and dad, ready to
 25 go down --

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1 **A. Yes.**
 2 Q. -- about 30 minutes or so after the call with Hayley,
 3 and you see smoke coming -- what was the colour of the
 4 smoke at that time?
 5 **A. So it was black. It wasn't as thick. It was -- yes.**
 6 **So black smoke but not thick.**
 7 Q. Did you smell it?
 8 **A. I still have the burning smell in my nose at that point,**
 9 **so that's still what I could smell.**
 10 Q. How fast and with how much pressure do you think it was
 11 coming out of the vents?
 12 **A. Well, the smoke was coming out very slowly. It wasn't**
 13 **fast at all. I think ... yeah, it was quite slow.**
 14 Q. But you could see movement, could you, of the smoke?
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 Q. Did it seem to you to be coming out under any kind of
 17 pressure?
 18 **A. No, not really.**
 19 Q. You say the smoke was coming from both sides and meeting
 20 in the middle.
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 Q. Was it dissipating anywhere from the lobby or was it
 23 just collecting in the lobby?
 24 **A. So it started collecting in the lobby. At that point**
 25 **I had made the decision that it was unsafe to go back**

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1 **into the lobby, so I had locked myself into our flat.**
 2 **So this is after we have made our first attempt to get**
 3 **out.**
 4 **After that, I started looking at it through -- so**
 5 **our front door had a peephole, sort of just to look if**
 6 **someone knocks at the door, you can see who's outside,**
 7 **so it had the little glass there. So I kept on looking**
 8 **out through that peephole. I could see that it was**
 9 **getting thicker and thicker, and it got to a point where**
 10 **we couldn't see anything at all from that peephole.**
 11 **Then I remember the smoke started coming in from**
 12 **under our front door, and it got to a point where**
 13 **I couldn't get close to the front door either, so**
 14 **I couldn't look through the peephole anymore either. So**
 15 **slowly, slowly -- the same way it was making its way to**
 16 **the middle of the hallway, it started making its way**
 17 **from our entrance into our rooms.**
 18 Q. Just breaking that down a little bit so I can understand
 19 a bit more detail there.
 20 How long did you spend, do you think, in the lobby
 21 when you first decided with your mother and father to
 22 leave and you saw the smoke coming through the vents?
 23 How long did you spend in the lobby?
 24 **A. It wasn't long at all. So we got into the staircase and**
 25 **there were quite a few people that were coming up.**

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1 **There were so many people that were coming up that we**
 2 **couldn't get past them to go down. So I think the first**
 3 **few people that were in front, we asked them what was**
 4 **going on. I think they said something along the lines**
 5 **like, "There's no way out, there's a fire and there's no**
 6 **way out". I think someone had mentioned that the fire**
 7 **was in the stairwell as well, so we couldn't make our**
 8 **way down the stairs. So we just went back into our**
 9 **door, into our apartment.**
 10 Q. Okay. I'm going to come back to that aspect of things
 11 in a moment.
 12 Can I just pick up on something else, which is you
 13 go back into your flat and you look through the peephole
 14 in your front door.
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 Q. Could you see the smoke vent on the north wall of the
 17 lobby from your peephole?
 18 **A. No. There was a little wall that was blocking our view**
 19 **to that. So in front of us there was a wall where you**
 20 **could only see partially, so up to about the new doors**
 21 **where they had enclosed the pipework on the lobby area,**
 22 **you could see I think the first door of that, closest to**
 23 **our flat.**
 24 Q. When you went back into your flat, how soon did you
 25 first then look out of the peephole?

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<p>1 A. So I think we all went into the living room, spent about 2 a minute just talking to the other people, seeing what 3 was going on, and then I think my mum and dad stayed 4 there in the living room, and I made my way back into 5 our hallway to have a look through the peephole. 6 So literally about a minute.</p> <p>7 Q. When you looked out of the peephole, did you see any 8 difference in the smoke conditions of the lobby?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, it was a lot thicker. Much less visibility. You 10 could still see a little bit of the floor, so you could 11 see the blue part of the floor, but it was getting 12 darker and darker.</p> <p>13 Q. Just so we're clear, the peephole was glass; was it 14 clear? Did you have a clear view through the peephole?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. It wasn't misty or anything like that?</p> <p>17 A. No, not at that stage, not the first time I looked out 18 of it.</p> <p>19 Q. Right. Okay. 20 Going back a little bit in your evidence, you say at 21 paragraph 30, which is where we were, I've just read to 22 you, you wanted to make your way down the stairs. You 23 then say in the third line, as we've seen: 24 "... even went into the staircase." 25 So you've got across the lobby.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 A. No.</p> <p>2 Q. Could you feel any movement of air, up or down or 3 across, in the stair at that point?</p> <p>4 A. I can't remember.</p> <p>5 Q. Could you still smell the burning smell in the stairs?</p> <p>6 A. I don't think it was in the staircase.</p> <p>7 Q. Okay. 8 Then you say at paragraph 30, at the end, and as 9 you've just told us, that people were coming up and they 10 were your neighbours from lower floors. 11 At paragraph 31, you say: 12 "31. They were coming up and telling us that there 13 was a fire in the Tower and that they had been told to 14 come up to the top floor. They told us that there was 15 no way out through the stairs. At this point there was 16 not much smoke on our floor and I could still see 17 clearly." 18 First of all, how many people do you remember in 19 total were coming up as you stepped out onto the landing 20 outside the stairwell door?</p> <p>21 A. I would estimate it a minimum of ten people.</p> <p>22 Q. Did you know them?</p> <p>23 A. Yes. So because I was in such a rush to get down and 24 with everything going on, I just noticed the first four 25 people, who eventually ended up coming into our flat</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Can I just ask you, who opened the door to the 3 staircase, do you remember?</p> <p>4 A. No, I can't remember.</p> <p>5 Q. I think it's right you have to push the door into the 6 staircase, don't you?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Do you know or do you remember whether whoever it was 9 who pushed the door into the staircase found it more 10 difficult to open than normal?</p> <p>11 A. No, I can't remember.</p> <p>12 Q. Was there any air pressure pressing against the 13 stairwell door that you might recall?</p> <p>14 A. I can't remember.</p> <p>15 Q. When you got into the stairs, how far into the stairs 16 did you get on that occasion?</p> <p>17 A. So we didn't manage to take a step down, so we were on 18 the landing of our floor. That's as far as we got, 19 because the stairs were just full of people coming up.</p> <p>20 Q. A couple of questions about the conditions in the stair. 21 First of all, did you notice any smoke in the stair 22 when you got into it?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. Did you notice any change in the temperature in the 25 stair at that point?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 with us. So that's the ones I remember clearly. The 2 rest I don't remember exactly who it was. But -- yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Did you know them?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. You knew who they were?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Do you remember who you spoke to?</p> <p>8 A. So I remember speaking -- it began with one of the 9 Iranian ladies that had come up, who ended up in our 10 flat. And then I think the person who I got the most 11 information from was Mariem.</p> <p>12 Q. Mariem?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Mariem Elgwhahry?</p> <p>15 A. Yes, that's right. She's the one that I got most 16 information from.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. So going back to paragraph 31, when you say "They 18 were ... telling us that there was a fire in the Tower", 19 is that information that came from Mariem, do you think?</p> <p>20 A. Yes. I remember she said that the fire was already in 21 their flat. She mentioned that her flat was already 22 burnt.</p> <p>23 Q. You then say: 24 "... they had been told to come up to the top 25 floor."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 Do you know or did she tell you who had told her to 2 go to the top floor?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. Did you get any impression of who had given that advice?</p> <p>5 A. I thought it was the firefighters that had told her.</p> <p>6 Yeah.</p> <p>7 Q. She didn't say?</p> <p>8 A. No, she didn't say.</p> <p>9 Q. Did anybody else in that group that you encountered then 10 tell you the same thing, that they had been told to come 11 up to the top floor?</p> <p>12 A. I believe one of the Iranian ladies, they kept on 13 mentioning that they had been told that helicopters 14 would come and rescue them from the top. I don't know 15 where she got this information from, but that's what she 16 told us.</p> <p>17 Q. You go on in the next sentence of paragraph 31 to say: 18 "They told us that there was no way out through the 19 stairs." 20 First of all, do you remember who told you that?</p> <p>21 A. I can't remember, no.</p> <p>22 Q. When you say there was no way out through the stairs, 23 can you remember what they actually said?</p> <p>24 A. I think that they said that the fire was in the 25 staircase. That's what I remember.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 I saw quite a few people going to the other side of the 2 lobby, so where flat 201, 202 and 203 were.</p> <p>3 Q. Had the occupants of those flats come out onto the lobby 4 at that stage to greet or encourage the other members of 5 the group to come in?</p> <p>6 A. Yes, at that stage everyone was opening their doors at 7 that stage to see what was going on.</p> <p>8 Q. Right.</p> <p>9 A. I think we were probably one of the lucky ones in the 10 fact that we were still awake at the time when we 11 discovered the fire. Everyone else was probably still 12 sleeping.</p> <p>13 I remember flat 204, the gentleman that lived in 14 flat 204, he opened the door and he looked as if he had 15 just woken up, still looked a bit confused as to what 16 was going on. He opened the door and he just closed it 17 again. Looked outside and closed it again.</p> <p>18 Q. Did any of the people who had come up the stairs tell 19 you anything about other people in the stairs blocking 20 access?</p> <p>21 A. No.</p> <p>22 Q. You don't remember that?</p> <p>23 A. No, I don't think anyone did mention it.</p> <p>24 Q. Do you remember whether anybody spoke to your mother at 25 that stage?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 Q. Right.</p> <p>2 And then you say that, in paragraph 32: 3 "32. I had my house keys in my pocket and I opened 4 the flat door again and we went back into our flat." 5 Then you say in the next paragraph: 6 "33. Four of the women that had come up from the 7 floors below came into our flat with us." 8 And you describe who they are. 9 Did you invite them in?</p> <p>10 A. I think everyone that had come up the stairs just 11 followed whoever they were most comfortable with. So 12 I feel like the four ladies that came into our flat, 13 they were most comfortable with us because we -- so with 14 Mariem, I remember her from school. She was a few years 15 older than me, but I do remember seeing her, so she was 16 a familiar face and we had spoke on a few occasions. 17 Every time we would see each other in the lifts, we 18 would say hi and just ask each other how we were doing. 19 The Iranian ladies would always speak to my mum. 20 I think my mum had visited them, or they had visited my 21 mum, I can't remember, on a previous occasion. 22 So they felt most comfortable coming with us, so 23 they followed us into our flat; the rest followed the 24 other neighbours. 25 So I can't remember if anyone went into 206, but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 A. Yes, my mum was speaking to someone. I wasn't part of 2 the conversation, I don't think I was even listening, 3 but I could see out of the corner of my eye that she was 4 speaking to someone.</p> <p>5 Q. Do you remember who she was speaking to?</p> <p>6 A. No, I don't remember.</p> <p>7 Q. All right.</p> <p>8 You say that you took them in, I think to the living 9 room.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. That was the whole group, is it?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, everyone went into the living room.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay. On page 6 of your statement at paragraph 35, you 14 say: 15 "35. The two Iranian women stayed close to my dad. 16 Mariem and her mum sat on the sofa in the living room." 17 You then go on to say that you knew her from going 18 to school. 19 Where was your father at this time?</p> <p>20 A. So my dad was also walking around the flat quite a lot, 21 so he spent quite a lot of the time in his bedroom, but 22 he would every now and then come into the living room. 23 There was a stage where I told my dad to just stay 24 close to us, because every time -- I just felt like we 25 have to all be together, and I would just see my dad</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 suddenly wandering off and I didn't feel comfortable 2 with that, so I told him to stay close to us.</p> <p>3 But even after I did tell him that, I remember there 4 was another occasion where he just went into his bedroom 5 for the last time. And when he came back out, he just 6 told us, "Don't go into my bedroom because the fire's 7 already in there."</p> <p>8 Q. At paragraph 36, you describe how the smoke was coming 9 in, and you say: 10 "... the flat was filling up the flat slowly." 11 I think "the fire", that should say: 12 "... was filling up the flat slowly. Each time we 13 opened the door smoke poured in." 14 When you say "the door", is that the front door? 15 A. The front door, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you remember, when the door was shut, whether there 17 was smoke coming in? 18 A. From the bottom, yes.</p> <p>19 Q. From the bottom of the front door? 20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Do you remember what the colour of the smoke was? 22 A. It was black.</p> <p>23 Q. Did the smoke have a particular smell or taste, do you 24 remember? 25 A. I can't remember, no.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 actually taking a toll on us was while we were all in 2 the living room, even though we were away from the 3 smoke, as far away from the smoke as we could be, 4 I realised that around everyone's noses, there was 5 blackness around everyone's nose, and at that point 6 I just realised that must be around my nose as well, so 7 the smoke must be doing something to us.</p> <p>8 Q. How soon after the group came into the flat did you 9 notice black marks around people's noses? 10 A. I think probably about 10/15 minutes after everyone came 11 in.</p> <p>12 Q. And were they -- well, were you, let's start with you -- 13 were you feeling discomfort in terms of breathing or 14 your nose or lungs? 15 A. My nose was just a bit itchy from the inside, that's 16 about it. It just had an itchy, tingly kind of 17 sensation, but I couldn't really feel anything else.</p> <p>18 Q. What about your throat? 19 A. My throat felt fine at that time.</p> <p>20 Q. And your lungs? 21 A. I didn't feel anything.</p> <p>22 Q. Could you still smell that electrical burning smell that 23 you described to us earlier, that you had smelt at the 24 beginning of this? 25 A. I think at that stage it wasn't just an electrical</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 Q. Do you remember how thick it was when it was coming in? 2 A. When it started to come in, it was quite light, and as 3 more and more smoke came in, I think it just sort of 4 filled up the air and made it darker.</p> <p>5 Q. So thin black going to thicker black? 6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Have I got that right? 8 A. Yes, that's quite accurate.</p> <p>9 Q. How often do you think you opened the front door? 10 A. I think, until the point where I couldn't see anything 11 from the peephole, I stopped opening the front door from 12 then.</p> <p>13 So I believe I opened it maybe about three/four 14 times, but that was just to check if anyone else had 15 come out into the lobby, to see if any firefighters had 16 come up. Because you couldn't really see from the 17 peephole clearly anymore, so the only way for me to look 18 out was to open the door physically and pop my head out.</p> <p>19 Q. When you did that, could you breathe? 20 A. Yes. So I could breathe, but because of running around 21 so much, even within the flat, I think I had got a bit 22 breathless. I don't know if that was to do with the 23 smoke or just from me running around, but I had got 24 a bit breathless.</p> <p>25 The point where I realised that the smoke was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 burning smell. You could smell -- there was a whole 2 load of different smells that were in the air. So 3 I think there were like chemicals that you could smell, 4 you could smell like wood. So it was a mixture of 5 different smells.</p> <p>6 Q. That's really helpful. Can you just give us a bit more 7 on that? You say chemicals, wood -- anything else that 8 you remember, you can pick out? 9 A. I guess probably metal. So it had like -- I don't know 10 how to explain it, but it's sort of like if you can 11 taste sort of a sourness, kind of sourness in -- it's 12 very difficult to explain the smell.</p> <p>13 Q. No, I understand, it is. It is difficult. Okay, 14 sourness. 15 What about metallic? 16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. A metallic sourness? 18 A. Exactly.</p> <p>19 Q. Right. I put that idea into your head, but is that 20 right? 21 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. 23 Did the group all stay in one place in the flat or 24 were people moving about? 25 A. So we were moving around but not as to go into the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 different bedrooms. We were in the living room and the 2 kitchen, so we were moving around from the living room 3 to the kitchen, from the kitchen to the living room. 4 Yeah. 5 Q. When you were moving around the flat, did you yourself 6 observe any sources of smoke coming in apart from 7 underneath the front door? 8 A. No. At that stage, it was just -- so our hallway, so 9 inside our flat, the hallway up to my bedroom door, it 10 was completely black, so you couldn't see anything. 11 Smoke was coming in through there. I thought possibly 12 that it's coming in from my dad's bedroom because he's 13 mentioned that the fire had already started in there. 14 I do remember opening the windows every now and then 15 to get some smoke out and get some fresh air in, but 16 I do remember when we did open the window, at that point 17 there was smoke coming up from outside. So we couldn't 18 keep the windows open for too long because smoke would 19 get into our flat. 20 Q. Do you remember which window it was that you opened? 21 A. Yes. So we opened the kitchen window and the living 22 room window, the one which is closest to my bedroom. So 23 we had four windows in the living room. 24 Q. Okay. 25 A. The one which was closest to my bedroom, that's the one</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 Q. First of all, which windows were allowing draughts to 2 come through? Do you remember which ones in the flat 3 they were? 4 A. The main one which I can remember was my bedroom one, 5 because that's where I spent most of my time. 6 So, yeah, I remember there was a window which my mum 7 had sellotaped to stop the draught coming in. I can't 8 remember which window it was, but I do remember that 9 there was sellotape on one of the windows. 10 Q. When did she put the sellotape there, do you remember? 11 A. No, I can't remember. It was very soon after the 12 windows had been fitted. 13 Q. Do you remember which part of the window she put 14 sellotape on? 15 A. So it would have been -- so where you have the 16 windowsill, the PVC covering would sort of go around it 17 and go towards the bottom. 18 Q. Yes. 19 A. So at that bottom there were small gaps where usually, 20 where I've seen windows, they're siliconed in or 21 something is there to -- but we had a gap, a very small 22 gap there. 23 Q. Could you feel air coming in through that gap? 24 A. I could hear it. I never felt it myself. 25 So with my window in my bedroom, I could feel it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 we were opening. 2 Q. Right, and the kitchen window? 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. So both west side and north side? 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. Okay. 7 I just want to take a step outside this particular 8 part of the night and just look at something a bit more 9 general. 10 At paragraph 130 of your statement, and 131 in 11 particular -- you describe in 130 the replacement of the 12 old windows with new windows and gaps being left around 13 the edges and those gaps then being filled, and 131, can 14 I just ask you to look at that, you say -- this is the 15 top of page 22: 16 "131. Our flat was always cold after the new 17 windows were installed, as gaps underneath the windows 18 were allowing draughts to come through. The whole Tower 19 was a lot colder with the new windows. I remember the 20 wall in my bedroom which my bed backed onto was always 21 cold to touch. I did not personally report this but I 22 believe my mum did." 23 I just want to ask you questions about that 24 paragraph and then we'll come back to the night. 25 A. Sure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 Other windows, I didn't really experience it much. 2 I didn't spend much time out of my room when I was at 3 home. But from my window you could feel the wind, and 4 also you could hear it as well. 5 Q. Did you yourself or your mum block that with sellotape 6 or anything else? 7 A. No. 8 Q. Okay. 9 A. No. 10 Q. Was that gap still there, do you remember, at the time 11 of the fire? 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. Coming back, then, to the night, do you remember whether 14 any smoke came through the gaps that you've described 15 under the windows in the flat? 16 A. I didn't pay attention to it. I wouldn't have noticed. 17 Q. Do you know whether there was a gap under the window or 18 anywhere around the windows in your parents' bedroom? 19 A. I don't know. 20 Q. Moving to page 8 of your statement, at the top of the 21 page, you describe how you spoke to a firefighter. 22 "43. He told me we should stay in the flat." 23 At the bottom of page 7, that's part of the 24 discussion you're having with a friend on the phone. 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

1 Q. You say:
 2 "43. He told me we should stay in the flat. He
 3 told me to stay put. I asked him how long it would take
 4 for the fire brigade to reach us but he said he did not
 5 know. I was never told to leave the flat. I kept
 6 telling him we had two disabled people in the flat and
 7 he said that he knew there were disabled people in our
 8 flat but did not say that fire fighters were coming
 9 specifically to our flat. I do not know the identity of
 10 the fire fighter I spoke with."
 11 I know it's difficult, do you remember roughly how
 12 long after the group had come into your flat, after your
 13 first attempt to leave, you had that conversation?
 14 **A. No, because I received numerous amounts of calls from**
 15 **people outside the tower on that night, and the calls**
 16 **happened from the time everyone came into our flat until**
 17 **the point where I left the flat for the last time. We**
 18 **were continuously on the phone.**
 19 **So there were so many conversations with various**
 20 **people that I can't remember what time it would have**
 21 **happened.**
 22 Q. The group that had come into your flat, were they
 23 wearing night clothes?
 24 Let me ask it more generally: what were they
 25 wearing, do you remember?

