

<p>1 Tuesday, 6 November 2018</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to</p> <p>4 today's hearing.</p> <p>5 Before we begin, I need to say something.</p> <p>6 The inquiry is aware of the offensive video that was</p> <p>7 posted online yesterday. It must be shocking and</p> <p>8 distressing to all those involved, whatever form their</p> <p>9 involvement took, whether as bereaved, survivors or,</p> <p>10 indeed, members of the wider community.</p> <p>11 I am very pleased to hear that the authorities are</p> <p>12 taking the matter very seriously and that an</p> <p>13 investigation is underway.</p> <p>14 Thank you.</p> <p>15 Now, Mr Millett.</p> <p>16 MR MILLETT: Yes. Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>17 Mr Chairman, our next witness is Mr Nicholas Burton.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good, thank you.</p> <p>19 NICHOLAS BURTON (sworn)</p> <p>20 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Burton. Sit</p> <p>22 down and make yourself comfortable there.</p> <p>23 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Mr Burton, good morning.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Good morning.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 folder in front of you there on the desk or on the</p> <p>2 monitor on your desk to the right. Whichever is easiest</p> <p>3 for you to follow in, we can go with that.</p> <p>4 My first question is: is that the first page of your</p> <p>5 witness statement?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes, it is.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Can I ask you, please, to turn to page 22.</p> <p>8 You'll see a statement of truth with a signature</p> <p>9 underneath it over the date at the bottom of</p> <p>10 24 April 2018.</p> <p>11 Is that your signature?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Correct, that's my signature.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Have you had an opportunity to read this statement</p> <p>14 recently?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes, I have.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes, I can.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>19 There are two exhibits to it. The first, which is</p> <p>20 NTB/1, with an inquiry reference of IWS00000063, is</p> <p>21 a floor plan of flat 165. If we can just have that on</p> <p>22 the screen, please.</p> <p>23 Is that your first exhibit?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, it is.</b></p> <p>25 Q. That's flat 165?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 Q. Can I ask you, please, to give the inquiry your full</p> <p>2 name.</p> <p>3 <b>A. My name is Nicholas Trevanion Burton.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Can I start by thanking you very much for coming here</p> <p>5 and giving evidence to the inquiry. It's immensely</p> <p>6 appreciated and your contribution is very valuable to</p> <p>7 us.</p> <p>8 It will not be easy for you to relive the events of</p> <p>9 that terrible night, so if at any time you feel you need</p> <p>10 a break, you want me to stop for a few minutes, I'm very</p> <p>11 happy to do that. We will aim to sit for no longer than</p> <p>12 an hour at a time to give you a proper chance to have</p> <p>13 a break and to relax for a moment.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Thank you.</b></p> <p>15 Q. I should just also say this: sometimes, when you're</p> <p>16 answering my questions, it may look as if I'm not</p> <p>17 listening to you because I'm looking at the screen or my</p> <p>18 notes. I am very much listening to what you're saying,</p> <p>19 it's just that I have to follow it sometimes on the</p> <p>20 screen.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, I understand.</b></p> <p>22 Q. You've done a witness statement for the inquiry, which</p> <p>23 is IWS00000064. Can I please ask that that be put on</p> <p>24 the screen in front of you.</p> <p>25 You'll have it two in places: either in the paper</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. The second is NTB/2, which is IWS00000065, which I think</p> <p>3 is your LAS record from 14 June 2017.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes, the ambulance record, yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Yes, exactly. Thank you.</p> <p>6 Can I start by asking you a number of background</p> <p>7 questions.</p> <p>8 On page 1 of your statement you say -- I'm</p> <p>9 summarising -- as at June 2017, you lived at flat 165,</p> <p>10 Grenfell Tower, with your wife, Maria del Pilar Burton.</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, I did.</b></p> <p>12 Q. As I think you tell us in paragraph 2, she was the</p> <p>13 original tenant of flat 165.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes. I think nobody else had ever lived in that flat.</b></p> <p>15 <b>So she moved in -- I don't know the date, but early --</b></p> <p>16 <b>when the flats were built.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Yes. You say in your statement about 1975.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, that's an estimate. She told me that she was the</b></p> <p>19 <b>first person in that flat when it was new.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Right.</p> <p>21 <b>A. So ...</b></p> <p>22 Q. I think you both purchased the flat as leaseholders in</p> <p>23 1994.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, that's correct, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. As a leaseholder, were you a member of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 Grenfell Tower Leaseholders' Association?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, I was. We made an association to, you know,</b></p> <p>3 <b>communicate between ourselves and to help each other.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Yes.</p> <p>5 As at June 2017, Mr Burton, were you yourself in</p> <p>6 good health?