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1 **A. No, I don't remember. I can't remember what they were**
 2 **wearing.**
 3 Q. Did they look like they were dressed to leave or did
 4 they look like they'd just got out of bed?
 5 **A. I think Mariem and her mum looked as if they wanted to**
 6 **leave -- they were ready to leave.**
 7 **It wasn't like -- I don't think they were wearing**
 8 **outdoor clothes, they were wearing maybe house clothes.**
 9 **Not something that you would wear outside normally.**
 10 **I think I remember Mariem's mum, she had like**
 11 **a large scarf that was around her. That's about all**
 12 **I can remember.**
 13 Q. Were they wearing anything on their feet, do you
 14 remember?
 15 **A. I didn't pay attention.**
 16 Q. Just going back a bit to the larger group that you saw
 17 coming up the stairs, do you remember whether anybody
 18 else in that group was dressed to leave, ready to go
 19 outside, or whether they were in their bed clothes?
 20 **A. From what I remember, most people were in their house**
 21 **clothes, but they had just put on a jumper on top, like**
 22 **a coat or a jumper, just to keep themselves warm. But,**
 23 **yeah. Everyone was pretty much wearing pyjamas.**
 24 Q. Moving on in your evidence, at paragraph 45, page 8, you
 25 say:

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1 "45. The fire eventually got to our flat. It
 2 started in my parents' bedroom. I did not see it myself
 3 but my dad informed me that the fire was in his bedroom.
 4 He had closed his bedroom door and told us not to go in.
 5 This was quite concerning as my parents' bedroom was
 6 directly in front of our front door, which was our only
 7 exit out of the flat. We stayed in the flat for between
 8 15 and 30 minutes after that whilst the fire was in the
 9 bedroom. I believe the bedroom window had broken and
 10 the fire had come in from outside. When we eventually
 11 left, as no one was coming to rescue us, I would think
 12 it took us about 10 to 15 minutes to get down the Tower
 13 to the exit."
 14 There's quite a bit in that, so I want to see if
 15 I can unpack that a bit more.
 16 First of all, did you look out of the windows
 17 yourself after the time when your father had closed the
 18 bedroom door and said, "Don't go in there"?
 19 **A. Yeah, so we looked out of the windows quite a lot.**
 20 **I looked towards the north side, so looking onto the**
 21 **academy. You could see bits of flying debris on fire**
 22 **flying up, the wind taking them up.**
 23 **On the side of the kitchen, so towards the station,**
 24 **we couldn't see any fire at all. It was clear on that**
 25 **side.**

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1 Q. Do you remember hearing specifically Mariem Elgwahry
 2 calling 999?
 3 **A. Yes. I would say it was 999 that she called, because**
 4 **I remember she got frustrated at one point during the**
 5 **phone call. I think they must have asked if the fire**
 6 **had reached them or something, and she just shouted,**
 7 **"Yes, our flat is already burnt, everything in our flat**
 8 **is already burnt", through the phone. So I presume it**
 9 **was the Fire Brigade that she was on the phone to.**
 10 Q. Do you remember how many calls she made?
 11 **A. No, I don't remember.**
 12 Q. How many do you think you were present during?
 13 **A. I think to 999 I was present during one. The rest of**
 14 **the time, Mariem was on her phone pretty much the whole**
 15 **time. It was various phone calls to different people,**
 16 **so I wouldn't be able to say who she was on the phone**
 17 **to, but the whole time, she was on the phone.**
 18 Q. When she came off the phone on that occasion to the
 19 emergency services, did she tell you anything about what
 20 advice she'd received?
 21 **A. No, I don't think so, because I think halfway through**
 22 **that conversation, I had started walking around again.**
 23 **So I sort of left that and I walked to a different part**
 24 **to see how my mum was doing.**
 25 Q. Does that mean that she never relayed to you what advice

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<p>1 or information she had got from --</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. -- her 999 call?</p> <p>4 A. No. No. And I didn't ask either.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay.</p> <p>6 At paragraph 50, you say, the line above the end:</p> <p>7 "We had wet towels which we used to cover our mouths</p> <p>8 and I also soaked my sweatshirt in water and wrapped it</p> <p>9 around my head."</p> <p>10 Did you wet towels yourself?</p> <p>11 A. So my father and I, both of us.</p> <p>12 Q. Where did you go to do that?</p> <p>13 A. So when we started to see the smoke coming in, we had</p> <p>14 some buckets in the flat. We filled up the buckets full</p> <p>15 of water from the kitchen sink.</p> <p>16 Q. Kitchen sink, right.</p> <p>17 A. Yes, and we were just using the water from the buckets</p> <p>18 to -- so at first we started to throw the water over the</p> <p>19 carpets, and then we filled up the buckets again and we</p> <p>20 would just dip the towels into the bucket and use that.</p> <p>21 Q. Do you remember anything particular about the water</p> <p>22 pressure when you were filling up the buckets?</p> <p>23 A. No. I think because it was a slightly larger bucket, we</p> <p>24 just left the tap on while we went and sourced the</p> <p>25 towels and everything. So I didn't really pay attention</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 Don't talk to anyone about your evidence while you're</p> <p>2 out, and we'll come back at 12.05. If you would like to</p> <p>3 go with the usher, please.</p> <p>4 Right, 12.05, please.</p> <p>5 (11.55 am)</p> <p>6 (A short break)</p> <p>7 (12.05 pm)</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Neda?</p> <p>9 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Happy to carry on?</p> <p>11 THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.</p> <p>13 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Mr Neda, thank you very much for coming back to</p> <p>15 us.</p> <p>16 Can I just go back with you to one thing you told us</p> <p>17 in the last session of your evidence about the smoke</p> <p>18 coming from the smoke vents. Do you remember that</p> <p>19 discussion we had?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Just to clarify, you say that it came from both sides.</p> <p>22 Just to be clear, could you see the smoke coming</p> <p>23 from both vents on each wall, north and south?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. You could?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 to how fast it was filling up.</p> <p>2 Q. Do you remember any time when you or your father opened</p> <p>3 the taps and there was no water?</p> <p>4 A. I can't remember. Personally, I was just using the</p> <p>5 bucket as a water source. It was my dad mostly that was</p> <p>6 controlling the tap.</p> <p>7 Q. What about your mother, do you remember whether she</p> <p>8 worked the taps?</p> <p>9 A. I don't think my mum was handling the taps. Yeah,</p> <p>10 I think she was just helping to source the towels at the</p> <p>11 time.</p> <p>12 MR MILLETT: Yes, okay.</p> <p>13 Mr Neda, Mr Chairman, we've been going for another</p> <p>14 45 minutes or so. It might be convenient --</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Possibly a bit longer.</p> <p>16 MR MILLETT: I'm conscious we may have gone over our</p> <p>17 45-minute mark.</p> <p>18 Is it convenient to you, Mr Neda, that we take</p> <p>19 a break now?</p> <p>20 THE WITNESS: Yes, sure.</p> <p>21 MR MILLETT: Are you all right with that?</p> <p>22 Mr Chairman, a short break.</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think it would be sensible to have</p> <p>24 a short break now.</p> <p>25 We'll take 10 minutes, Mr Neda, if that's all right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. The other question is that when the ladies came into</p> <p>3 your flat, or perhaps while they were on the stairwell,</p> <p>4 you mentioned, I think, that there was discussion of</p> <p>5 helicopters coming.</p> <p>6 Was that when you first saw them or was that when</p> <p>7 you went into the flat with them?</p> <p>8 A. I believe it was more when we got into the flat.</p> <p>9 Q. Right.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Was there a discussion about them going onto the roof at</p> <p>12 any time, do you think?</p> <p>13 A. Yes. I think one of the Iranian ladies had mentioned</p> <p>14 that there would be -- when she mentioned that they</p> <p>15 would be sending helicopters, I think my mum had</p> <p>16 mentioned to her that there's no way up for us, no way</p> <p>17 for us to get onto the roof, it's locked.</p> <p>18 Q. Did you get any impression or sense of where the lady</p> <p>19 had got -- I think this is Mrs Afrasiabi, isn't it?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Where she got the idea of helicopters from?</p> <p>22 A. Well, she had spoken to someone on the phone before</p> <p>23 coming up. She did mention that she was speaking to</p> <p>24 someone on the phone. I don't know who it was.</p> <p>25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

1 **A. And then I think just the fact that the helicopters were**
 2 **outside the tower, were flying above the tower, probably**
 3 **influenced that a bit more onto her.**
 4 Q. Okay.
 5 Going back to your first witness statement, you
 6 describe your decision to leave the flat, and you do
 7 that in a number of places, but I think it's best to see
 8 it at paragraph 50 on page 9 of your statement.
 9 Just to set it in context for you, Mr Neda, this
 10 starts on the page before at page 8 with the heading
 11 "Leaving the flat to try and escape", and paragraph 49
 12 then describes how your mum was next to the window
 13 saying she was ready to jump rather than going through
 14 the pain of being burnt alive. I don't want to take you
 15 through that.
 16 Paragraph 50, you say:
 17 "50. So in those last few minutes when I thought
 18 there was nothing else we could do, I grabbed my mum and
 19 I shouted to my dad, 'we need to leave now'. There was
 20 just so much smoke. I thought if I did not grab my mum
 21 then, at that time, I would not be able to grab her
 22 again. She was vulnerable because she certainly could
 23 not walk down the stairs on her own due to her mobility
 24 problems. I had to do something. We had wet towels
 25 which we used to cover our mouths and I also soaked my

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1 sweatshirt in water and wrapped it around my head."
 2 We looked at the wet towels, but I just want to look
 3 at the decision.
 4 Can you, looking back on it now, just describe for
 5 us exactly what it was that made you make that decision?
 6 **A. Well, the smoke was just cornering us at that point, so**
 7 **we didn't have anywhere else to hide. So up until that**
 8 **point, we would keep on moving further and further back**
 9 **into the flat, until the point where we got to the**
 10 **kitchen, which is the last place that remained**
 11 **smoke-free. Well, less smoke than everywhere else.**
 12 **After that, we didn't have anywhere else to hide**
 13 **from the smoke.**
 14 Q. At that point, I think -- we looked at this earlier --
 15 you had already had a discussion with a firefighter who
 16 told you to stay where you were and that people were
 17 coming?
 18 **A. Yes.**
 19 Q. How long after that conversation did you make the
 20 decision to leave that you've just described, do you
 21 think?
 22 **A. Probably about 10/15 minutes. Yeah.**
 23 Q. Can you tell us whether the advice that you got from the
 24 firefighter had in any way influenced your actions
 25 before you decided to leave?

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1 **A. Yes. Because there was a stage where my friends and**
 2 **family were downstairs and they were communicating**
 3 **directly to the firefighters who were outside the tower.**
 4 **At several points, I asked if they were actually coming**
 5 **to get us, and the response that I had got was that they**
 6 **were on their way up.**
 7 **They told me that they had reached a certain level.**
 8 **I believe they -- yes, he said -- the guy outside wasn't**
 9 **sure what floor the firefighters had reached. But he**
 10 **assured us that they were on their way up and they would**
 11 **be with us soon. Especially the fact that when I told**
 12 **them that we had disabled people in the apartment, they**
 13 **said that they already know that. So I thought, okay,**
 14 **they're clearly thinking about us, they know we're up**
 15 **here, so they must be coming to get us.**
 16 **I had no reason to disbelieve them.**
 17 Q. So at the moment you made your decision, did you know or
 18 think you were now going to do something different from
 19 the advice that you got from the firefighter?
 20 **A. Yes. So I just thought to myself: we don't have enough**
 21 **time to wait for them. There's just not enough time.**
 22 **I remember just before that, literally minutes**
 23 **before that, I had sent a message to someone who had**
 24 **lived on the 3rd floor. They weren't in the tower at**
 25 **the time, but they were in contact with the Fire Brigade**

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1 **outside. I had sent a message asking, "Is there any**
 2 **hope?" That's the words I used, "Is there any hope?"**
 3 Q. Yes.
 4 **A. And she didn't have an answer for me. She just said,**
 5 **"Stay calm", and at that point I just thought: things**
 6 **aren't -- they're not going to get here in time.**
 7 Q. Is that Mojda Habib?
 8 **A. Yes, that's right.**
 9 Q. I think, given what you've just said, perhaps we can
 10 look at your second exhibit to your second witness
 11 statement.
 12 I'll just give the IWS reference so we can get it up
 13 on the screen: it's IWS00001134.
 14 This exhibit is dated 16 October, so just two days
 15 ago.
 16 **A. Yes.**
 17 MR MILLETT: You exhibited it.
 18 This is an extract of your WhatsApp messages with
 19 Mojda Habib.
 20 I don't want to look at the first page. I'd like to
 21 pick it up at the second page of the exhibit, if we can.
 22 Before we do that, I should just say, there is at
 23 the top of this extract, Mr Chairman, the bottom of
 24 a picture which does show flame on the exterior of the
 25 tower. Again, I should just make a warning in case

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<p>1 anyone finds that distressing.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: It's page 8 of the second exhibit.</p> <p>4 If we could pick this up at the top of this extract.</p> <p>5 This is, just so we're clear, Mr Neda, an extract</p> <p>6 from -- is it from your phone?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. When you were receiving WhatsApp messages from Mojda?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. She was outside the building, was she?</p> <p>11 A. No, not herself; her brother-in-law was outside.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay.</p> <p>13 You say -- I am interested in the timings -- halfway</p> <p>14 down the page:</p> <p>15 "Our noses are full of black smoke."</p> <p>16 That's you sending her a message, is it?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. The green is you sending her a message?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. So we can time the black smoke around the noses</p> <p>21 that you described earlier at 01.59.</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Then you say at the bottom:</p> <p>24 "We are getting worried."</p> <p>25 This is 02-something and then:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 A. I think in that case, I think that was maybe about</p> <p>2 15 minutes before we made the decision to leave.</p> <p>3 Possibly.</p> <p>4 Q. Did a call come into you which you took?</p> <p>5 A. Yes. There were several calls with her brother-in-law.</p> <p>6 Q. Do you remember whether one of those was the call on</p> <p>7 which the phone was handed to the firefighter?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Right. Okay. That's very helpful.</p> <p>10 When you made your decision, as we have been</p> <p>11 discussing, to leave, did you have any thoughts about</p> <p>12 how you were going to get through the lobby to the</p> <p>13 stairwell?</p> <p>14 A. I just remember, although I couldn't tell how hot it was</p> <p>15 that night, from when I had wet my sweater, the water</p> <p>16 was getting dry, it kept on drying out, so we had to</p> <p>17 keep re-wetting our towels and whatever we were using.</p> <p>18 So I remember I re-wetted my sweater, wrapped it</p> <p>19 around my head and I just thought I'm just going to take</p> <p>20 a deep breath in and hold my breath and go as far as</p> <p>21 I can.</p> <p>22 Q. We discussed earlier that you'd been told by you think</p> <p>23 Mariem --</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. -- when she arrived in the stairwell and you met her</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 "Is there any hope?"</p> <p>2 02.01.</p> <p>3 Would that be about the time when you started asking</p> <p>4 Mojda, "Is there any hope?"</p> <p>5 A. Yes. I think that's one of the last messages I sent to</p> <p>6 her on the night.</p> <p>7 Q. How long after this do you think you made your decision</p> <p>8 to leave?</p> <p>9 A. About two or three minutes after -- it might have been</p> <p>10 more. I'm not sure exactly.</p> <p>11 Q. Does that mean that the conversation you had with the</p> <p>12 firefighter about staying in your flat and there's</p> <p>13 somebody coming for you was before 02.01, or was it</p> <p>14 after, do you think?</p> <p>15 A. I ... I think there might have been an occasion after as</p> <p>16 well where I had conversations on the phone. I don't</p> <p>17 think Mojda was the last person that I spoke to or</p> <p>18 messed on the night.</p> <p>19 Q. No. Indeed, if you look down the page, Mojda says:</p> <p>20 "I'm calling him.</p> <p>21 "He's gonna call u.</p> <p>22 "Now."</p> <p>23 This is all at 02.02:</p> <p>24 "Pick up."</p> <p>25 At 02.02.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 that there was no way through the stairs because the</p> <p>2 stairs were on fire.</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. Did you have any thoughts at the time you decided to</p> <p>5 make your escape how you were going to get through that</p> <p>6 fire that you thought was there?</p> <p>7 A. I thought that -- there was just no other way to get</p> <p>8 out. Other than the windows, there was no other way.</p> <p>9 And being afraid of heights myself, I decided to take</p> <p>10 the other option, the only other option that was</p> <p>11 available, and I thought if we do encounter any flames,</p> <p>12 it might be possible to go into one of the other lobbies</p> <p>13 on another floor just while we -- before we reach the</p> <p>14 flames. I thought it was a better option to take than</p> <p>15 the window.</p> <p>16 Q. Prior to you and your mother leaving the flat, had any</p> <p>17 firefighter come up to the flat?</p> <p>18 A. No.</p> <p>19 Q. Are you sure about that?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. So at the moment you open your front door to leave, can</p> <p>22 you describe for us the conditions that you immediately</p> <p>23 encountered in the lobby at that point?</p> <p>24 A. So smoke just hit me. Even though we had already gone</p> <p>25 into the smoke, into the -- yes, into the thick smoke in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 our hallway, when I opened the front door, even more</p> <p>2 smoke just hit me in my face.</p> <p>3 I remember just closing my eyes, and I think until</p> <p>4 the point where I got into the staircase, my eyes were</p> <p>5 closed the whole time.</p> <p>6 Q. Does that mean you couldn't actually see -- I mean,</p> <p>7 clearly you couldn't see anything, but --</p> <p>8 A. Yeah. I think even if I would've kept my eyes open,</p> <p>9 from when we had gone into the smoke in our hallway,</p> <p>10 already we couldn't see anything in front of us, so even</p> <p>11 if I would've had my eyes open in the lobby area,</p> <p>12 I still wouldn't have been able to see.</p> <p>13 Q. At paragraph 52 of your statement, you say:</p> <p>14 "52. I grabbed my mum and walked out of our flat on</p> <p>15 to the landing outside. It was pitch black and thick</p> <p>16 with smoke. I could not see a thing."</p> <p>17 Then you say:</p> <p>18 "The heat was greater in the lobby than in the</p> <p>19 flat."</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Can you tell how much hotter it was in the lobby than in</p> <p>22 the flat?</p> <p>23 A. Well, I think the best I could explain it is every time</p> <p>24 I would take a breath in, I could feel my throat and my</p> <p>25 lungs burning. I could feel it, literally.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 A. No. I can't remember that.</p> <p>2 Q. Apart from the burning in the lungs and your throat,</p> <p>3 I think you've described, what other physical effect did</p> <p>4 that smoke in the lobby when you went into it have on</p> <p>5 you?</p> <p>6 A. I was out of breath. I think just out of breath. Yeah.</p> <p>7 Q. Were you sick?</p> <p>8 A. No. Like I was coughing, every couple of seconds I was</p> <p>9 coughing, but I wasn't sick, no.</p> <p>10 Q. What about your mum? Do you remember what physical</p> <p>11 effect it had on her?</p> <p>12 A. She was coughing quite a lot. She was struggling to</p> <p>13 talk. I remember halfway down the stairs she went</p> <p>14 unconscious for a small period of time. I can't</p> <p>15 remember when she regained consciousness.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you remember whether she was sick?</p> <p>17 A. No, I can't remember.</p> <p>18 Q. How long do you think it took you to cross the lobby?</p> <p>19 A. The lobby, probably about a maximum of 20 seconds. It</p> <p>20 was quite quick. Because I was holding my breath, I was</p> <p>21 just trying to get through as fast as I can. So it was</p> <p>22 quite quick until we got to the staircase.</p> <p>23 Q. You had your mother with you.</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Were you holding her?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 Q. So you did inhale the smoke in the lobby, did you?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Could you feel the heat of the air or smoke on your</p> <p>4 skin?</p> <p>5 A. Not really, no. I remember just before I got out, I was</p> <p>6 wearing a leather jacket. I took that off and I was</p> <p>7 just wearing a polo shirt at the time with jeans, and</p> <p>8 I don't think -- I think the heat was the least of my</p> <p>9 worries at that time. I wasn't paying much attention to</p> <p>10 it.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. So before I leave it, leaving aside the lungs,</p> <p>12 did you feel any change in the ambient air temperature</p> <p>13 as you went out into the lobby at all?</p> <p>14 A. No, not really.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay.</p> <p>16 You told us, I think, earlier this morning that you</p> <p>17 weren't focusing on the noise that the smoke vent system</p> <p>18 was working?</p> <p>19 A. No, I wasn't.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay.</p> <p>21 Your mother has given us a statement, and I know</p> <p>22 will be giving evidence later today. She describes in</p> <p>23 her statement that there was dark, grey, shiny smoke.</p> <p>24 She says it was shiny. She says it looked like glitter.</p> <p>25 Do you remember that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Can you describe how?</p> <p>3 A. So from what I remember, I put her left arm over my</p> <p>4 shoulder, across my shoulder. I put my right arm around</p> <p>5 her hip area, and I was sort of -- I had my left arm</p> <p>6 holding her arm, and just carrying her weight on my</p> <p>7 shoulders.</p> <p>8 Q. Right. I see.</p> <p>9 Then you get to the stairwell door.</p> <p>10 Do you remember whether it was open or closed?</p> <p>11 A. I believe it was closed. The 23rd floor I believe was</p> <p>12 closed.</p> <p>13 Q. Did you push it open?</p> <p>14 A. Yes, with my shoulder.</p> <p>15 Q. Do you remember any pressure that you encountered in</p> <p>16 opening the door?</p> <p>17 A. No. I can't remember any.</p> <p>18 Q. Do you remember whether the door closed behind you once</p> <p>19 you got into the stairwell?</p> <p>20 A. I think it did. The doors were quite heavy, so they</p> <p>21 would close automatically after. So I think it did, but</p> <p>22 it was too dark to see. I couldn't tell if it had</p> <p>23 closed after us.</p> <p>24 Q. I should have asked you this question a minute ago, but</p> <p>25 when you left your flat, did you or your mother close</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

20 (Pages 77 to 80)

<p>1 the door behind you?</p> <p>2 A. No, we left it open.</p> <p>3 Q. You left it open.</p> <p>4 A. I remember -- because I thought my dad was following</p> <p>5 behind us. When I opened the door, our door would stay</p> <p>6 open. Unless you closed it physically, it would stay</p> <p>7 open. I just left it open thinking my dad's going to</p> <p>8 follow us, and we just ran towards the staircase.</p> <p>9 Q. Your door didn't have a self-closer on it?</p> <p>10 A. Not at the time of the fire. When they fitted the door,</p> <p>11 it did have one. I think within about one week of the</p> <p>12 door being fitted, it broke, so we weren't able to close</p> <p>13 our door. We called the TMO, someone came and they took</p> <p>14 off -- it had like a little chain towards the middle</p> <p>15 which would close the door. It would make the door</p> <p>16 quite heavy as well. So they took that off. They said</p> <p>17 that they would replace it, but they never came back to</p> <p>18 do that.</p> <p>19 Q. Did you ever ask them to come back?</p> <p>20 A. No, I think we just left it. I think we were happy with</p> <p>21 the door being a lot lighter, because my mum was not</p> <p>22 able to open and close that door due to her condition.</p> <p>23 It was too heavy for her. So once they took it off, the</p> <p>24 door was very light. You could open and close it very</p> <p>25 easily.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 A. No, it was completely dark.</p> <p>2 Q. It was completely dark?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. You couldn't even see any lights?</p> <p>5 A. No.</p> <p>6 Q. Could you smell the smoke or taste the smoke?</p> <p>7 A. Yes. It was very sour-tasting. Yeah, every breath that</p> <p>8 I took, I could just taste it, taste the sourness of it.</p> <p>9 Q. Was it the same taste and smell that you'd experienced</p> <p>10 when you'd smelt and tasted it in the flat?</p> <p>11 A. Slightly different. So it was more acidic. I don't</p> <p>12 know if -- it felt more acidic.</p> <p>13 Q. When you say it felt more acidic, which part of your</p> <p>14 body could you feel the acid nature of the smell?</p> <p>15 A. I could feel it in my throat and inside my nose, the</p> <p>16 lining of my nose.</p> <p>17 Q. So when you say it felt more acidic, what does that feel</p> <p>18 like?</p> <p>19 A. So it felt like it was just burning away inside.</p> <p>20 Q. Was that more or was that different from when you were</p> <p>21 in the flat?</p> <p>22 A. Yes. So when I was in the flat, although I could smell</p> <p>23 it, it wasn't as intense. In the stairwell, it was very</p> <p>24 intense. So even if you took a very small breath in, it</p> <p>25 would feel like you've taken like a whole gulp of air</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 Q. Yes, thank you.</p> <p>2 Just going back, then, into the stairs, when you get</p> <p>3 into the stairs, do you remember whether the smoke was</p> <p>4 the same or different from what you'd encountered in the</p> <p>5 lobby when you'd come through it?</p> <p>6 A. So it was less intense. It was still thick enough to</p> <p>7 not be able to see anything. If you lowered yourself</p> <p>8 down, you would be able to see the floor. But if you're</p> <p>9 standing up, it was just thick, black smoke which you</p> <p>10 couldn't see anything from.</p> <p>11 Q. You say you had a sweater over your head. Was it</p> <p>12 actually over your head so it obscured your vision?</p> <p>13 A. No. I tied the sleeves of the sweater around my --</p> <p>14 I think it was like just around my nose and my mouth,</p> <p>15 and I was biting onto it, sort of sucking up the water</p> <p>16 from the sweater. But I still had my eyes open fully.</p> <p>17 It was just covering up to my eyes and around, so not</p> <p>18 over my head.</p> <p>19 Q. Could you see your feet when you got into the stairs?</p> <p>20 A. If I lowered myself down, yes, but not if I was standing</p> <p>21 up.</p> <p>22 Q. Could you see the banisters? When you put your arm</p> <p>23 out --</p> <p>24 A. No, I couldn't see it. I was feeling it.</p> <p>25 Q. Did you see the emergency lighting on in the stairs?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 in.</p> <p>2 Q. What colour was the smoke in the stairwell?</p> <p>3 A. It was black.</p> <p>4 Q. Was it the same?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Same colour.</p> <p>7 Did you notice any change in the temperature, the</p> <p>8 ambient temperature in the stairwell, compared with the</p> <p>9 lobby?</p> <p>10 A. No, I don't think I was paying much attention to the</p> <p>11 temperature. I think I had so many things on my mind at</p> <p>12 the time that I didn't even think about it.</p> <p>13 Q. You describe in your statement from page 9,</p> <p>14 paragraph 54, onwards, to the next page, page 10, at</p> <p>15 paragraph 61, your detailed description of your descent</p> <p>16 of the stairs with your mother.</p> <p>17 How were you assisting your mother down? Can you</p> <p>18 describe how you were holding her?</p> <p>19 A. Yeah. So the whole time she had one arm over my</p> <p>20 shoulder, so going across from one side of my shoulder</p> <p>21 to the other side. I was holding her around the hip</p> <p>22 area, so had my arm around her, and holding her weight</p> <p>23 up as much as I could.</p> <p>24 I remember I had -- I think I had one hand on the</p> <p>25 banister just to feel my way around.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

1 Q. So you were taking her weight basically?
 2 **A. Yes. My mum wouldn't have been able to go down the**
 3 **stairs as fast as we needed to. I think the time it**
 4 **would take a normal person to go up an entire flight of**
 5 **stairs, my mum would go up one step in that amount of**
 6 **time. So she wouldn't have been able to do it on her**
 7 **own. I had to take the weight.**
 8 Q. You describe this descent, as I say, in detail at
 9 paragraph 61, when you then describe walking past
 10 a floor where you'd seen an open landing.
 11 **A. Yes.**
 12 Q. And then going in or going up, I think, to find some
 13 clean air.
 14 Before you did that, did you, on your descent down
 15 to that point, notice any change in the smoke density in
 16 the stairwell?
 17 **A. I think we could see the floor a bit more, a bit better.**
 18 **It was still quite dark up, and still very difficult to**
 19 **breathe in the smoke, but you could see -- I think we**
 20 **could see a bit of the floor at that stage.**
 21 Q. Did you notice any change in the temperature at any
 22 point during this descent up to the point at which you
 23 see the floor with clean air?
 24 **A. No.**
 25 Q. No.

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1 **A. No.**
 2 Q. Did you come across any firefighters in the stairwell
 3 during that descent?
 4 **A. No. There were hoses during the descent, but no**
 5 **firefighters themselves.**
 6 **It looked as though the hoses had just been placed**
 7 **there. I don't think they had been used because they**
 8 **were still flat. But, yeah, no firefighters at all.**
 9 Q. What about the floor, was it wet or dry?
 10 **A. I think it was dry. Yeah, I don't think it was wet**
 11 **because I remember at one point we tripped over, and**
 12 **when I had touched the floor, I couldn't feel any**
 13 **wetness.**
 14 Q. Do you recall any point in your descent when, just
 15 perhaps for a few floors, it got hotter?
 16 **A. No.**
 17 Q. Do you remember seeing any other occupants of the
 18 building coming down the stairs?
 19 **A. Not coming down, no. Any person that we came across was**
 20 **already dead on the stairs, or they were about to pass**
 21 **away.**
 22 Q. And you describe that in your statement.
 23 Can I then take you to paragraph 61 of your
 24 statement on page 10.
 25 You say:

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1 "As we got about halfway down the Tower, I remember
 2 walking past a floor where I had seen an open landing
 3 door. I do not know which floor this was on, but
 4 because we could not breathe where we had gotten to, on
 5 the stairwell, we went back up one staircase to try and
 6 find some air."
 7 First of all, you say "about halfway down the
 8 Tower"; were you able to number the floors as you went
 9 down?
 10 **A. No. I was just guessing, just from the amount of steps**
 11 **it felt like I had gone down. I was just guessing.**
 12 Q. Okay, I see.
 13 Was there any point in this descent up to this point
 14 where you could begin to see the electric lights in the
 15 stairs?
 16 **A. Only when we got to about the 4th floor. That's when we**
 17 **saw light.**
 18 Q. Could you see the light fittings which weren't
 19 illuminated or was it because of the smoke?
 20 **A. No, it was because of the smoke. Once we got to the**
 21 **4th floor, I still wasn't paying attention to anything**
 22 **that was on the walls or any fittings on the walls,**
 23 **I was just thinking to get myself out as quick as**
 24 **possible.**
 25 Q. Sure.

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1 At this point, you say you walked past a floor where
 2 you had seen an open landing door.
 3 Do you know what was keeping the door open or why it
 4 was open?
 5 **A. There wasn't anything to keep the door open, so there**
 6 **was nothing blocking the door.**
 7 Q. When you went past it, did you look into the floor?
 8 **A. No, I didn't look in. So when we -- the way I had come**
 9 **about to see the door was we had tripped, and whilst on**
 10 **the floor, because it was a lot clearer down under, at**
 11 **the bottom area, I just noticed the door was a bit open,**
 12 **like halfway open.**
 13 **But at that point I was still trying to get out, so**
 14 **we just continued to go down. I think it was just the**
 15 **one flight of stairs that we went down, and I realised,**
 16 **like, I just can't breathe anymore. Because at that**
 17 **point I think my sweater had fallen off, and I couldn't**
 18 **get it back, so I just needed some sort of air.**
 19 **At that point, I was thinking if we go back up one,**
 20 **at least the door is open, maybe we might find a flat**
 21 **door which is open and get to a window, get some air.**
 22 **I wasn't expecting to find air inside the lobby.**
 23 Q. So you then went up a half flight or single flight from
 24 the little half landing --
 25 **A. Exactly.**

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<p>1 Q. -- to that floor. Did you go onto that lobby floor with 2 your mother? 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. How far into the lobby did you get? 5 A. So we sat down -- well, we laid down by where the air 6 vents are on the wall in between, so in between flat 2 7 and flat 3. 8 Q. The south side of the lobby? 9 A. Yes, so we laid down there, just for about a minute or 10 so. 11 Q. Was there any clear air there? 12 A. It seemed a lot clearer. Like, it was still smoky, but 13 you could at least see -- we could see each other. 14 Q. Right. 15 A. I could see the condition of my mum, I could see how she 16 was at that stage. 17 Q. You say you laid down by where the air vents are on the 18 wall in between. Are those the air vents nearest the 19 ground? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. Was there air coming out of them? 22 A. I didn't pay attention. I just saw the clear air around 23 it and -- 24 Q. Right. 25 A. -- I just went there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 only that I grabbed one of them on the chest, and 2 I think that's when they realised that there's someone 3 here. 4 Q. Maybe you don't know, but how many in the group of 5 firefighters did you think there were as a matter of 6 impression? 7 A. I'm pretty sure there was only two. 8 Q. You don't know where they were on their way up to? 9 A. No. 10 Q. At paragraph 64 of your statement, you say: 11 "64. The fire fighter I grabbed was male, and he 12 was with a female fire fighter. He told me to grab hold 13 of his arm and the female fire fighter helped my mum. 14 I told him my dad and four others were trapped in flat 15 205 on the top floor. The fire fighter took out his 16 notebook and wrote down the flat number and the number 17 of people who were trapped. They both helped us down 18 the stairwell. I told my mum to hold my hand and stay 19 close to me. The female fire fighter was helping my mum 20 and I was scared that she would get to the point where 21 she could not carry my mum and I was not going to leave 22 my mum in the stairwell. I held on to her hand 23 tightly." 24 At that point, when you say, "I told him my dad and 25 four others were trapped in flat 205 on the top floor",</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 Q. How long do you think you spent there before progressing 2 on down again? 3 A. I don't think it was more than a minute. 4 Q. Was that enough for you to get your breath back -- 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. -- and be able to start to breathe normally? 7 A. Yes, it was just enough for me to feel like I can carry 8 on a few more flights of stairs, and then at that point 9 I thought maybe I might be able to do this on every few 10 floors which I go down. 11 Q. Then you set off down again. 12 How far after leaving that lobby to go down again 13 did you encounter your first firefighter? 14 A. I think maybe two floors. Two/three floors down. 15 Q. When you encountered that first firefighter, can you 16 describe for us the smoke in the stairwell at that 17 point? 18 A. So we still couldn't see. I only knew there was 19 a firefighter there from the sounds I was hearing. So 20 I could hear the breathing apparatus working, and I just 21 knew it was a firefighter. But I couldn't see them. 22 Q. So you don't know or you couldn't see that they had 23 torches? 24 A. No, and I don't think they saw us either, because it 25 felt as though they were ready to go past us, and it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 you realised your father had not come down with you? 2 A. Yes, because while we were coming down, my mum, on 3 several occasions, she shouted my dad's name in the hope 4 to get a response, to see he's behind us. But we had no 5 response, so we could only assume that he was still in 6 the flat. 7 Q. You say that the firefighter took out his notebook and 8 wrote down the flat number. 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. And the number of people who were trapped. 11 Could he see enough to be able to do that? 12 A. So from what I remember, we got down quite low. So we 13 were, I think, pretty much sitting on the stairwell. 14 I think he tried to look for the number on the 15 floor, to see what floor we were on, and he couldn't see 16 that. He asked me if I knew what floor we were on and 17 I told him I don't know either. 18 Q. Did he have a torch with him, can you remember? 19 A. I can't remember. 20 Q. So you got down low, does that mean near the ground you 21 could -- 22 A. Yes, near the ground it's a lot less smoke, so at that 23 point we could see the ground. It's a lot clearer down. 24 Q. I see. 25 You were on the stairwell, were you, when he wrote</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

23 (Pages 89 to 92)