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, I was.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Was your wife in good health at the time?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Not at the time. My wife was sick for a few years, and</b></p> <p>10 <b>she was suffering with dementia.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Can I ask you about some aspects of fire safety</p> <p>12 awareness.</p> <p>13 You cover these in your statement at paragraph 59,</p> <p>14 which is on page 16 of your statement, at</p> <p>15 subparagraph (7), just towards the top of the page.</p> <p>16 You say:</p> <p>17 "I remember that there were notices regarding fire</p> <p>18 safety when I moved in, in the 1980s. There was a</p> <p>19 plaque next to the notice board which was a safety</p> <p>20 notice and said do not use the lifts in the event of a</p> <p>21 fire."</p> <p>22 Just pausing there, can I ask you to be shown</p> <p>23 IWS00000500.</p> <p>24 Do you recognise this?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I do, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 Q. Do you remember what this plaque was replaced with so</p> <p>2 far as fire safety information is concerned?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No, it wasn't actually replaced, the board was just put</b></p> <p>4 <b>on top of it, so I don't remember any other fire safety</b></p> <p>5 <b>aspects after that.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Was there a time then or a period during which there was</p> <p>7 no fire safety information posted publicly in</p> <p>8 Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, I didn't notice any more information. There may</b></p> <p>10 <b>have been ... the only other one -- there may have been</b></p> <p>11 <b>a little red plaque maybe saying "Dry riser" on one end,</b></p> <p>12 <b>but I can't be sure of that.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Okay.</p> <p>14 Can I ask you, please, to be shown INQ00000093.</p> <p>15 Have you ever seen this sign before in</p> <p>16 Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes, I've seen this sign.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Where?</p> <p>19 <b>A. If I was looking at the lifts, both the lift doors, it</b></p> <p>20 <b>was on the left-hand side. It was a new sticker they</b></p> <p>21 <b>put maybe a few months before, they stuck it on the</b></p> <p>22 <b>wall, after the refurbishment.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Was it on your floor?</p> <p>24 <b>A. It was on my floor.</b></p> <p>25 Q. On other floors?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 Q. Is that the plaque that you're referring to?</p> <p>2 <b>A. That is definitely the plaque that I was referring to,</b></p> <p>3 <b>yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Do you remember where that plaque was situated?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, it was in the main lobby area opposite the lifts,</b></p> <p>6 <b>on the back wall.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Was it anywhere else in the tower?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Not that I remember, I just remember it being on that</b></p> <p>9 <b>wall on all the floors.</b></p> <p>10 Q. How long was it there for -- let me try that again: when</p> <p>11 did it disappear?</p> <p>12 <b>A. It probably disappeared when they -- I don't know what</b></p> <p>13 <b>year they decorated the lobby area, and they put up</b></p> <p>14 <b>a metal/plastic information board which never had any</b></p> <p>15 <b>information on it, and that was kind of either bolted on</b></p> <p>16 <b>top or they may have removed that and put that against</b></p> <p>17 <b>the wall. So just facing, you know, the doors of the</b></p> <p>18 <b>lift.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Was that before the most recent refurbishment?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Oh, yes, this was years, years ago.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Oh, I see. Right.</p> <p>22 <b>A. It's when they tiled the lobby area.</b></p> <p>23 Q. So a refurbishment prior to the most recent one?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yeah, they did some work years ago and just made nice</b></p> <p>25 <b>lino and coloured tiles.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes, absolutely.</b></p> <p>2 Q. What about in the lobby?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I think it -- in the main lobby where the lifts are on</b></p> <p>4 <b>the ground floor, I think it may have been there as</b></p> <p>5 <b>well. I can't, you know, say 100 per cent, but I guess</b></p> <p>6 <b>it would be there if they've put it on all the floors to</b></p> <p>7 <b>give people information. Or it may have been on the</b></p> <p>8 <b>board -- there was a board on the ground floor where the</b></p> <p>9 <b>lifts are, there was an information board, there was</b></p> <p>10 <b>information there, and it may have been on there as</b></p> <p>11 <b>well.</b></p> <p>12 Q. You say that it was a new sticker that they put maybe</p> <p>13 a few months before.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. They stuck it on the wall.</p> <p>16 Can we put some timing on that. You say a few</p> <p>17 months before; a few months before what?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Definitely within 2017.</b></p> <p>19 Q. During 2017?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Before 2017, was there any fire safety information</p> <p>22 publicly posted in Grenfell Tower that you can remember?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Not that I can remember. They may have put something on</b></p> <p>24 <b>the board down on the ground floor, but I can't</b></p> <p>25 <b>necessarily see anything that was in the communal area,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