1 this down?
 2 **A. Yes.**
 3 Q. Did he say what would be done about those who were still
 4 up in your flat?
 5 **A. No. I can't remember if he said anything.**
 6 Q. Those two firefighters then accompanied you and your
 7 mother down to the bottom of the tower?
 8 **A. Yes.**
 9 Q. Did you know what that firefighter did with the piece of
 10 paper or the information that you'd given him after
 11 that?
 12 **A. I don't know. Once we got to about I think it was the**
 13 **2nd floor or the 3rd floor, they handed us over to other**
 14 **firefighters who were there. There was a big group of**
 15 **firefighters there, and I don't know where they went**
 16 **themselves.**
 17 Q. Did you see or know what that firefighter who had
 18 written down the details did at that point of handover?
 19 **A. No, we were just rushed out of the building.**
 20 Q. If you go to paragraph 67 of your statement, you say:
 21 "I think it took us approximately 10 to 15 minutes
 22 to get out of the Tower but I do not really know for
 23 sure."
 24 Just pausing there, does that mean from the moment
 25 you left your flat --

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1 **A. Yes.**
 2 Q. -- to the moment you left?
 3 **A. Yes, that's right.**
 4 Q. You say:
 5 "When we got out of the Tower I told the Fire
 6 Brigade that there were still people in our flat, at the
 7 top, as four ladies had come in to the flat and my dad
 8 was still there."
 9 Where were you when you informed the Fire Brigade
 10 that there were people still in your flat?
 11 **A. I think I was -- the first time I mentioned it was just**
 12 **as I got out of the main entrance. I think I just**
 13 **turned my head to the firefighter that was helping me**
 14 **get away from the tower. I told him.**
 15 **Then after they put us on the grass area by Station**
 16 **Walk, there were a couple of firefighters that kept on**
 17 **coming to check up on us, and I mentioned it to him as**
 18 **well.**
 19 Q. Did any firefighter tell you what was going to be done
 20 about those who had been left behind in your flat?
 21 **A. No, they just said they're going to try their best to**
 22 **help everyone. I think they were telling us, "Don't**
 23 **worry, just worry about yourself."**
 24 Q. At paragraph 81 you describe how you were treated --
 25 this is on page 14 of your statement -- and were given

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1 oxygen masks and blankets.
 2 Were you treated as soon as you left the tower or
 3 did you have to wait to be treated, do you remember?
 4 **A. I had to wait. So once we got out of the tower, they**
 5 **put us onto the grass area in Station Walk. They gave**
 6 **oxygen to my mum. She was in a worse condition than me.**
 7 **At that point, I didn't really feel like I needed any**
 8 **help. Other than being exhausted, I felt fine, and**
 9 **I didn't really -- no one really came to me to see if**
 10 **I needed anything or if I was doing okay.**
 11 **I remember there was one point where I felt a little**
 12 **bit out of breath. My mum gave her oxygen to me for**
 13 **I think about 20/30 seconds. I used it and I put it**
 14 **back around her.**
 15 **After we got moved closer to the station,**
 16 **Latimer Road station, and they had set up like a triage**
 17 **point where the ambulance was checking everyone, and**
 18 **they were just putting numbers on everyone's hand**
 19 **depending on how severe their condition was.**
 20 Q. In your statement at paragraph 83, if we just look down
 21 at that, you say you were taken to hospital:
 22 "When I got to the hospital, I was pretty bad.
 23 I could not breathe. My airway was getting blocked and
 24 when I told the doctors that I could not breathe, they
 25 checked me over and rushed me in and put me into an

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1 induced coma ..."
 2 As you say.
 3 **A. Yes.**
 4 Q. How soon after you left the tower do you think your
 5 condition deteriorated in that way?
 6 **A. So up until the point where I got to the hospital, I was**
 7 **still feeling fine. I walked into the ambulance on my**
 8 **own feet, I didn't need a stretcher or anything,**
 9 **I walked into the hospital.**
 10 **I think it's after I started calming down and the**
 11 **adrenaline had gone is when I started to feel it.**
 12 **It must have been I think after 9 o'clock in the**
 13 **morning when I got put into the induced coma.**
 14 Q. You say in your statement in the previous paragraph that
 15 you'd been waiting outside the tower for up to three
 16 hours or maybe three hours.
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. Do you know, why were you waiting for that long?
 19 **A. I think everyone was waiting quite long, and then, to**
 20 **begin with, they started to take the high priority**
 21 **patients in first. So there were quite a lot of**
 22 **ambulances, but all of them were being used. Each**
 23 **ambulance was taking about two patients at a time rather**
 24 **than one.**
 25 **I think they just saw that I was a lower priority.**

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<p>1 I mean, they even took my mum a couple of hours before</p> <p>2 they took me, and they wouldn't let me go with my mum</p> <p>3 because they needed the space in the ambulance for</p> <p>4 someone else.</p> <p>5 Q. Sure. Thank you.</p> <p>6 Just one more question about the way down I just</p> <p>7 wanted to ask you.</p> <p>8 You described how on the way down you saw a door</p> <p>9 open.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. And then you went to it for some clean air.</p> <p>12 Do you remember whether on your way down you saw any</p> <p>13 other stairwell doors open?</p> <p>14 A. Yes. I remember that hoses that the Fire Brigade had</p> <p>15 left out were holding doors open at parts of the tower.</p> <p>16 It wasn't on every floor, but on some floors where you</p> <p>17 could see, it was the Fire Brigade's hoses that were</p> <p>18 holding the doors open.</p> <p>19 Q. How many doors do you think were propped open by hoses?</p> <p>20 A. I would say I saw about three doors open. But there</p> <p>21 were several floors that we had gone past where</p> <p>22 I couldn't see the doors, so I wouldn't be able to tell</p> <p>23 if they were open or not.</p> <p>24 Q. Apart from the hoses being used to prop doors open or</p> <p>25 propping doors open, were there any other doors into the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 MR MILLETT: Very well.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, if you think you need less</p> <p>3 time than that --</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: I think 1.05 is right, otherwise it's</p> <p>5 three minutes.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Otherwise it's very difficult to</p> <p>7 time.</p> <p>8 MR MILLETT: Exactly.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: 1.05, please.</p> <p>10 (12.57 pm)</p> <p>11 (A short break)</p> <p>12 (1.05 pm)</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think there are a couple of</p> <p>14 questions at least.</p> <p>15 THE WITNESS: No problem.</p> <p>16 MR MILLETT: Mr Neda, thank you very much for coming back.</p> <p>17 Just one or two, which probably means four or five.</p> <p>18 A. No problem.</p> <p>19 Q. First of all, do you remember, did you have sliding</p> <p>20 doors in your flat between the kitchen and the living</p> <p>21 room?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. What were they made of, do you know?</p> <p>24 A. I believe it was wood.</p> <p>25 Q. Were they open on the night of the fire or were they</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 stairwell that you saw on your way down which were open</p> <p>2 but which were not propped open?</p> <p>3 A. I can't remember, no. I wouldn't be able to say</p> <p>4 definitely.</p> <p>5 MR MILLETT: Mr Neda, you've been extremely patient and I'm</p> <p>6 extremely grateful to you. I've come to the end of my</p> <p>7 questions. What I'm going to do now is to ask the</p> <p>8 chairman to rise for a few minutes just to see if there</p> <p>9 are any other questions I need to ask you or other</p> <p>10 people want me to ask you, and then I'll invite you to</p> <p>11 come back.</p> <p>12 Mr Chairman, is that convenient? I'm conscious it's</p> <p>13 12.55, so we should have a short break.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'm sure Mr Neda would like to</p> <p>15 finish his evidence before we break for lunch if he can.</p> <p>16 We'll break now for 5 minutes while Mr Millett</p> <p>17 gathers his thoughts, and then we'll see if there are</p> <p>18 any further questions. Is that all right?</p> <p>19 THE WITNESS: Sure.</p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You go with the usher and don't talk</p> <p>21 to anyone about your evidence, please, while you're out</p> <p>22 of the room.</p> <p>23 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much.</p> <p>25 I'm going to say 1.05, Mr Millett.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 shut?</p> <p>2 A. We used to keep them open all the time.</p> <p>3 Q. Before you and your mother left the flat, do you</p> <p>4 remember whether there was a conversation with Mariem</p> <p>5 and the Afrasiabis about the plan, what you were going</p> <p>6 to do?</p> <p>7 A. So I had shouted to my dad that we need to leave. My</p> <p>8 dad had then gone up to everyone. At that point</p> <p>9 everyone was in one small space because the smoke had</p> <p>10 cornered us in, and I believe he was explaining the plan</p> <p>11 to them.</p> <p>12 The only thing I could think of was to grab my mum,</p> <p>13 make sure she's ready and take her out.</p> <p>14 Q. Did you have a discussion with the Afrasiabis?</p> <p>15 A. No, I didn't.</p> <p>16 Q. What about Mariem, about the plan?</p> <p>17 A. I think I just mentioned in general to everyone that we</p> <p>18 need to leave now. That's about it. We didn't have any</p> <p>19 discussions. We didn't have time for discussion.</p> <p>20 Q. Do you remember where you last saw them in the flat?</p> <p>21 Where were they in the flat when you last saw them?</p> <p>22 A. So everyone was crowded around the kitchen. My dad was</p> <p>23 more towards the kitchen sink, which was by the entrance</p> <p>24 of the hallway if you go through the kitchen. He was</p> <p>25 there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

<p>1 I think the last thing I saw him doing was just</p> <p>2 re-wetting the towels in preparation to leave.</p> <p>3 Q. Do you remember where the Afrasiabi sisters were at that</p> <p>4 time?</p> <p>5 A. I believe one of them was sitting on top of the worktop</p> <p>6 which is directly by the kitchen window. So we had</p> <p>7 a worktop which covered that section. One of them was</p> <p>8 sitting on top of there, and the other one was standing</p> <p>9 by her.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you remember who was sitting and who was standing?</p> <p>11 A. No, I can't remember which way round it was.</p> <p>12 Q. Where was Mariem at that time, do you remember?</p> <p>13 A. She was with her mum. I think she was -- from what</p> <p>14 I remember she was at the -- so where the sliding doors</p> <p>15 would slide to close off the kitchen from the living</p> <p>16 room, I believe she was there.</p> <p>17 Q. She was still on the sofa with her mum?</p> <p>18 A. No, not on the sofa, she was off the sofa. So literally</p> <p>19 where the kitchen and the living room is divided,</p> <p>20 standing there.</p> <p>21 Q. What about Mariem's mum? They were together, were they?</p> <p>22 A. They were together, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. The occupants of flat 202 were a young Italian couple.</p> <p>24 Did you know them?</p> <p>25 A. I didn't know them. I had seen them on one or two</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. -- was there a discussion about breaking down the gate</p> <p>3 to the roof?</p> <p>4 A. I can't remember that discussion happening.</p> <p>5 Q. Paragraph 18 of your statement -- I'm sorry to ask you</p> <p>6 to go back to this -- you actually refer to hearing</p> <p>7 noises from the vent on Fridays and it wouldn't be</p> <p>8 sorted out until the following Monday.</p> <p>9 Does that mean that you would go to work on Monday</p> <p>10 and come back and it was fixed, or was it fixed by</p> <p>11 Monday, in other words over the weekend?</p> <p>12 A. No, it would be fixed while we're at work. So when we'd</p> <p>13 come back, we'd just notice that it's not making the</p> <p>14 noise anymore.</p> <p>15 Q. Does that mean you had a sleepless weekend?</p> <p>16 A. Yes. Yes. I think what seemed to be quite common is</p> <p>17 the TMO wouldn't really send anyone to do repairs unless</p> <p>18 they had more than one complaint. So several people</p> <p>19 would have to complain before they actually took action.</p> <p>20 Q. Did you go to your neighbours to --</p> <p>21 A. Not regarding the vents, but regarding other problems,</p> <p>22 yes.</p> <p>23 Q. I was interested in the vents.</p> <p>24 Finally, Mr Neda -- and it is finally -- I've read</p> <p>25 in your statement that you are or were at the time of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 occasions, just said hi. They were fairly new to the</p> <p>2 tower, and I only saw them on the two occasions quite</p> <p>3 early in the morning while we were going to work.</p> <p>4 I presumed they were going to work as well.</p> <p>5 Q. They were called Gottardi.</p> <p>6 A. I didn't know them by name.</p> <p>7 Q. You didn't know them by name?</p> <p>8 A. I only learnt of their names after the fire.</p> <p>9 Q. Did you see them on the night of the fire at all?</p> <p>10 A. No, I didn't.</p> <p>11 Q. You didn't?</p> <p>12 A. No.</p> <p>13 Q. When you got down and told the firefighter about those</p> <p>14 who had been left in your flat, did you mention to the</p> <p>15 firefighter that there were also others on the top floor</p> <p>16 who needed rescuing?</p> <p>17 A. I didn't, no. I wasn't sure if there was anyone left on</p> <p>18 the top floor because we stayed in our flat for</p> <p>19 a considerable amount of time. People from the other</p> <p>20 flats could've left, they could've -- I didn't know what</p> <p>21 they had done. And when we left, we didn't see anyone,</p> <p>22 so ...</p> <p>23 Q. I'm sorry to jump around, when you were in the flat, and</p> <p>24 the lady, I think Mrs Afrasiabi, was discussing the</p> <p>25 helicopter, I think as you told us before --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 the fire a second Dan black belt Taekwondo champion.</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Would the chairman take from that that you are or were</p> <p>4 at the time of the fire a physically fit young man?</p> <p>5 A. Yes. I would say my fitness levels were above average.</p> <p>6 Yes.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: With that, Mr Neda, it only remains for me to</p> <p>8 thank you enormously for your help that you have given</p> <p>9 to the inquiry in your written statements and this</p> <p>10 morning.</p> <p>11 I know it's jolly difficult to come here and talk</p> <p>12 about the night, but we are extremely grateful to you</p> <p>13 and you have been extremely valuable to us.</p> <p>14 So thank you very much indeed.</p> <p>15 No further questions, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: No?</p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: No further questions.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Well, Mr Neda --</p> <p>19 MR STEIN: Sir, may I just interrupt for a moment. Mr Howe</p> <p>20 is just going to have a word with Mr Millett.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.</p> <p>22 Sorry, I was just about to say you could go, but you</p> <p>23 can't.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: I should have picked the cue up from the</p> <p>25 chairman, actually, rather than from Mr Howe.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 I apologise.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think Mr Howe has only anticipated</p> <p>3 what I was going to say.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: There is a final question, Mr Neda. I'm sorry,</p> <p>5 I was more interested in your physical fitness than this</p> <p>6 final question, but I will ask it anyway.</p> <p>7 Is there anything about the events of the night,</p> <p>8 over and above what's in your statements and over and</p> <p>9 above what you have told us today, about what you saw,</p> <p>10 heard, smelt, observed on the night that you think it's</p> <p>11 important for the chairman to know?</p> <p>12 THE WITNESS: There is something which I've prepared, and</p> <p>13 I will try and get it across as best as I can.</p> <p>14 So having been in the fire that night, and not</p> <p>15 knowing what was going on outside or on the other floors</p> <p>16 of the tower, and having heard the testimony of the</p> <p>17 firefighters, I feel that the residents were fatally let</p> <p>18 down.</p> <p>19 Having been in contact with the firefighters</p> <p>20 outside, while I was inside the tower, I was on several</p> <p>21 occasions told that they were on their way to get us,</p> <p>22 and I feel that this was false hope. I feel it's the</p> <p>23 false hope which prevented quite a number of people from</p> <p>24 escaping the tower that night.</p> <p>25 So the image that we had, being in the tower, was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 evidence. I repeat my thanks to you, as I said before,</p> <p>2 for your coming here today and assisting the chairman</p> <p>3 with our investigations. Thank you very much.</p> <p>4 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much for having me. Thank you.</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'd like to add my thanks, Mr Neda.</p> <p>6 You've given your evidence very clearly and carefully,</p> <p>7 and for that we are very grateful. It was obviously</p> <p>8 a very horrendous experience.</p> <p>9 If I may, I'd just like to express my admiration for</p> <p>10 the way in which you acted that evening, and I'm sure</p> <p>11 your father would be very proud of you.</p> <p>12 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much. Means a lot.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you for coming.</p> <p>14 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That's probably a convenient point,</p> <p>16 isn't it, Mr Millett?</p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, it is, yes. We move to our next</p> <p>18 witness, who will be Flora Neda, Farhad's mother --</p> <p>19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: -- at whatever time you think convenient.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think we would all benefit from</p> <p>22 having the usual hour to take lunch, so shall I say</p> <p>23 2.20?</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: 2.20, very good.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: 2.20, please. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 that the building was swarmed with firefighters, enough</p> <p>2 for everyone to have some assistance, not just a few</p> <p>3 people that were on the lower floors to get the</p> <p>4 assistance.</p> <p>5 I feel that if we were told the truth, even after</p> <p>6 the point where the firefighters knew that they wouldn't</p> <p>7 be able to reach those that were on the upper floors, if</p> <p>8 they would've just told us that, "There's nothing we can</p> <p>9 do, do whatever you can", at least people would've had</p> <p>10 time to make the decision for themselves to get out or</p> <p>11 to stay in the building. I feel that it was too late</p> <p>12 for them to make any decision once they were trapped.</p> <p>13 I mean, even those who were trapped beyond the point</p> <p>14 of having any way to escape, if they knew that the</p> <p>15 firefighters were not coming to get them or if they</p> <p>16 didn't have any way of escape, they could've at least</p> <p>17 prepared themselves for what was to come. So they</p> <p>18 could've at least prayed, if they were a religious</p> <p>19 person, they could've at least prepared themselves for</p> <p>20 the pain that they were about to go through.</p> <p>21 So I think that's quite important. I think the key</p> <p>22 word in it is "false hope".</p> <p>23 Thank you.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Neda.</p> <p>25 Well, Mr Neda, thank you very much for all your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 (1.20 pm)</p> <p>2 (The short adjournment)</p> <p>3 (2.20 pm)</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>5 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, I now call our next witness,</p> <p>6 Mrs Flora Neda.</p> <p>7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.</p> <p>8 FLORA NEDA (sworn)</p> <p>9 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mrs Neda. Sit</p> <p>11 down and make yourself comfortable.</p> <p>12 All right?</p> <p>13 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>15 Mrs Neda, good afternoon.</p> <p>16 Can I ask you, please, to give the chairman your</p> <p>17 full name.</p> <p>18 A. Flora Neda.</p> <p>19 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>20 Can I say, first of all, thank you very much to you</p> <p>21 for coming here today and assisting us with our</p> <p>22 investigations. We're very grateful to you.</p> <p>23 A. You're welcome, thank you.</p> <p>24 Q. I know that at times during your evidence it may be</p> <p>25 difficult to remember things. If you need a break at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 any time, we can take a break. We will aim, I think, to</p> <p>2 sit in 45-minute chunks so that you can have</p> <p>3 an opportunity to take a break.</p> <p>4 A. Okay.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. If I ask a question and you want me to repeat it or put</p> <p>8 the question in a different way, then I'm happy to do</p> <p>9 that. All you have to say is, "Could you please say it</p> <p>10 again", or something like that.</p> <p>11 A. Okay.</p> <p>12 Q. Also, when I'm asking questions and you're answering</p> <p>13 questions, I might be looking at my screen, or at your</p> <p>14 statement. It doesn't mean I'm not listening to what</p> <p>15 you're saying; I'm listening very, very interestedly in</p> <p>16 what you're telling us.</p> <p>17 Can I start, Mrs Neda, with your first witness</p> <p>18 statement, which is IWS00000887.</p> <p>19 Is that the first page of your first witness</p> <p>20 statement?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Can I ask you, please, to go to the last page of that</p> <p>23 statement, which is at page 30.</p> <p>24 You'll see a signature on that page above</p> <p>25 a date: 3 June 2018.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>3 We've heard some evidence this morning from your</p> <p>4 son, Farhad, and I don't want to repeat a lot of what he</p> <p>5 has told us very helpfully this morning, but I am going</p> <p>6 to go over some of the material or the ground again.</p> <p>7 Your family home at the time of the fire</p> <p>8 in June 2017 was flat 205 on the 23rd floor.</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. I think you moved into Grenfell Tower on 17 May ...</p> <p>11 well, can you tell me when you did move into</p> <p>12 Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>13 A. 17 May 1999.</p> <p>14 Q. 1999?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Your son has confirmed that you were tenants of the flat</p> <p>17 in Grenfell Tower.</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you remember who the landlords were?</p> <p>20 A. Kensington and Chelsea.</p> <p>21 Q. Right, the council?</p> <p>22 A. The council, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Before I turn to the events of 14 June 2017, I want to</p> <p>24 ask you about what you knew or thought you should do in</p> <p>25 the event of a fire.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 Can you confirm that that's your signature?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Have you had an opportunity to read this statement</p> <p>4 recently?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Can you confirm that the contents are true?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. I'm going to confirm for the record that there are no</p> <p>9 exhibits to this statement.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>12 MR MILLETT: You've also, I think, prepared a second witness</p> <p>13 statement for the inquiry dated 16 October 2018, and</p> <p>14 that has a reference of IWS00001133.</p> <p>15 Is that the first page of your second witness</p> <p>16 statement?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. If you go to the next page, which should be page 2,</p> <p>19 there's a signature above a date of 16 October 2018. Is</p> <p>20 that your signature?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Have you had an opportunity to read this statement</p> <p>23 recently?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 Can I ask that the witness first please be shown</p> <p>2 INQ00000093.</p> <p>3 My first question, Mrs Neda, is have you ever seen</p> <p>4 this sign or something like it before?</p> <p>5 A. Yes. Just a few months before the fire.</p> <p>6 Q. Right.</p> <p>7 A. After refurbishment.</p> <p>8 Q. Where did you see this sign?</p> <p>9 A. It was next to the door lift.</p> <p>10 Q. On your floor?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Did you see this sign anywhere else in Grenfell Tower at</p> <p>13 that time?</p> <p>14 A. I didn't remember.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay.</p> <p>16 A. On the other floors, I didn't remember.</p> <p>17 Q. Apart from this notice, were you aware of any</p> <p>18 information from any organisation or any individual, any</p> <p>19 person, about what you should do if there was a fire in</p> <p>20 the block?</p> <p>21 A. Not really. But sometimes my son always watching TV,</p> <p>22 and he has lots of information about the fire,</p> <p>23 everything, while he watching. But always he say when</p> <p>24 the fire happen, you shouldn't use the lift.</p> <p>25 We never think about to stay at flat, because</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

1 **I always think if the fire happen, how we could do, but**
 2 **we never think about this one, what we should do.**
 3 Q. Right. I see.
 4 Just following that up a little bit more, as
 5 at June 2017, at the time of the fire, what was your
 6 understanding of what you should do if there was a fire
 7 somewhere in the block?
 8 **A. We have to leave the building. Because long time ago,**
 9 **when we came first time, every floor had a board,**
 10 **whiteboard, in front of the lift, and there was lots of**
 11 **letters they put, the TMO, information and everything,**
 12 **including the fire regulation or London fire safety. It**
 13 **was a long time ago. But I can't remember when that**
 14 **year was.**
 15 **After maybe 10 years or 12 years, we couldn't see**
 16 **anymore that letters or the paper they put on the board.**
 17 **It was completely empty.**
 18 **After refurbishment, we just got this one, few**
 19 **months before the fire.**
 20 **That's it.**
 21 Q. Did you see this sign anywhere else in the building?
 22 **A. Which one?**
 23 Q. The sign that we have on the screen here.
 24 **A. This one. I don't remember for any floor, but maybe on**
 25 **ground floor, maybe. I can't remember.**

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1 Q. When in the old days you had this whiteboard, where was
 2 that in the building?
 3 **A. Every floor has got, when you come out from the lift,**
 4 **before the refurbishment, in front of the lift was wall,**
 5 **and the board was hanging on the wall.**
 6 Q. Right.
 7 **A. It was like a screen, glass board.**
 8 Q. I am going to show you a notice and see if you recognise
 9 it. Could the witness please be shown IWS00000500.
 10 Mrs Neda, do you recognise this notice?
 11 **A. Something like that, but I can't remember, but something**
 12 **like that they stick on the -- exactly this board.**
 13 **Always they put the sign or some information when**
 14 **something happened to the building. It might be that**
 15 **one.**
 16 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.
 17 Did you ever have any discussions with the TMO or
 18 anybody else about a personal evacuation plan for you in
 19 case there was a fire in the block?
 20 **A. I didn't speak with the TMO or someone else. The only**
 21 **person I was always keep asking and tell, my husband.**
 22 **When the first time we got that flat and we moved in**
 23 **the flat, I was thinking there is no way out if the fire**
 24 **happen. And I was asking too many times if the fire**
 25 **happened, especially our electric meter was just next to**

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1 **our out door, and I was thinking always if that one**
 2 **has -- if electric shock happen.**
 3 **And the fire door, how we could leave the building,**
 4 **I was always asking him, and he was saying "I hope to**
 5 **not happen, that." But we never think and never ask**
 6 **what we have to do.**
 7 **But during the refurbishment, we had always every**
 8 **week meeting, all the resident had meeting with the TMO,**
 9 **and we are keep telling them the building is not safe**
 10 **because of the fire exit. We only just have**
 11 **a staircase, not any other ways to go out if the fire**
 12 **happen.**
 13 **They didn't listen to us.**
 14 Q. Did you go to those meetings?
 15 **A. Yes, I was going there.**
 16 Q. Did they respond to the point that was made about not
 17 feeling safe, that you described, because of the fire
 18 exit?
 19 **A. No.**
 20 Q. Can I turn to the night of the fire itself, the night of
 21 13/14 June.
 22 If you go to paragraph 20 of your first witness
 23 statement, please, at the bottom of page 4.
 24 You say there that you'd been visiting your sister,
 25 Zara, and her family on the evening of 13 June 2017, and

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1 you came back to Grenfell Tower in the early hours of
 2 the following morning, 14 June.
 3 At paragraph 22 you say that you have seen a CCTV
 4 image of you entering the tower at 12.52.
 5 Can I, having shown you that and reminding you of
 6 that, can I just ask you, when you first came into the
 7 tower at that time, did you come through the main
 8 entrance?
 9 **A. Yes.**
 10 Q. When you came into the main entrance, did you hear
 11 anything unusual?
 12 **A. It was normal, as usual. Everything around the tower**
 13 **was normal.**
 14 Q. Right.
 15 **A. Not fire engine, not the people was -- it was normal.**
 16 **We couldn't see anything. Not noise. It was noise,**
 17 **from the outside ventilation. I don't know which one**
 18 **was that. But everything was normal when we entered the**
 19 **building.**
 20 Q. You say there was noise from the outside ventilation.
 21 When you came into the lobby, could you hear
 22 a ventilation noise on the outside of the building?
 23 **A. There is always -- I don't know what was that. Always**
 24 **like a fan was running or turn on 24 hours. It was**
 25 **always been there, and we used to that.**

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<p>1 But the inside the building, when we went there, 2 even ground floor, inside the ground floor, in front of 3 the lift, also was okay, which -- we used the lift. The 4 only noise when we reach to 23rd floor, our floor, we 5 just noticed there was noise. 6 Q. I am going to ask you a few questions about that in 7 a moment, but before I do, can I just go back to the 8 outside ventilation noise that you said was running on 9 24 hours. 10 When you were standing outside the building, do you 11 remember where that noise, that fan noise, would come 12 from, normally? 13 A. Mostly in front of the -- when you was in front of the 14 entrance, it was the top of the entrance, something. 15 And also next to -- in front of the entrance, there 16 was -- we couldn't see, there was basement or something. 17 Q. Yes. 18 A. They built like windows for that one on the floor. The 19 noise was coming from there as well, and also the air 20 was coming from there as well. 21 Q. Yes, thank you, I see. 22 In paragraph 23 of your statement, on page 5, you 23 describe how you came home and the lifts were working 24 and you all went straight up to your flat in the lift. 25 Then you say:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 A. Yes. 2 Q. On page 6 of your statement -- if we just turn to 3 page 6 -- at paragraph 28, you say: 4 "28. It was a scary noise and it was extremely 5 loud. We were unable to hear one another speak outside 6 on the landing because of the noise." 7 Was it as loud as, for example, a vacuum cleaner? 8 A. It is, yes, it is. It was very loud. If I say like 9 airplane, that much. We couldn't hear each other when 10 we talk with each other in front of the fan. That's why 11 it was very scary and I was getting my son to straight 12 away call, otherwise I couldn't go to sleep. Even we 13 couldn't hear each other, the noise, and we closed the 14 door, we talk inside the flat. 15 Even when Farhad called to the TMO, and we were 16 inside the flat, and the front door was closed, you 17 could hear very loud those noise. 18 Q. Had you ever heard those vents making as loud a noise as 19 that before? 20 A. It is like accelerating noise. It's pushing and gets 21 slowly back and pushing -- how can I explain that? 22 Q. Like a kind of pulse? 23 A. Yes. Like accelerating the car. 24 Q. Right. 25 A. Like that, the noise. It is loud, and after that gets</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 "When the lift door opened on our floor, we could 2 hear a noise coming from the ventilation system." 3 I'm going to show you a photograph of the inside of 4 the lobby in the building. 5 Before I do, can I just ask you, Mrs Neda, are you 6 all right to be shown photographs from inside 7 Grenfell Tower? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. Okay. Well, let me show you two photographs, 10 side-by-side, if I can, BLA00002513, and BLA00002514. 11 I should just tell you, Mrs Neda, these photographs 12 were taken after the fire from on floor 6, but I just 13 want to ask you about the vents that you heard when you 14 came out onto floor 23 having come up in the lift. 15 The left-hand photograph on the screen that you see 16 is looking, with the lifts on the left-hand side, 17 towards the north of the building. 18 A. Yes. 19 Q. And on the right-hand photograph, it's at the other end 20 of the lobby, looking in the other direction, and you 21 can see that the vents are towards the floor, there. 22 So when you're describing noise coming from the 23 vents, I know it's a different floor, but are those the 24 vents or the kind of vents that you heard the noise 25 coming from?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 slowly, like motor getting slowly, slow down, and start 2 again. Moving and -- 3 Q. How often between soft and loud and then soft again 4 would it be? 5 A. It not stopping, the noise. It's still the noise was 6 okay, but it is going up and down. 7 Q. Right. 8 The sound that you were hearing, was it a low sound 9 or a high sound? 10 A. Both them high sound, yes. 11 Q. Both? You say both -- 12 A. Yes, low -- when the noise get up and get down, it's 13 still very loud. 14 Q. Was the same noise coming from both sets of vents at 15 each end of the lobby, or was the noise more in one set 16 of vents? 17 A. To be honest, I just feel in our floor, and also I feel, 18 just because it was very loud, we didn't feel the other 19 side was the same or not, but the noise was mostly in 20 our side. 21 Q. Going back a little bit in your statement, and in time, 22 at page 5 of your statement, paragraph 24, you say: 23 "24. The contractors carrying out refurbishment 24 works on the Tower had installed a new ventilation 25 system which ran every few hours to refresh the air.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

<p>1 There were occasions when it would get stuck and it 2 would make a lot of noise. This happened frequently and 3 it seemed to happen particularly on Friday evenings. We 4 usually had to wait until Monday for someone to come out 5 and repair it."</p> <p>6 I'm interested in what you mean when you say 7 "stuck".</p> <p>8 When you say it would get stuck, can you describe 9 what would happen?</p> <p>10 A. I mean when -- it was automatically open by itself, and 11 it was still keep open. I don't know how long was the 12 time of when it was open.</p> <p>13 Q. Right.</p> <p>14 A. But it was -- when the -- maybe it is few -- 10 minutes 15 was open to change the air from the floors, and after 16 that automatically got open. But most of the time, when 17 it is automatically open, it's not closed back, it was 18 stuck open.</p> <p>19 Q. I see.</p> <p>20 A. After maybe 10 minutes, it's not closing back by itself 21 automatically, the noise is starting afterwards. And 22 I notice the ventilation is stuck, open.</p> <p>23 Q. When the ventilation was open --</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. -- the noise continued, did it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 121</p>	<p>1 26. You say:</p> <p>2 "25. I remember that on an occasion when an 3 engineer was sent to our floor by the TMO to fix the 4 ventilation system, I spoke to him. He was a middle 5 aged man in a dark navy jacket which I think had 'TMO' 6 written on it. The engineer had been on the floor above 7 us working on the ventilation motor to stop the noise."</p> <p>8 When you spoke to the man, did he tell you what the 9 problem was with this ventilation system?</p> <p>10 A. They are not working on 23rd floor. Because there is no 11 way by the lift to go to the roof, they always come to 12 the top floor, and 23rd floor, and after that they use 13 the stairwell. There was a small door on the top of the 14 wall next to the roof. Before the refurbishment, they 15 put ladder on there and they use that, and there is no 16 gate also there. But a few months before they start the 17 refurbishment, they put a gate there, with grille. 18 Always was locked. I'm sure that the key was only with 19 the TMO's hands.</p> <p>20 Q. Right.</p> <p>21 A. They will open that.</p> <p>22 When we called to stop the ventilation, because the 23 motor of those ventilation was on the roof, exactly on 24 top of my bedroom, I could hear the motor as well. They 25 said the motor is on the roof, there is two big, strong</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 123</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, because I feel the air was coming.</p> <p>2 Q. Right.</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. On occasions like that, at times like that, did you hear 5 the sound going louder and softer in the same way?</p> <p>6 A. Sometimes it was the same, one level.</p> <p>7 Q. Right.</p> <p>8 A. But the night of the fire, it was loud and going down 9 and up.</p> <p>10 Q. Had you ever heard that down and up before?</p> <p>11 A. Once.</p> <p>12 Q. Once.</p> <p>13 A. Maybe twice.</p> <p>14 Q. I see. Do you know --</p> <p>15 A. It was quite familiar for me because I always been at 16 home, especially during the day when that is happen. My 17 husband and Farhad was at work, or he was at uni. 18 I always being at home and I completely know -- familiar 19 for me what happened to that.</p> <p>20 And straight away I call TMO, this has happened 21 again, and I report it for them to come and please stop 22 this noise.</p> <p>23 Q. On that subject, you had discussions with the TMO, 24 because you say at paragraph 26, if we can look at it -- 25 or 25 perhaps is the best place to start, just before</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 122</p>	<p>1 motors, one on your side and the other is on the other 2 side of the ventilation -- the other side of our floor. 3 They wanted to go there and fix it from the roof, not in 4 our floor.</p> <p>5 I just watching when they use the lift, because 6 I was waiting extremely to -- they are coming as soon as 7 possible to stop that noise. I was keep looking, they 8 are coming or not. Suddenly I saw the man with the TMO 9 uniform. I told him, "Have you found out to stop that 10 noise?" He said, "Yes, we sort it out."</p> <p>11 I asked him why it is always happen during the 12 weekend. Mostly it was Friday. I don't know what is 13 link to the fire alarm or something. They said, because 14 the teenage people coming and they turn off the fire 15 alarm and they are smoking, they don't want the smoke 16 alarm coming on and make a noise, and the ventilation, 17 when it start to open to take out the smoke, it is 18 stuck.</p> <p>19 I don't know -- I'm not sure what is the ventilation 20 system links to the fire alarm. He told me something 21 like that, but I don't know exactly what happened.</p> <p>22 Q. That's very helpful.</p> <p>23 Who would be the people who would be able to switch 24 off the smoke alarm or fire alarm?</p> <p>25 A. Before refurbishment, we had reception on the ground</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 124</p>

1 floor with security 24 hours was there. They don't
 2 allow the teenage boy after school, they are coming and
 3 using our staircase. And they are drinking, smoking,
 4 and make dirty our floor and put the rubbish,
 5 everything. And too many times we complain for the TMO,
 6 "Please bring back the reception for us, we need
 7 security, because they are doing dirty" -- there is very
 8 dirty, I can't say here. But they didn't listen to us.
 9 But when I -- even 1 o'clock in the morning or
 10 2 o'clock in the morning, they were there, still there,
 11 drinking and fighting with each other, shouting, making
 12 noise.
 13 That's why I said they are turning off the fire
 14 alarm.
 15 Q. Did the TMO person tell you that outsiders -- in other
 16 words, non-residents of the tower -- had been able to
 17 somehow switch off the smoke alarm?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Did he explain to you how they could do that?
 20 A. No.
 21 Q. Right.
 22 A. He just point on the fire alarm. He said because they
 23 turn off the smoke alarm.
 24 Q. We know that Farhad called the TMO and spoke to them.
 25 We discussed with him this morning all about that call.