2 (Pages 5 to 8)

1 especially when they built the new cupboards to house  
 2 the pipes for the water in.  
 3 Q. Did you ever read this notice?  
 4 A. Yes, I read it. I'm quite curious about things.  
 5 Q. What was your take-away message from it?  
 6 A. It's just about -- you know, it was a fire safety notice  
 7 to say if there's a fire, to stay put in your flat, you  
 8 know. So, yes, it was like telling us, you know, stay  
 9 put, really.  
 10 Q. Right.  
 11 A. Or what to do if there was a fire. So there is a bit  
 12 that says "leave the building, please".  
 13 Q. Apart from this notice, were you aware of any  
 14 information from any organisation or any individual  
 15 about what you should do if there was a fire anywhere in  
 16 the block?  
 17 A. I can't remember specific kind of conversations. I've  
 18 had conversations with fire officers in the past.  
 19 There's been a fire on my floor, on the old 16th floor,  
 20 so the 19th floor. There's been a fire on my actual  
 21 floor. So I probably had a conversation, and they may  
 22 have given us an information pack -- not may have, they  
 23 gave us an information pack one time, the TMO, and they  
 24 had little booklets and everything in there, but that  
 25 probably just got put in the cupboard and never to

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1 reveal itself again.  
 2 But my understanding is that I would stay in my  
 3 flat, because there was no way that a fire could get  
 4 into the flat unless it's in your flat at the time.  
 5 Q. A moment ago you said old 16th floor, the 19th floor.  
 6 I'm going to take this question out of order, but  
 7 let me do it anyway.  
 8 Do you remember whether after the refurbishment,  
 9 when the floor numbers were changed --  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. -- the numbering in the stairwell changed?  
 12 A. Yes, it did. Yeah, they put what I can describe as  
 13 dodgy stencils, and some of them were over the top of  
 14 other numbers. You'd think that if you'd had  
 15 a £10 million refurbishment, you would make sure that  
 16 the stairs have been painted and nice, but they'd left  
 17 all of that and then just put -- it was very confusing  
 18 for everybody, you know, especially maybe for the fire  
 19 department on the night of the fire, because the  
 20 confusion was in the old days, it was -- like my flat  
 21 was 165, so that means 16th floor, flat 5. It's simple,  
 22 the numbers. But then to be told that you're now on the  
 23 19th floor was very confusing for everybody.  
 24 Q. Did the stencils on the wall of the stairwell on each  
 25 floor accurately identify the floor number as at the

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1 night of the fire?  
 2 A. I think so. I mean, I think I've actually -- because  
 3 I've walked up and down those stairs a lot, you know,  
 4 the lifts are out, you've got shopping and probably  
 5 cursing all the way up to the 19th floor, and I may have  
 6 remembered that some of the floors maybe didn't even  
 7 have numbers or they didn't do it correctly. I think  
 8 mine had 19th floor.  
 9 Q. Yours had 19th floor, did it?  
 10 A. Yes, I believe so.  
 11 Q. You refer to the stencils as dodgy; why do you say that?  
 12 A. Because, you know, I believe they just had this major  
 13 refurbishment, they could've decorated the stairwell,  
 14 there was just -- you know, in a much -- they didn't do  
 15 nothing to the stairwell, and I think it just looked  
 16 very tacky on the wall. It wasn't, you know, a clear  
 17 sign, you know, saying "This is the 19th floor"; it was  
 18 just a kind of black stencil someone may have just  
 19 sprayed on. They weren't that creative.  
 20 Q. Did you have any trouble seeing it, though?  
 21 A. No, no, I didn't.  
 22 Q. At page 16 of your statement, while we're still on it,  
 23 can I ask you to look at subparagraph (10).  
 24 You say there in the second line:  
 25 "We used to have an old fire panel, which would show

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1 which flat the fire alarm was coming from and we used to  
 2 have a concierge downstairs. The new fire panel did not  
 3 show where the fire was or where the alarm was coming  
 4 from. This was a concern."  
 5 You also go on to say that you observed the Fire  
 6 Brigade having problems accessing the tower and had to  
 7 let them into the tower on two occasions.  
 8 A. Yes, several times.  
 9 Q. Just on that, where was the old panel located?  
 10 A. Yes, originally on the ground floor, and it was a big  
 11 fire panel with just little lights. So if an alarm went  
 12 off in the tower, the Fire Brigade could just come in,  
 13 see which floor and then go straight to deal with where  
 14 the alarm was going off.  
 15 After the refurbishment, they moved that panel to  
 16 the 2nd floor where you could get out to the walkway,  
 17 before they blocked that off, and then they took it all  
 18 away. And then there was -- as you go into the atrium  
 19 of the building, on the left-hand side, before the  
 20 second door to get to the lifts, there was a little red  
 21 box panel which nobody knew what it was.  
 22 So the couple of times that the Fire Brigade arrived  
 23 at the tower when I was down walking my dog, I had to  
 24 give them entrance to the tower. One time they asked  
 25 me, "Where is the fire panel?" and I said, "Is this the

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<p>1 <b>box?" and they said, "No, that's not it", and then went</b></p> <p>2 <b>through to the next door, and we were there, like,</b></p> <p>3 <b>trying to look where the fire panel was, where the dry</b></p> <p>4 <b>riser was and where -- you know, it was very difficult</b></p> <p>5 <b>for the Fire Brigade to understand.</b></p> <p>6 <b>And as I was talking to them, they said that they</b></p> <p>7 <b>actually weren't from North Kensington, our local, they</b></p> <p>8 <b>were from another -- I don't know where. I know one of</b></p> <p>9 <b>the fire officers during this inquiry hinted about he</b></p> <p>10 <b>was one of the officers there, but I don't know what</b></p> <p>11 <b>station he was from.</b></p> <p>12 <b>And, yeah, I just didn't know where -- if the fire</b></p> <p>13 <b>officers wanted to know information straight away of</b></p> <p>14 <b>where the alarm was going off, I just remember them</b></p> <p>15 <b>sending somebody up the stairs, so they probably have to</b></p> <p>16 <b>go to every floor.</b></p> <p>17 Q. When you refer to the old alarm, was it a general</p> <p>18 all-building alarm, or was the alarm limited to the</p> <p>19 floor or flat where the fire was?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Actually, I'm not too sure, because I don't actually</b></p> <p>21 <b>remember the alarm actually going off. So we was</b></p> <p>22 <b>looking for the alarm, but I don't remember being</b></p> <p>23 <b>downstairs and the alarm actually going off that I could</b></p> <p>24 <b>hear.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 Q. No, okay.</p> <p>2 Can I then go back to the question of fire safety</p> <p>3 advice.</p> <p>4 Do you remember receiving a newsletter from the TMO</p> <p>5 and Rydon during the refurbishment which contained</p> <p>6 advice about fire safety?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No, I don't remember seeing that.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Let me see if I can jog your recollection, then.</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, sure.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Can the witness please be shown ART00002606.</p> <p>11 (Pause)</p> <p>12 Well, maybe --</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Are you sure we have that,</p> <p>14 Mr Millett?</p> <p>15 MR MILLETT: We may not have, which surprises me somewhat.</p> <p>16 We'll come back to that after the break. It can be</p> <p>17 taken as it stands.</p> <p>18 Can I ask you, then, to turn to page 18 and look at</p> <p>19 the top of that page, subparagraph (16), where you</p> <p>20 discuss the question of doors.</p> <p>21 You say there:</p> <p>22 "We had to close the front door, it was not</p> <p>23 self-closing. It was a good front door."</p> <p>24 Did you ever change the door after you'd moved in?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 <b>A. This is just a few months, you know, before the fire.</b></p> <p>2 Q. The new panel, I think you were saying, was located,</p> <p>3 when they moved it, to the 2nd floor.</p> <p>4 <b>A. That was just during the refurbishment. So they did the</b></p> <p>5 <b>atrium and then I remember them moving it to the</b></p> <p>6 <b>2nd floor, before they built a flat there. I remember</b></p> <p>7 <b>it being there one day. And then of course they had to</b></p> <p>8 <b>build a new flat, they built nine new flats on the first</b></p> <p>9 <b>three levels, and then they had to take it away. So</b></p> <p>10 <b>I don't know.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Where did it end up?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Well, I just figured it was that little box that was</b></p> <p>13 <b>next to the second door as you go into the tower.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Right.</p> <p>15 <b>A. But it was a completely different system. The old box</b></p> <p>16 <b>was a massive box with lots of lights and everything,</b></p> <p>17 <b>but this was just a little red box with no indication of</b></p> <p>18 <b>anything. I didn't know what it was for, really.</b></p> <p>19 Q. When you say a little red box, do you mean a box on the</p> <p>20 wall to the right of the door leading into the community</p> <p>21 room?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes, there was a community room with a big plaque saying</b></p> <p>23 <b>"Community Room", and just right of that there was</b></p> <p>24 <b>a little red box. I did have a little look at it, but</b></p> <p>25 <b>I couldn't make it out myself.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 Q. Was the door ever self-closing?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Did the TMO or RBKC ever tell you that your front door</p> <p>4 had to be self-closing?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Actually, they may have -- I may have had a discussion.</b></p> <p>6 <b>I think that was when I went and asked about the doors,</b></p> <p>7 <b>because they didn't actually give us -- they did the</b></p> <p>8 <b>refurbishment of the doors before, before the major</b></p> <p>9 <b>refurbishment, and I went down to the office and said,</b></p> <p>10 <b>"Excuse me, you haven't, you know, come to us and give</b></p> <p>11 <b>us a door."</b></p> <p>12 <b>But there may have been a discussion when I asked</b></p> <p>13 <b>them why I wasn't getting a door, they said, "You're</b></p> <p>14 <b>a leaseholder, you have to buy your own door", and there</b></p> <p>15 <b>may have been a discussion about maybe the fire</b></p> <p>16 <b>regulations and our door was not the right door. But</b></p> <p>17 <b>our doors were much more solid and stern than the doors</b></p> <p>18 <b>that they were replaced with.</b></p> <p>19 <b>So I think there may have been a discussion. I'm</b></p> <p>20 <b>not too sure about them telling me it has to be</b></p> <p>21 <b>a self-closing door.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Do you remember who the discussion was with?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I don't know who was in charge then. I don't know</b></p> <p>24 <b>whether it was Siobhan or -- I don't know if it was</b></p> <p>25 <b>Siobhan ... I'm not too sure who the discussion was</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