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1 I think he then came back into the flat when it was
 2 finished.
 3 Where were you while he was making that call, do you
 4 remember?
 5 A. Which call, sorry?
 6 Q. Okay, let me back up a little bit.
 7 Farhad called the out-of-hours number at the
 8 council, in fact, and told them about the vent making
 9 a noise.
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Do you remember him making that call?
 12 A. Yes. Because sometimes when Farhad was at home, because
 13 he was explain very well to them, I was telling him,
 14 "Please call them to come and report for them". And
 15 sometimes when he wasn't at home, I was calling.
 16 Q. On that night, on the night of the fire, you come up
 17 into the lift --
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. -- through the lifts, onto the lobby, and you hear the
 20 noise.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Then Farhad called the council.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Do you remember him making that call?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. You do?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Where were you while he was making that call?
 4 A. We were together in the sitting room, but while he was
 5 talking, he was walking around the flat and going out,
 6 out into the lobby, and coming back to the sitting room.
 7 He was walking around.
 8 Q. He said he went in and out of the flat.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Into the lobby and back in again.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. He said this morning you were holding the door open for
 13 him?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. That's right, is it?
 16 A. Yes, because I wanted to know what happened straight
 17 away. I was following Farhad when he was going there,
 18 I want to listen what he's saying, but I couldn't hear
 19 because on the phone, the speaker was not loud.
 20 I was waiting what he's saying to me. I keep follow
 21 Farhad, always --
 22 Q. Right.
 23 A. -- while he was on the phone.
 24 Q. After the call -- this is paragraph 31 of your statement
 25 at the bottom of page 6 -- you say:

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1 "31. Farhad asked me what had happened and I told
 2 him that we were still waiting for the TMO engineer to
 3 arrive and that he should go to sleep. I went back out
 4 onto the landing. This time I could smell burning. It
 5 smelled to me like burning rubber."
 6 At that time, did you see any smoke on the landing?
 7 A. No, it was clear.
 8 Q. You then say at paragraph 33 on page 7, after you've
 9 described going back to bed:
 10 "33. I could also now see bits of what I thought
 11 were paper or debris on fire flying around in the air.
 12 Saber got out of bed and said, 'Yes, there is a fire.'
 13 Which window did you look out of? Was that your
 14 bedroom window?
 15 A. My bedroom.
 16 Q. Your bedroom faces north, I think?
 17 A. Yes, towards the academy.
 18 Q. When you saw this debris flying around, was it at the
 19 level of your window or above or below?
 20 A. Lower, lower.
 21 Q. Below?
 22 A. Yes, below.
 23 Q. How far below, do you remember?
 24 A. I couldn't remember, but at that time I think it was
 25 windy, and the fire was going around and ...

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<p>1 Q. At that stage, I think you already thought you wanted to 2 leave the flat and go down.</p> <p>3 A. I was feeling something is wrong. But we couldn't see 4 the fire, because the fire is not on our side. We 5 couldn't see. I was going outdoor to see what happened 6 at that time when I checked the ventilation is still 7 making noise, and I just saw one of the lift wasn't 8 working, out of order, and I came back, I told my 9 husband one of the lift not working, and I smell 10 something like wire, electric, like the wire is getting 11 hot or burning. I was feeling something like that.</p> <p>12 I came back to my bedroom. I told him it is 13 something wrong, I could feel something, the smell, and 14 he said, "It is nothing, come, go to sleep."</p> <p>15 When I turned next to the window to go to my bed, 16 I watch from the window, and I saw the reflection of the 17 fire, but I haven't seen the fire exactly. I told my 18 husband there is a fire, and also I could hear the 19 people of the tower, maybe the ground floor, was 20 chatting with each other and making noise, but 21 I couldn't hear what they are saying.</p> <p>22 I said, "There is a noise from the people, and 23 I could see the reflection of the fire. Let's go and 24 see what happened."</p> <p>25 Farhad came to my bedroom, "What are you saying?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 When we went out of the out door, we locked our 2 door. We wanted to go to the staircase because both the 3 lift out of order at that time.</p> <p>4 When we wanted to go to the staircase, at that time 5 I saw too many people came from the staircase, and they 6 opened the staircase door and they were crying.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Mrs Neda, it's been a long answer and you've 8 given us a lot of information. 9 Shall we take a break now?</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, right, we'll have a 10-minute 11 break, Mrs Neda. 12 Would you like to go with the usher, and I have to 13 ask you not to talk to anyone about your evidence while 14 you're out of the room. All right?</p> <p>15 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll come back at 3.15. 17 Take your time. 18 All right, 3.15, please. 19 (3.05 pm) 20 (A short break) 21 (3.15 pm)</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mrs Neda?</p> <p>23 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. 25 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p>
<p>1 I said, "Farhad, there is something not okay, let's go 2 downstairs, we have to see what happened."</p> <p>3 Still my husband said, "There is nothing, they said 4 they are coming, let's go to sleep, I'm going early 5 morning at work."</p> <p>6 And I was worried, I couldn't go to sleep; first 7 from the noise, and second, when the fire was happen, 8 I wanted to see what happened.</p> <p>9 When I told him there is a fire, he woke up and get 10 up from his bed and watch from the window. He said, 11 "Yes, there is a fire."</p> <p>12 We went to see what happened. Again, I opened the 13 door, out door, to see if someone is there, coming to 14 ask what happened. I saw my next door -- the young 15 girl. She was crying and running from flat 206. And 16 she said, "Oh my God", and her mum was behind her. She 17 was slowly, slowly walking. I just saw her, she went to 18 the staircase.</p> <p>19 I straight came back. I told my husband, "See, 20 I told you, something happened. Our neighbour, 21 everybody, is going downstairs. Let's go to see what 22 happened."</p> <p>23 When he saw a piece of fire was coming from the 24 train line and the academy was -- he said, "Yes, get 25 ready to go", and we got ready.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p>	<p>1 MR MILLETT: Mrs Neda, thank you for coming back to us. 2 A. You're welcome.</p> <p>3 Q. We're going to carry on. 4 Can I ask you, please, to go to paragraph 34 of your 5 statement on page 7, the first statement. 6 You say at the beginning, "We got ready to leave", 7 and in the second line, you say: 8 "Farhad said, 'Don't use the lift.' As I left the 9 flat again and went on to the landing with Saber and 10 Farhad, I saw approximately 30 to 40 people coming on to 11 our landing from up the stairs. I asked them what was 12 going on." 13 First of all, can I just take you back to the moment 14 when you left your flat with Saber and with Farhad, 15 intending to go down. 16 Do you remember what the air conditions were like in 17 the lobby at that time?</p> <p>18 A. It was clear.</p> <p>19 Q. It was clear.</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Did you notice any smoke at all?</p> <p>22 A. Not really.</p> <p>23 Q. Did you notice the noise of the smoke vents at all at 24 that time?</p> <p>25 A. It's still there, the noise.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p>

<p>1 Q. Was it the same noise as before or ...?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. I think we heard from Farhad this morning that you made</p> <p>4 it across the lobby and had got into the stairwell when</p> <p>5 you saw all the people coming up. That's how I think he</p> <p>6 remembers it.</p> <p>7 Is that how you remember it or do you remember</p> <p>8 seeing the people before that?</p> <p>9 A. No, that one, that one.</p> <p>10 Q. You remember it the same way?</p> <p>11 A. The same time when we wanted to go to the stairway, we</p> <p>12 saw the people, not before that.</p> <p>13 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>14 You say in your statement:</p> <p>15 "... I saw approximately 30 to 40 people coming on</p> <p>16 to our landing from up the stairs."</p> <p>17 Thinking about it again, looking back, do you think</p> <p>18 it was 30 to 40?</p> <p>19 A. It was too many. I couldn't count it, but the lobby was</p> <p>20 full of the people, yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Did you know any of the people who came up?</p> <p>22 A. Sorry?</p> <p>23 Q. Did you know them? Did you know any of them?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, of course, I know them, because a long time we were</p> <p>25 together, see each other in the lift and say hello to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 133</p>	<p>1 her, she straight came to us. I told, "What happened?"</p> <p>2 She said, "There is a fire." Because we couldn't see</p> <p>3 the fire, just only the reflection of the fire. I asked</p> <p>4 her what happened. She said, "There is a fire and</p> <p>5 coming to our flat, and we wanted to go down."</p> <p>6 Someone said -- I don't know, the firefighter was</p> <p>7 there or someone, she told me, "The firefighter told us,</p> <p>8 you go up, the helicopter rescue come and rescue."</p> <p>9 I told, "There is no way out to go to the roof, how</p> <p>10 they told you?" She said, "No, I don't know, they said</p> <p>11 go upstairs, the helicopter coming and rescue."</p> <p>12 And she was keep saying, always asking me, "Why the</p> <p>13 helicopter is not coming? They told us."</p> <p>14 Q. Doing the best you can with that conversation at that</p> <p>15 time, how sure are you that she said to you that she'd</p> <p>16 been told by a firefighter that a helicopter was coming</p> <p>17 to rescue you?</p> <p>18 A. I'm not too sure, but she said -- she said to me, but</p> <p>19 I'm not sure it was.</p> <p>20 Q. Can I ask you to look at paragraph 41 of your statement.</p> <p>21 This is, just looking forward a little bit in time,</p> <p>22 Mrs Neda, when you are in your living room and you're</p> <p>23 having a conversation with Mariem Elgwahry, who is in</p> <p>24 your living room with you at that time, and you say,</p> <p>25 halfway down that paragraph:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 135</p>
<p>1 them. They were our neighbour, I know them.</p> <p>2 Q. Do you remember who you spoke to when you met them</p> <p>3 there?</p> <p>4 A. Yes. The Iranian ladies, Mrs Afrasiabi, because I know</p> <p>5 them -- she was recently coming on the tower, she got</p> <p>6 the flat, but we were speaking the same language, we</p> <p>7 know each other. And also Mariem and her mum, since</p> <p>8 I been in the tower, I know them very well. And the</p> <p>9 rest of them I know and say hello to them. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you remember what they were wearing? Not each of</p> <p>11 them, but in general. Were they wearing night clothes</p> <p>12 or did they look ready to leave the tower?</p> <p>13 A. Some of them with night clothes, some of them with</p> <p>14 jeans. Yes, it was different, the clothes.</p> <p>15 Q. You say, still in paragraph 34, six lines down:</p> <p>16 "They told us that they had been told to come</p> <p>17 upstairs as a rescue helicopter was coming for us."</p> <p>18 Do you remember who said that to you?</p> <p>19 A. Mrs Afrasiabi.</p> <p>20 Q. Mrs Afrasiabi?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Did she tell you who had told her that a helicopter was</p> <p>23 coming?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, when they came up, I saw her. She came up with her</p> <p>25 sister and she was using her walker as well. When I saw</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 134</p>	<p>1 "When I had asked Mariem why she and her mother had</p> <p>2 come up the stairs she had told me that there had been</p> <p>3 no way out on the staircase because it was blocked with</p> <p>4 people running from the fire and they had been told to</p> <p>5 go up."</p> <p>6 Again, I know it's difficult to remember exactly,</p> <p>7 but doing the best you can, can you remember who Mariem</p> <p>8 was referring to when she said that "they had been told</p> <p>9 to go up"? Who was the "they"?</p> <p>10 A. Mariem didn't tell me --</p> <p>11 Q. Right.</p> <p>12 A. -- someone told her to go up, but she told there is no</p> <p>13 way to go down because full of the people.</p> <p>14 Q. Full of people.</p> <p>15 A. The people was rushing to go downstairs, there is no</p> <p>16 way. I asked Mariem, "Why you are coming upstairs? Why</p> <p>17 you are not going down?" She said, "There is no way</p> <p>18 where I have to go, and the fire is spreading very fast,</p> <p>19 it has reached my flat." And she was crying, and she</p> <p>20 says, "What we can do?" I told her, "Mariem, you have</p> <p>21 to be calm and pray. It should be fine." She says,</p> <p>22 "No, no, this is not fine. The fire is not -- the fire</p> <p>23 is really bad. I can't wait, where we have to go?" She</p> <p>24 was keep telling like that and crying, and she was</p> <p>25 always on the phone.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 136</p>

<p>1 Q. Yes.</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Do you remember whether Mariem told you that she had</p> <p>4 been told to go up, she herself?</p> <p>5 A. No. She came by herself.</p> <p>6 Q. Can I ask you to go back in your statement to</p> <p>7 paragraph 35, which is on page 8 of your statement.</p> <p>8 Because I'm going back in time -- in your statement and</p> <p>9 in time -- this is when you meet the people on the</p> <p>10 stairs or in the lobby coming up.</p> <p>11 You say at paragraph 35:</p> <p>12 "35. At this time, I saw my neighbour from</p> <p>13 flat 203."</p> <p>14 Is that Rania Ibrahim you saw?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Did you say anything to Rania?</p> <p>17 A. No.</p> <p>18 Q. Did she say anything to you?</p> <p>19 A. No, she just opened the door to see what is going on,</p> <p>20 and when she opened the door, most of those people who</p> <p>21 came up the stairs gone to her flat, and she closed the</p> <p>22 door. We came with Mariem and her mum and Afrasiabi in</p> <p>23 our flat, and we closed the door.</p> <p>24 But we didn't see how many of those people gone back</p> <p>25 out, or staying on her flat. We didn't see afterwards.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 flat?</p> <p>2 A. I can't remember, but I feel the smoke, because</p> <p>3 I couldn't breathe proper, and I opened the kitchen</p> <p>4 window to take out the smoke, that much was the smoke.</p> <p>5 Q. So you tried to ventilate the flat --</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. -- by opening the kitchen window?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Did it work? Did it help?</p> <p>10 A. No, it getting worse, because the air was -- circulation</p> <p>11 was very easy to -- the smoke coming in our flat, and it</p> <p>12 is more smoke, and my husband told, "Don't open the</p> <p>13 windows because the smoke is coming more."</p> <p>14 Q. Did you notice what colour the smoke was?</p> <p>15 A. When we left, when we wanted to leave with Farhad, when</p> <p>16 we opened the door, I thought there was very dark.</p> <p>17 Q. I'll come to that.</p> <p>18 A. Greasy, like shiny. And I could see the light of our</p> <p>19 corridor was still on, and when we opened the door, the</p> <p>20 smoke was running slowly, slowly like this (Indicates)</p> <p>21 and came inside our flat.</p> <p>22 I saw the colour of the smoke was very dark grey,</p> <p>23 like black, even black, and we even couldn't see what is</p> <p>24 inside the corridor.</p> <p>25 Q. Yes. And you say at paragraph -- this is when you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 139</p>
<p>1 Q. You go back into your flat --</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. -- and you explained how that is, with Mariem and her</p> <p>4 mum and the Afrasiabis.</p> <p>5 You say at paragraph 43 of your statement, at</p> <p>6 page 9:</p> <p>7 "43. There was more and more smoke coming inside</p> <p>8 the flat and we turned on the torches on our phones and</p> <p>9 started waving them out of the window ..."</p> <p>10 How soon after coming back into your flat with the</p> <p>11 four ladies did you notice smoke starting to come into</p> <p>12 your flat?</p> <p>13 A. When we saw the people was coming, we straight go to --</p> <p>14 when they told there is no way out, my husband told me,</p> <p>15 "I told you there is no way to go downstairs." We went</p> <p>16 inside the flat. But there wasn't smoke at that time,</p> <p>17 it was clear. But afterwards, slowly, slowly, the smoke</p> <p>18 coming to the lobby, and underneath the front door was</p> <p>19 coming to the corridor, because Farhad alternatively</p> <p>20 going out, open the door and closing back, and there's</p> <p>21 smoke coming in our flat.</p> <p>22 Q. Was the smoke coming from anywhere else apart from under</p> <p>23 your front door?</p> <p>24 A. No.</p> <p>25 Q. Do you remember how quickly the smoke was filling the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 opened the door to go out?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. I just want to follow that up.</p> <p>4 In your statement at paragraph 51, page 11, you</p> <p>5 describe the smoke as "dark grey, shiny and thick".</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. "It is difficult to explain but it looked like glitter</p> <p>8 when we open our front door."</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. You just described that.</p> <p>11 So you had the light behind you -- is this right? --</p> <p>12 from your --</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. -- flat, the hall?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. When you say you could see -- it looked like glitter,</p> <p>17 what does that --</p> <p>18 A. It's not exactly glitter, but it was very shiny, like</p> <p>19 the glitter, when you put under the light, it was</p> <p>20 reflecting the shine, like that.</p> <p>21 Q. Could you see little -- sorry.</p> <p>22 A. It seemed like that. But it's not exactly glitter.</p> <p>23 Q. No.</p> <p>24 A. It is like example I give you.</p> <p>25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 140</p>

35 (Pages 137 to 140)

1 You say:
 2 "... it looked very greasy and had a really bad
 3 taste which was a mixture of hot and sour. The smoke
 4 started burning my throat immediately which caused me to
 5 vomit and choke."
 6 This is at the time when you were going into the
 7 lobby with Farhad?
 8 **A. Yes, when we left the flat. Yes.**
 9 Q. Before that, when you're still in your flat, was the
 10 smoke as thick as that?
 11 **A. In the corridor was smoky, but not that much was in the**
 12 **corridor, the lobby. But still was -- it was reach up**
 13 **to Farhad's bedroom. And the sitting room and the**
 14 **kitchen still was smoky, but was more clear.**
 15 Q. Did you notice the glittery part of the smoke when it
 16 was in the hall inside your flat?
 17 **A. No.**
 18 Q. You didn't?
 19 **A. No.**
 20 Q. Can I just show you paragraph 44 of your statement,
 21 Mrs Neda, and this is still when you're in the flat
 22 before you leave.
 23 Halfway through that paragraph, you say:
 24 "He [Saber] said that he had been told that this
 25 would help to reduce the fire. When we opened the taps,

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1 there was no water. Saber told us that there was no
 2 water and that we only had one bucket of water.
 3 I remember seeing his face at this point and he had a
 4 look of what I would describe as hopelessness."
 5 Did you yourself open the taps? Did you try them?
 6 **A. Yes, when we wanted to open the tap, Saber was in the**
 7 **kitchen, next to the sink. He opened the kitchen tap.**
 8 **I wanted to go to the bathroom. There was no water.**
 9 **I came back. I told there is no water and Saber -- when**
 10 **we saw the water pressure was very low, and nearly to**
 11 **stop running, the water, we had just half of the bucket**
 12 **of water. So we thought the water -- there is no water,**
 13 **we just only have that much.**
 14 Q. So you went into the bathroom and tried --
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 Q. -- the taps yourself?
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. And there was no water in the taps?
 19 **A. No.**
 20 Q. This is difficult, I know, but how long before you left
 21 the flat did you realise that there was no water coming
 22 out of the taps?
 23 **A. I'm not sure about the time, because every time**
 24 **everybody call us and tell everything, but I think --**
 25 **I'm not sure who told Farhad or Saber, I'm not sure.**

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1 **They tell us to open your tap, water, and leave**
 2 **everything if you have, you can make wet your carpet,**
 3 **everything. After that we start to open the tap. Maybe**
 4 **20 minutes after we get back to the flat, maybe.**
 5 Q. Right.
 6 You describe in your statement, at paragraph 49,
 7 which is on page 10, that you've made the decision to
 8 leave the flat.
 9 You say:
 10 "49. Farhad took my hand and I called to Saber and
 11 said we are all leaving. As we left the flat, the smoke
 12 alarm started going off."
 13 Do you remember who made the decision that you
 14 should all leave the flat?
 15 **A. Farhad. Yes.**
 16 Q. When you left the flat, do you remember who opened the
 17 front door?
 18 **A. Farhad.**
 19 Q. Then you go into the smoke and you describe the smoke
 20 for us.
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 Q. Before you left the flat with Farhad, do you remember
 23 whether any firefighter had come up to your floor at
 24 all?
 25 **A. We haven't seen none of them. I'm sure none of them**

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1 **came up to 23rd floor.**
 2 Q. Yes.
 3 **A. And we haven't seen.**
 4 Q. Going back to paragraph 51, of your statement, which we
 5 looked at a moment ago on page 11, you've described the
 6 smoke with this glitter and its taste and smell.
 7 Were you able to breathe it at all?
 8 **A. No, it was very difficult. When we first get inside the**
 9 **smoke, I was push myself back, I told Farhad, "I am not**
 10 **going, it is very difficult. How we can go inside**
 11 **this?" He encouraging me to come, we have to leave**
 12 **there.**
 13 **But when we went inside, straight away we wanted to**
 14 **block our breathing. We start coughing, and our eyes**
 15 **was -- it was really difficult to open our eyes.**
 16 **Something like burning, and otherwise was cut off, we**
 17 **couldn't speak.**
 18 **Also, I feel sick, and I wanted to vomiting like**
 19 **that. But it was difficult to breathe.**
 20 **We put the cloth, wet cloth, on our nose and mouth**
 21 **to not --**
 22 Q. Were you wearing a towel over your head or just in front
 23 of your nose and mouth?
 24 **A. No, just I taken my mouth and my nose.**
 25 Q. Was the towel wet?