4 (Pages 13 to 16)

1 **with.**  
 2 Q. Was that Siobhan Rumble?  
 3 **A. Yes, we had many rumbles. Yeah. Yeah.**  
 4 Q. Right.  
 5 **A. They wanted to charge my wife and I £1,000. They said**  
 6 **we could have a door but they would charge us £1,000, so**  
 7 **I just declined.**  
 8 Q. You also say in the next subparagraph that your old  
 9 front door was a fire door. That's three lines up from  
 10 the bottom of that subparagraph.  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. How did you know it was a fire door?  
 13 **A. Because it was a sturdy, heavy, three-hinged door.**  
 14 Q. So it was your assumption it was a fire door? Did you  
 15 see any documents saying it was a fire door?  
 16 **A. No, I didn't see no documents at all.**  
 17 Q. In subparagraph (19), a little bit lower down the  
 18 page -- the middle of the page, in fact -- you say:  
 19 "(19) The door did not have a draft seal on it  
 20 already, but I had put on a little strip to seal it  
 21 myself."  
 22 Where did you put the strip?  
 23 **A. Just on the base.**  
 24 Q. Why did you need to do that?  
 25 **A. Actually, that was a long time ago. Just to make sure**

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1 **that any air coming through the base -- but I'm sure**  
 2 **that came off when I put wooden flooring in the**  
 3 **corridor.**  
 4 Q. Having done that, did the door have any gaps around it?  
 5 **A. No, no gaps.**  
 6 Q. No draughts coming in?  
 7 **A. No draughts coming in. I don't even remember there was**  
 8 **a draught coming in when I put the strip, so ...**  
 9 Q. Sticking with page 18, you say at paragraph 59(21) at  
 10 the bottom, "Extractor fans", and you discuss the  
 11 extractor fan in the bathroom and the one in the kitchen  
 12 which came at the time of the refurbishment.  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. Did you ever have any trouble with the extractor fan?  
 15 **A. The one in the bathroom, no trouble. There was no kind**  
 16 **of extraction, it was just on the ceiling and they just**  
 17 **pulled out the old one and popped in a new one, and it**  
 18 **never really sucked in any air or anything.**  
 19 **The one in the kitchen, a lot of problems. First of**  
 20 **all --**  
 21 Q. Can you elaborate?  
 22 **A. Yes. They came, they put the extractor fan, put all the**  
 23 **electrics, because it wasn't automatic, you had to press**  
 24 **a little button, but it just made so much noise.**  
 25 **I think nearly everybody had the problem of when the**