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1 **A. Wet, yes.**
 2 Q. When you crossed the lobby with Farhad, and you got to
 3 the stairwell door, do you remember whether it was
 4 closed or whether it was open?
 5 **A. I don't know, because Farhad leading me, "Mum, I know**
 6 **all the way". I can't see, everywhere was dark and full**
 7 **of smoke. He was touching the wall, there is a wall,**
 8 **and now you can turn left, and this is the stairwell.**
 9 **I don't remember when Farhad opened the door, the**
 10 **staircase door, it was open or closed. I couldn't see**
 11 **that it was.**
 12 Q. When you got into the stairwell, do you remember whether
 13 the smoke was the same as in the lobby or more or less?
 14 **A. It was dark, too dark, I couldn't see anywhere. I think**
 15 **it was the same, or maybe much better -- not sure.**
 16 Q. Were you able to open your eyes and look around or did
 17 you have to keep them --
 18 **A. No, we just close and open because we couldn't see when**
 19 **we wanted to open our eyes anyway, we can't see**
 20 **anywhere. So it is better to keep closed our eyes, at**
 21 **least not getting blind or something.**
 22 **When we wanted to open, it is very runny and get**
 23 **wet, and when we wanted to dry our eyes, the smoke was**
 24 **get inside our eyes.**
 25 Q. Mm.

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1 **A. We prefer to -- better to keep close our eyes.**
 2 Q. When you got into the stairs, did you notice a change in
 3 the temperature around you?
 4 **A. To be honest, I never think and feel about the**
 5 **temperature. I'm not sure what the temperature was,**
 6 **what was the temperature, because we were thinking about**
 7 **how to get out, and we couldn't feel any temperature.**
 8 Q. Sure.
 9 You came down the stairs, and I think you stumbled
 10 at around about the 18th floor, you say in your
 11 statement.
 12 **A. Yes.**
 13 Q. It's paragraph 54, on the same page, just a little bit
 14 lower down. You say:
 15 "54. I remember that around the 18th floor
 16 I stumbled and he thought I had fallen. Farhad turned
 17 on the light on his mobile telephone."
 18 My question is: how did you know that it was around
 19 the 18th floor?
 20 **A. Because when we walk past the staircase, it is not**
 21 **exactly, but at that time we walk too many stairs.**
 22 Q. So you were counting the flights of stairs?
 23 **A. We couldn't count.**
 24 Q. No.
 25 **A. But we feel we were around that, because we feel that**

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1 **time was -- we couldn't see the time, but the time we**
 2 **are walking to go down the stairs, it looks like how**
 3 **many floors we gone down.**
 4 Q. On your journey down the stairs, Mrs Neda, did you
 5 notice any doors to any other lobbies open?
 6 **A. I didn't see anyone, but I think it took too long to get**
 7 **down the stairs. But I feel when we reach half of the**
 8 **tower -- it was maybe around half of the tower -- one of**
 9 **the staircase was open, and we said at least we have to**
 10 **go there. There is not smoke that much as was in the**
 11 **staircase. We went there to rest and take in fresh air.**
 12 **There was smoke, but to me there was looks like**
 13 **clear, the lobby. We just used that floor for a while,**
 14 **for a few minutes, not too long. At least we have to**
 15 **have fresh air.**
 16 Q. Right.
 17 **A. Yes, that was open. The rest of them, I didn't see.**
 18 Q. Do you remember whether on that floor you saw the air
 19 vents when you went in?
 20 **A. Yes. We just sat next to that.**
 21 Q. Do you remember whether they were working?
 22 **A. I don't know.**
 23 Q. You don't remember whether the little doors to the air
 24 vent system on that floor were open?
 25 **A. No, I couldn't see, because at that time we were very --**

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1 **struggling to breathing and coughing. We were look**
 2 **after ourselves.**
 3 Q. Yes, sure.
 4 You then describe in your statement at paragraph 62
 5 on page 13, just jumping ahead:
 6 "62. I do not know what floor we had reached but we
 7 were nearly down, maybe it was the 6th, 5th or 4th
 8 floor, when I felt someone grab me. I asked Farhad if
 9 it was him and he said no, he told me that it was the
 10 Fire Brigade and that they had a hold of him as well."
 11 Can I just ask you, you think it was the 6th, 5th or
 12 4th floor; could you see the numbers on the wall by that
 13 stage?
 14 **A. No, no, but we feel, because after we find out the Fire**
 15 **Brigade, they grab us, we didn't go down that much**
 16 **longer, we soon reached to the -- it was 3rd floor**
 17 **walkway, and that's why I feel it was maybe 6th or**
 18 **5th floor, or maybe less than that.**
 19 **Because when she grabbed me, we just maybe two floor**
 20 **gone down, and after that there is no fire and no smoke.**
 21 Q. Yes, I see.
 22 You say in the next paragraph, 63, in the last
 23 sentence:
 24 "She [that's the female firefighter] asked me where
 25 I had come from and I told her that we had come from the

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1 top floor."
 2 Did you tell her that there were still people up on
 3 the top floor?
 4 **A. I didn't tell her, but Farhad told them.**
 5 Q. Right.
 6 **A. Both of them.**
 7 Q. Do you remember seeing a firefighter writing down the
 8 flat number and floor number?
 9 **A. No.**
 10 Q. Okay.
 11 At paragraph 66 -- this is now outside the tower --
 12 you say at the bottom of page 13:
 13 "66. When we got outside of the Tower, I had
 14 recovered some consciousness and Farhad and I were both
 15 crying. Farhad told them that his father was stuck on
 16 the 23rd floor."
 17 Do you remember who Farhad spoke to at that time?
 18 **A. The firefighter.**
 19 Q. Do you remember whether that firefighter took a note at
 20 all?
 21 **A. No.**
 22 Q. A record?
 23 **A. No. They are walking around, just asking, and when**
 24 **Farhad told, they says, "We will do, the people have**
 25 **gone for rescue, you have to be relaxed." That's it.**

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1 **They didn't write down.**
 2 Q. Do you know what that firefighter did in response to the
 3 information that Farhad was giving him?
 4 **A. I'm not sure.**
 5 Q. At 67, you say:
 6 "67. I spoke to a fire fighter and he asked me what
 7 floor I had come down from and if there was anyone else
 8 up there. Farhad and I were crying and we told the fire
 9 fighter that Saber was stuck in our flat and we asked
 10 them if they could go up. He told us not to worry and
 11 that they would go and rescue him."
 12 How long had you been outside the tower, do you
 13 think, before you spoke to the firefighter and told him
 14 that?
 15 **A. When we got out, they sat me down, next to ground floor,**
 16 **opposite playground, and there ... yes. I told the --**
 17 **they're coming to give me the oxygen. I was crying and**
 18 **they told me, "Are you okay?" I said, "No, I'm not**
 19 **okay, my husband is stuck on the top floor with other**
 20 **people." They said, "Don't worry, there is the rescue,**
 21 **the people will rescue them, don't worry."**
 22 Q. Right.
 23 Do you remember whether that firefighter took a note
 24 of what you said, to confirm the floor and flat?
 25 **A. I haven't seen. They haven't got any pen and paper with**

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1 **them, just they were walking around and ask. I think**
 2 **they might pass to each other, and that's it.**
 3 Q. Did you see the firefighter pass that information to
 4 anybody else?
 5 **A. No.**
 6 Q. When you came outside, I think you were treated by
 7 paramedics.
 8 **A. Yes.**
 9 Q. Do you remember how long it took for them to come to
 10 you, to treat you, after you left the tower?
 11 **A. I'm not sure what time we got out, because the time is**
 12 **not fixed to me, but now I understand it was maybe**
 13 **02.30, around 02.30.**
 14 Q. Yes.
 15 **A. But we sat down until 5 o'clock, maybe, 05.00 or 05.30**
 16 **in the morning, because I saw the day is getting**
 17 **brighter and brighter that morning. I was there until**
 18 **that time.**
 19 Q. Did anybody suggest taking you to hospital before that
 20 time?
 21 **A. No. After 5 o'clock my breathing was getting worse and**
 22 **worse. I wasn't able to speak. Even I was breathing**
 23 **and my shoulder was moving, and one lady saw me, they**
 24 **said, "This lady is not looking well". Straight she**
 25 **called ambulance, and they came, they took me to the**

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1 **ambulance, and I was getting inside the ambulance by**
 2 **myself until we reach to the hospital, and after that**
 3 **I didn't know what happened.**
 4 Q. Where were you when you were collected to be taken to
 5 hospital?
 6 **A. We sat nearest to Latimer Road station, but when the --**
 7 **in the morning, the weather was quite cold, everybody**
 8 **was shaking. Across the road, there was a pub. They**
 9 **opened the door, pub's, and send us to there at least we**
 10 **get warm, and the ambulance took me from there**
 11 **afterwards.**
 12 MR MILLETT: Yes.
 13 Mrs Neda, I've come to the end of my questions for
 14 you, you'll be glad to hear. I'm going to ask the
 15 chairman to rise for a few minutes just so that I can
 16 check my notes and make sure that nobody else has any
 17 questions for you. So I'm going to ask him to break for
 18 a few minutes. Is that all right with you?
 19 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 20 MR MILLETT: Okay.
 21 Mr Chairman?
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, of course. We'll break until
 23 4 o'clock. So if you would like to go with the usher,
 24 Mrs Neda, they'll look after you. All right?
 25 All right, 4 o'clock, then, please.

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<p>1 (3.55 pm) 2 (A short break) 3 (4.00 pm) 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Are you happy to answer 5 a few more questions? 6 THE WITNESS: Yes. 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. 8 Yes, Mr Millett. 9 MR MILLETT: Mrs Neda, thank you for coming back. 10 I only have one question, and it's a final question 11 for you. 12 A. Okay. 13 Q. It's this: is there anything, in addition to your two 14 witness statements and in addition to what you've told 15 us today, about what you saw or heard or smelt or felt 16 on the night itself that you think it's important for 17 the chairman to know? 18 A. Yes. I just want to say, stay put means we will do 19 something for you, or we are here to help you. 20 Those people who died on the night of the fire, the 21 only cause of that, of their death, it is the stay-put 22 policy. If they didn't believe the Fire Brigade and the 23 stay-put policy, they are not trusting them, and not 24 listening to them, I'm sure they will be alive, 25 including my husband.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 you very much to you for coming here today and giving us 2 your evidence. I know at times it's not been easy, but 3 we're very grateful to you for coming and assisting us 4 with our investigations. So thank you very, very much 5 to you and your son, Farhad. 6 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, and I would like to add my 8 thanks to that. 9 You obviously had a really horrible experience, and 10 the loss of your husband is something which I think none 11 of us can really understand. 12 But we are very grateful to you for coming to tell 13 us about what happened, because it's important that we 14 know these things. 15 I'm sorry if it's been a disagreeable experience for 16 you, as I think it probably has, but we are very 17 grateful to you. Thank you very much indeed. 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir. 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: If you would like to go with the 20 usher, she'll look after you. 21 (The witness withdrew) 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now, Mr Millett. 23 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, it's been a long day and I fear 24 I must tell you that we will not get to the end of our 25 proposed reading list of witness statements to be read</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p>
<p>1 The Fire Brigade has to take the responsibility for 2 their mistakes. This mistake destroyed my life, my 3 son's life and also all the people in Grenfell Tower, 4 either they died or survived, all of them now, destroyed 5 their life. 6 I'm not saying just for my husband, I'm not standing 7 just for my husband, as I remember those children who 8 died in the tower, the mothers, the fathers, brothers 9 and sisters, all of them. 10 When I remember them, I am not only standing for my 11 husband, I am standing behind them as well, because they 12 are not alive to give their voice. My voice should be 13 from them as well. 14 I want from you justice. I'm sure I couldn't get, 15 even the justice has been done, I'm sure I didn't get my 16 husband back or the family who lost their family as 17 well, they didn't give them back, but at least they 18 should change the policy to not happen for future. 19 If they stay with this policy, I am sure nobody 20 trust them anymore, and it cause more mistakes, and 21 cause more people dying. 22 That's it. 23 I want justice. 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. 25 MR MILLETT: Well, Mrs Neda, thank you very much, and thank</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>	<p>1 in, so I'm afraid that's disappointing, but we felt that 2 it was important that both witnesses today should be 3 given as much time as possible to give us their 4 evidence. 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 6 MR MILLETT: And I don't regret that. 7 However, there is one statement that is so closely 8 linked to the events on that floor on that night that 9 I am going to read it into the record. 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you. 11 MR MILLETT: I don't know how long this will take because 12 there's quite a bit of it I do want to read in so that 13 you get a sense of it. 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Make sure you do it justice, 15 obviously. 16 MR MILLETT: I will certainly do it justice, to the extent 17 that I can do it justice, Mr Chairman, but it may take 18 20 to 30 minutes or so, so bear with me. But if we sit 19 a little bit past 4.30, I hope that won't be too much of 20 a problem. 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'm quite content to do that. 22 AHMED ELGWAHRY (evidence read into the record) 23 MR MILLETT: I'm grateful. 24 It's the statement of Mr Ahmed Elgwhary, 25 IWS00000988. It runs from page 1 to page 96 because it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p>

<p>1 includes a lengthy and useful exhibit. 2 It's dated 25 July 2018, and Mr Elgwahry's statement 3 carries a statement of truth at page 24 over that date. 4 Mr Elgwahry was the brother of Mariem Elgwahry, 5 about whom you've heard quite a bit today, Mr Chairman, 6 and she lived at flat 196 on the 22nd floor. 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 8 MR MILLETT: I should say, first of all, that this statement 9 and its exhibit will stand in its entirety as evidence 10 to the inquiry and will be taken into account in its 11 entirety. 12 I'm going to start, if I can, at paragraph 58, which 13 is on page 17, under the heading "Refurbishment: 14 Windows". 15 He says this: 16 "58. During the refurbishment the windows were 17 replaced. When I lived in the Tower the windows were 18 single glazed and you could slide them open. They had a 19 metal frame and you could slide open the window fully. 20 With the refurbishment they added double-glazing, which 21 I thought was great for my mum and sister, although I 22 never thought the flat felt cold. But when they put the 23 new double glazing in they repositioned the windows, 24 pushing it back so you effectively had more space to 25 lean on before you could out of the window. An</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 157</p>	<p>1 "62. On another occasion we could not close the 2 window properly. My sister sent e-mails concerning the 3 problems and contacted a resident called William 4 THOMPSON, who lived on the lower ground floors. My 5 sister sent an e-mail to Willy to raise concerns at a 6 meeting as she was not able to attend that day. She 7 explained in the email that you could hear a whistling 8 noise from the breeze coming through the window. Rydon 9 was the contractor and someone came up and accused my 10 sister of not closing the flap at the top, this was a 11 false accusation and again, she felt fobbed off." 12 Can I pick up the events of the night in 13 Mr Elgwahry's statement on page 2 at paragraph 5. 14 There's quite a lot of this. I'm not going to read it 15 all, but I'll read quite a bit of it: 16 "14 June 2017. 17 "At home 18 "5. The night of the fire I had met Mariem and 19 spent the evening with her at my house with my son and 20 Ferzana. We were planning to meet as a family over the 21 weekend and we spoke to my mother via facetime. Mariem 22 left after 9pm and drove home to The Tower. I went to 23 bed several hours later. My wife, Ferzana woke me up 24 and told me that she had missed calls from Mariem. She 25 told me to check my phone. As I checked my phone Mariem</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 159</p>
<p>1 immediate concern with this, was how difficult it was to 2 close and open those windows. The windows were not 3 simple to use. They were quite stubborn and did not 4 work properly. Some of the windows in the living room 5 would never fully lock, so it would close, but the 6 handle would never fully lock in, and never fully click. 7 "59. With the new windows you could feel a breeze 8 coming in. It was like a flow of air coming especially 9 in the living room. We found the flat colder, not 10 warmer, after the refurbishment. The TMO told us the 11 purpose of installing the new windows was to provide 12 better insulation but that was not achieved. 13 "60. On the weekend I visited my mother and the 14 window was partially hanging off the hinges and my mum 15 had to get a blanket or towel to cover it. This was a 16 brand new window which had 'come off the hinges' as 17 stated by Mariem in an email. I recall we could not 18 close it. My mum and sister contacted the TMO and were 19 blamed for breaking it. My mother could hardly use her 20 hands and it was impossible for her to break the window 21 let alone grip the handle. 22 "61. The window was not completely off but it was 23 hanging off. My sister wrote to the TMO and I exhibit 24 emails about this ..." 25 And he gives the reference:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 158</p>	<p>1 called me. The first call I answered from my sister was 2 at 1:43 AM. I also had a missed call from her at 1:33AM 3 and a WhatsApp message at 1:35 AM which said 'Ahmed 4 answer please. There's a fire in the building.' I have 5 a copy of my phone records for the 14 June 2017 which I 6 exhibit at AE1. 7 "6. My memory of this conversation is blurred. 8 Mariem said 'the kitchen is on fire'. I froze. I was 9 in shock. I immediately questioned why there was a fire 10 in the kitchen because my mum would always turn off the 11 appliances in the entire flat including turning off the 12 switches. I responded to say 'just get out of the 13 building. Just get out.' She didn't disagree. I asked 14 Mariem if my mum was with her and asked if they were 15 both ok. She replied saying 'yes. I'm with mum'. I 16 can't remember whether she said that she was still in 17 her flat at that point. I quickly told her 'I'm on my 18 way' and put the phone down. 19 "7. When I got off the phone, I quickly got 20 dressed. I turned to my wife, Ferzana and just said 'I 21 feel sick'. I just knew something was not right. The 22 fact that the kitchen was on fire was not normal. 23 Before I left the house, Mohammed Rasoul called me. 24 Mohamed is a good friend of mine and he lives in Flat 25 25 on the 5th floor of the Tower. He told me that he was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 160</p>

<p>1 already out of the Tower with his family. He told me 2 they were taking him to Kensington Leisure Centre. He 3 didn't explain the severity of the fire on the phone but 4 perhaps he might have not known at that point or didn't 5 want to worry me. I said goodbye to my wife, ran down 6 the stairs, opened the front door and ran to the car." 7 Paragraph 9, picking it up there, he says: 8 "9. Mariem called me at 1:48AM but this was only a 9 five second call and I can't remember the conversation. 10 Mariem called again at 1:49 AM and this was for a 11 minute. I think this is when she told me that she had 12 tried to go down the stairs but couldn't as there were 13 others going back upstairs and were telling her to go 14 back up. I don't know how far down the stairs she went. 15 She said that the neighbour in Flat 205 had let her and 16 my mum in. Flat 205 was on the 23rd floor, on the floor 17 above my mother. It seemed odd to me because fires 18 never spread in Grenfell Tower. We had experienced 19 fires over the years and they never spread to the nearby 20 flats and so I was thinking, 'What the hell is going 21 on?' I said to Mariem 'I am on my way. Is mum with 22 you?' She said that she was. I tried to reassure 23 Mariem by telling her that Mohammed Rasoul and other 24 residents that I knew were out of the Tower safely. I 25 also told her that the firemen were on their way.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 161</p>	<p>1 "12. Mariem called me at 2:13 AM. This was a three 2 minute call and I think this was when I was running down 3 the road to get to the Tower. I can't remember this 4 conversation. 5 "13. When I got to the top of Sirdar road I could 6 see the East side of the Tower. I was completely 7 shocked. The fire was raging. I had never seen 8 anything like it before. It looked like a movie. I 9 couldn't believe that it was real. I could clearly see 10 where the fire had started. At that point the fire had 11 spread diagonally from the side that it had started. 12 The fire was spreading so quickly. It was as if the 13 whole tower was covered in tissue paper because of how 14 fast it was spreading. I was horrified. From the East 15 side of the Tower, I could see my mum's kitchen and part 16 of the living room was completely on fire. As I looked 17 at the fire, I made an immediate judgment call that if 18 my family didn't try to get out, then they were going to 19 die. I knew then it was going to be a case of them 20 dying inside their flat or to die trying. 21 "Inside the fire command vehicle 22 "14. I started to run down Grenfell Road and 23 suddenly a police officer tried to stop me from running 24 any closer to the Tower. I was waving my phone at him 25 shouting something along the lines of 'My sister is in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 163</p>
<p>1 "Arrival at the Tower 2 "10. Having received a phone call from Mohamed and 3 Patrick, I knew there was something seriously wrong. I 4 got into my car and I took the A40, A406 route from 5 Hendon towards Grenfell Tower. As I got closer to the 6 Tower I noticed that the traffic had started to increase 7 significantly. I got there at 2.13am. I know that as I 8 called my sister. I was approaching the area by 9 Stoneleigh Road but it was gridlocked from there. I 10 remember seeing Ambulances, Fire Engines, Police Cars, 11 and normal vehicles, which I presumed belonged to other 12 relatives or friends who were rushing to get there, as I 13 was. I found a space as soon as I turned into 14 Stoneleigh Road and I parked the car. I called my 15 sister and said, 'I'm here just hold on.' 16 "11. I drove down Saint Anne's Road which was 17 already packed with cars and there were lots of people 18 standing around on the pavements. I turned right and 19 parked at Stoneleigh Place as it was the first parking 20 space I could find. I couldn't drive down any closer to 21 the Tower because there were so many police cars, 22 ambulances and fire engines around. I started sprinting 23 down Stoneleigh place onto Sirdar Road. As I was 24 sprinting, it felt like I wasn't even moving. I was 25 freaking out.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 162</p>	<p>1 there! My sister is in there!' I can't remember what 2 the police officer said but I believe he told me to go 3 with him or at least directed me to where I should go. 4 I could see firefighters with hoses spraying the water 5 at the Tower." 6 Picking it up at 15, he says: 7 "15. The policeman took me to what I could only 8 describe as a fire command vehicle. I do not know if it 9 was the closest emergency vehicle, but it was on 10 Grenfell Road, where my sister used to park her car. 11 "16. Inside the fire vehicle, I was standing in a 12 really confined space with one other fire fighter and 13 policeman. We both stood next to each other and he was 14 the only firefighter I spoke to that night. I don't 15 know what his name was. The firefighter was holding a 16 board which had all the floor numbers and flat numbers 17 in the Tower. I am unable to confirm whether this board 18 contained the layout of floors and flats pre or post 19 refurbishment. My initial thought was he had taken it 20 from the reception in the ground floor of the Tower but 21 then I realized at a later date they only had that board 22 on the ground floor by the lifts before the 23 refurbishment on what was known as 'Street' level. He 24 was analysing the board. At this point, I realised how 25 unprepared the Fire Brigade were. It was clear that the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 164</p>

<p>1 fire services could not keep up with how fast the fire 2 was spreading. I was still on the phone to my sister 3 and I said to her, 'look I am going into the fire engine 4 just hold on!.' 5 Then at 18: 6 "18. I was inside the command vehicle with a 7 policeman and firefighter. The firefighter started 8 providing advice such as tell Mariem to lay low with her 9 nose touching the floor and to go to the bathroom and 10 inhale the drain. He asked does she have a wet towel? 11 Can she block smoke coming in and so on. Mariem sounded 12 like she was cooperating because she would say 'hold 13 on', but I really do not know what she was doing because 14 she never rejected the recommendations but listened and 15 acknowledged what she was being told to do. I asked if 16 there was anything else as it just did not sound enough 17 and finally, when all was said the firefighter told me 18 to tell Mariem to call 999. I looked at him in complete 19 disbelief. I think I actually laughed in shock and said 20 'you have to be kidding me?' When I told Mariem she too 21 reacted in complete shock. With all due respect he is 22 part of the fire brigade services that should be 23 providing instructions and yet he was telling me to call 24 999. The fire fighter looked at me and he didn't have 25 anything else to say. He was speechless. He knew that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 "20. I could see the building completely filled 2 with fire, blue flames, and people inside. There was 3 just the most disturbing screaming that I have ever 4 heard in my life. You could see this little water hose 5 against this big flame and thinking 'What the hell's 6 that going to do?' I do not mean to be disrespectful to 7 the firefighters, it seemed they did not have the 8 resources. What they had was insufficient to the task. 9 "21. A little while later, the police said that we 10 needed to move further back away from the Tower. I told 11 them 'I know that you can't help me but can you at least 12 leave me to talk to my sister whilst looking at the 13 Tower'. I was in my own bubble. I was in a complete 14 state of shock. The police officers had accepted that I 15 wasn't moving from this spot so they agreed and left me 16 there. I was now only with police officers in this 17 cornered off area. I didn't want to risk walking all 18 the way round to the North and West side of the Tower 19 where I could see Flat 205 just in case any of the roads 20 were blocked off." 21 Then he describes or refers to Mariem's emergency 22 calls. We have those transcripts in the record. 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 24 MR MILLETT: Then picking it up at page 9 just above 25 paragraph 28:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p>
<p>1 he couldn't help my mum and sister anymore. He almost 2 turned away and started ignoring me when I asked further 3 questions. This was extremely difficult to comprehend 4 especially when I knew my sister was still on the phone 5 and felt that when I arrived I was going to help in some 6 way when the fact of the matter is I couldn't. At this 7 point I thought about running into the Tower again to 8 try and save them. I then remember the policeman's look 9 at me also aware of the way the firefighter was behaving 10 and understood there was nothing else that could be said 11 he looked at me and escorted me out of the vehicle and 12 we walked to Bomore Road next to the Kensington Leisure 13 Centre. 14 "Inside the cordoned off zone: Bomore Road 15 "19. At some point when on Bomore Road the police 16 started to cordon off the area. I remained inside the 17 cordoned off area the whole night. I was by the 18 emergency services on Bomore Road facing Kensington 19 Leisure Centre. From where I was standing, I could not 20 see Flat 205 which was where my mum and sister were. 21 Flat 205 was on the North and West side of the Tower. 22 Where I was standing I had full visibility of the East 23 side of the Tower. On this side you can view the 24 kitchen window and the living room partially for flat 25 196 where my family lived.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p>	<p>1 "On the phone to Mariem in flat 205. 2 "28. I called Mariem at 2:29 AM for four seconds 3 but I think it went to voicemail. I called Mariem again 4 at 2:30 AM but she didn't answer. I now started to 5 really panic. 6 "29. Mariem called me at 2:31 AM and that call was 7 for one minute. We didn't even talk about the 999 8 calls. Mariem clearly didn't want to worry me. 9 "30. I asked her 'can you see fire where you are? 10 Can you look out the window?' She said, 'No, I can only 11 see smoke at the moment'. I said, 'Ok, how many are 12 with you?' She said there was six (6) or seven (7). She 13 obviously at that time was confident in moving around 14 that flat and she seemed quite calm, she said 'we are 15 all here'. 16 "31. I asked her if she could you leave? She said, 17 'No, outside the flat it's just full of black smoke, we 18 have no vision, and we can't see where we're going'. 19 She refused to leave, no matter what I said to her. I 20 couldn't take the risk of saying to her you need to go, 21 or you're going die and even if you go you might die 22 because I had no idea what the state of the stairwell 23 was. I also kept asking her 'Can you see the fire?' She 24 said 'No'. I asked where they were and she said, 'I am 25 in the kitchen now. I've done everything that I have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 168</p>

<p>1 been told to do. I've got a wet towel, we've got a 2 towel under the kitchen door, its sealed, and we are 3 just sitting'. 4 "32. I continued trying to persuade her to leave 5 with mum, but she refused. No matter what I told her 6 she refused. 7 "33. The other thing that the firefighter told me 8 when I was in the command vehicle was to tell her to lay 9 flat on the floor, with her nose touching the floor, so 10 I told her that too. I also said to her if there is any 11 smoke I would rather you do not talk to me, just save 12 your breath, cover your mouth, leave the phone lines 13 open, and so let them know your still there. I wanted 14 to try and keep did give her false hope. I just lied to 15 her basically, and I said 'they are coming for you' and 16 I said, 'don't worry you know Mohammed's out, other 17 people are out, I can see people are coming out, they're 18 coming to get you, so don't worry they are all coming 19 out, they're coming out'. I just started getting 20 desperate, without trying to scare her, because I could 21 not see or feel what she was going through, her or my 22 mum. I never spoke to my mum that night, because I just 23 knew that she would be freaking out, and my sister said 24 she was freaking out. I knew that I had to speak to my 25 sister, because she is the only one that will remain</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 169</p>	<p>1 and my sister, because it got to a point where I had 2 nothing else to say to her. I was trying to keep my 3 sister calm. At times my sister started to freak out 4 saying, 'We've been here waiting 45 minutes, where the 5 hell are they?' I could only tell her the same thing, 6 which is 'They're coming', 'Just hold on.' That is all 7 I remember kept on telling her. I tried to stay calm 8 and checking if Mum is ok. My wife and many others were 9 trying to call me but I knew that if I disconnected the 10 phone call to my sister that I will never be able to 11 call her back, so I just did not answer the phone. 12 "The last phone call from 2.33AM 13 "37. The last phone call was from 2.33am. I hung 14 up the phone at 4:27 AM. During this phone call it was 15 pretty quiet. There were no fire alarms going off. I 16 could hear coughing but I didn't hear screaming or 17 shouting. I'm not sure whether my sister was lying down 18 on the floor for the whole time or not. I became very 19 concerned because her coughing was beginning to 20 increase. I was really panicking. I was so desperate 21 for her to get out of the flat and said to her 'can you 22 at least try to get out?' She said, 'No. I can't get 23 out. The landing is filled with thick black smoke and I 24 can't see.' 25 "38. I just kept repeating 'just try to get out.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 171</p>
<p>1 calm with me. I said to her 'why don't you try to get 2 out' and she said 'No, I'm not going to, I won't be able 3 to see, it's all black, I'm not going out there.' I said 4 'Why don't you at least grab Mum, you know the layout of 5 the flat, we've been there long enough. If you know the 6 layout of the flat, why don't you just use your hands, 7 and just, get on your knees and just get out.' I told 8 her that she knew where the stairs are, and she said 9 'no'. 10 "34. Part of me thinks that the reason why she did 11 not have that confidence to leave was maybe to do with 12 the fact that that she had our mum with her. My mum is 13 disabled, she cannot run fast, she cannot even walk 14 fast, so, I think she must have had it at the back of 15 her mind. Maybe if she was on her own she would have 16 done it but there was no way she could leave Mum. 17 "Sounds and others in flat 205 18 "35. I could hear coughing in the background. I 19 never heard other people talking, but I did hear 20 coughing. I could hear helicopters in the background 21 when on the phone to Mariem. At no point in time, in my 22 conversations with my sister could I ever hear a fire 23 alarm but I heard the helicopters because they were near 24 Mariem and my mum. 25 "36. There were moments of just silence between me</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 170</p>	<p>1 Just try to get out.' I told her to 'get on your knees 2 with mum, stay low and crawl over to the stairwell and 3 just try and get out. Touch the walls to guide yourself 4 out. You know the layout of the flats.' She refused 5 and said that she wasn't confident enough to leave. 6 Part of me thinks the reason why she did not have 7 confidence to leave was because she didn't want to leave 8 our mum who was disabled and couldn't walk or run fast. 9 I could only tell her to do this but I had no idea how 10 bad the smoke was in the stairwell. 11 "39. Mariem was quiet but then said, 'Oh my god' 12 and freaked out. She never said if she saw fire. I do 13 not know whether she could see fire at the windows or 14 smoke coming in through the kitchen door, I do not know. 15 I was starting to think that the smoke was coming in 16 that way or through the sliding wooden doors which 17 separate the kitchen from the living room. I know that 18 the kitchen was the last area to be affected, because I 19 could tell from seeing where the fire was affecting my 20 flat. I knew if she is ok in the kitchen, that must 21 mean that the fire is wrapping round the tower, and the 22 last area to be covered in the fire is that side, which 23 means that the bedrooms in the flat are all getting set 24 on fire. I asked her if anyone was with her in the 25 kitchen she said 'yes', I do not know if there were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 172</p>

1 still six (6) or seven (7) people, but that was the
 2 number she gave me. That brief panic happened so
 3 quickly, she started coughing. I could hear more people
 4 coughing, and I said, 'Don't talk Mariem, just stay with
 5 me'. Then she didn't say anything, she just started
 6 coughing, and coughing for less than a minute, it was so
 7 quick. Then she started mumbling and I started
 8 panicking, I said 'Mariem are you still there?' she just
 9 started like humming, like deep humming because she
 10 could no longer speak. Then I said, 'Can you at least
 11 bang on the floor, make a noise' and I could hear
 12 someone just banging. I do not know if it was her, but
 13 it must have been her because every time I asked her to
 14 do it, she did it. Then the mumbling, humming stopped,
 15 and then she stopped responding. That happened very
 16 quickly, I assumed that as she was not responding our
 17 mum was gone as well, but then I heard my mum for the
 18 first time, I heard her voice, I do not know how long
 19 afterwards 20-30 seconds afterwards, she just said in
 20 Arabic 'I can't breathe, I can't breathe.' She sounded
 21 so desperate. I didn't hear her again. She was gone.
 22 "40. I think it was around 3.10 to 3.15am when I
 23 lost them. It was clear to me that it was the smoke
 24 that they died from as Mariem was telling me that she
 25 could not see fire, only smoke. I think I was on the

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1 phone to Mariem for about 40 to 45 minutes before she
 2 passed away.
 3 "Fire breaking in
 4 "41. Around 5 to 10 minutes later, I could hear
 5 crackling noises. I could hear the glass windows break.
 6 I could hear the fire entering the flat from the window.
 7 I will never forget how violent and aggressive it
 8 sounded. I could hear it penetrating through the flat
 9 and heard bubbling noises. I could hear pots and pans
 10 falling and smashing everywhere. I could hear things
 11 moving around quite violently and after that it was just
 12 burning. What I did not hear, thankfully was anyone
 13 still alive when the fire entered the kitchen. I know
 14 that whoever was in the kitchen died well before the
 15 fire entered that kitchen.
 16 "42. I kept shouting down the phone 'Mariem!
 17 Mariem!' I knew that she was gone but I thought she
 18 might hear me. I was in a complete state of shock. I
 19 kept shouting and repeating 'They're coming. They're
 20 coming.' I was crying my eyes out. It was so
 21 distressing and I completely broke down. I stayed on
 22 the phone until 4.27am just listening to the flat being
 23 burnt. I stayed on the phone in hope that maybe a fire
 24 fighter would have made it to the top of the Tower to
 25 rescue them but I didn't hear anything. By that point I

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1 had heard enough. After I hung up the phone I didn't
 2 call her again. I couldn't really comprehend what had
 3 happened."
 4 Mr Chairman, there is much else in that statement
 5 which is important for us to take into account, but
 6 I won't read it to you.
 7 I think at that moment I should just leave it as it
 8 is.
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, very well.
 10 MR MILLETT: So, Mr Chairman, that brings us to the end of
 11 today's evidence.
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Before we close, can I just ask, is
 13 Mr Elgwahry here with us this afternoon?
 14 MR MILLETT: Yes, he is.
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I would like to thank him very much
 16 for producing such a careful and detailed statement, and
 17 to say how sorry we are, not only for his loss, but for
 18 the way he had to listen to the last moments of his
 19 mother and sister. It's very good of him to have made
 20 a statement of this kind. Thank you very much.
 21 Yes, Mr Millett.
 22 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, that, as I say, brings to a close
 23 today's evidence, and we will resume with our witnesses
 24 on Monday week. We are taking a short break next week.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.

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1 Well, thank you very much. As Mr Millett said,
 2 there will be no hearings next week.
 3 We shall resume on Monday, 29 October at 10 o'clock,
 4 and at that time we shall hear more evidence from those
 5 who were inside the tower.
 6 Thank you all very much.
 7 (4.25 pm)
 8 (The hearing adjourned until Monday, 29 October 2018
 9 at 10.00 am)
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 11 FARHAD (SHEKEB) NEDA (sworn)1
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