Page 18

1 **wind came up, it was just crazy noise, and they had to**  
 2 **come and make a solution to fit a widget or something in**  
 3 **to stop the fan making that noise. It was very loud.**  
 4 **It was very annoying.**  
 5 Q. Going over the page to page 19, subparagraph (22), you  
 6 deal with the question of smell and noise.  
 7 Five lines up from the bottom of that paragraph, you  
 8 say:  
 9 "It was cold after the refurbishment even though we  
 10 were told that the flats would be much warmer. I had to  
 11 buy slippers for the first time. The flats were very  
 12 hot before the refurbishment. However, once the new  
 13 radiator system was installed and they took the  
 14 underfloor heating away it was very different and cold."  
 15 Could you identify a source for the cold?  
 16 **A. Well, it was in two parts. Around the windows, it was**  
 17 **colder, but also before we used to have underfloor**  
 18 **heating. So, you know, a lot of the winter I didn't**  
 19 **even put the radiators on because, you know, the heat**  
 20 **comes up through the tower and our flats was always**  
 21 **very, very warm. So when they put new radiators in and**  
 22 **new windows and everything, the flat was much colder,**  
 23 **and I had to go and buy a pair of slippers.**  
 24 **But it was much colder. There was none of that nice**  
 25 **warm heat we used to have in the living room, kitchen,**

Page 19

1 **corridor, where the hot water pipes used to be. They**  
 2 **didn't take out the old hot water pipes; they just**  
 3 **stopped filling them with water because they didn't want**  
 4 **to drill into the concrete.**  
 5 **So, yeah, the flat was cold.**  
 6 Q. Focusing on the windows in that last answer.  
 7 Can you just tell me a little bit more about how the  
 8 windows after the refurbishment were a source of cold in  
 9 your flat?  
 10 **A. Yes, it's just the way they put the windows in. They**  
 11 **was cheap plastic, and they just did everything in**  
 12 **a hurry. And just around the window, it just felt much,**  
 13 **much cooler.**  
 14 **The old windows weren't that great, they were like**  
 15 **a single pane, and they used to have little tiny vents**  
 16 **and I used to put, like, paper in there during the**  
 17 **winter to stop the wind coming through. But I thought**  
 18 **that this new double glazing would be better, but it**  
 19 **wasn't necessarily better.**  
 20 Q. Just focusing a bit more on that, at the bottom of  
 21 page 19 at subparagraph (25), you say:  
 22 "(25) Windows: I remember that there was a small  
 23 draft that would come through the windows before the  
 24 refurbishment. The old windows had little vents and the  
 25 wind could whistle through. The new windows had better

Page 20

1 seals but I remember the keys would always fall out of  
 2 the lock barrel which was an issue."  
 3 You go on to discuss the plastic.  
 4 After the refurbishment, was there any breeze or air  
 5 that you felt coming through or around the windows?  
 6 **A. Not necessarily breeze, but it was just cooler. It was**  
 7 **just, you know, you touch the plastic and it would be**  
 8 **cooler. And I could tell that -- I was thinking in my**  
 9 **mind that these are brand new windows and they must be**  
 10 **the cheapest ones because, you know, we had kind of --**  
 11 **the barrel where the locks -- that came out. I've had**  
 12 **to go down, ask the people to come, Rydon to come, and**  
 13 **fix the barrels of the window. And I was thinking the**  
 14 **old windows lasted like 40 years or more, and these**  
 15 **windows, you know, 5 minutes and the barrel has already**  
 16 **fallen out. How cheap.**  
 17 I mean, it looked okay, the looks, but it was just  
 18 cheap plastic, and I knew that the day one of my friends  
 19 had a cigarette and dropped a bit of ash from the  
 20 cigarette and it left a brown mark. That set off --  
 21 I wouldn't say alarm bells, but I was just  
 22 thinking: this is not going to last --  
 23 Q. The focus of my question is really whether you could  
 24 feel air coming through the --  
 25 **A. Not necessarily.**

Page 21

1 Q. -- frames of the windows.  
 2 **A. I couldn't actually feel any kind of breezes coming**  
 3 **through on my windows very much, no.**  
 4 Q. Right, okay.  
 5 Can I then turn to the events of the night of 13 and  
 6 14 June 2017.  
 7 Just in general terms, on that night, I think it was  
 8 just you and Pily in the flat.  
 9 **A. That's correct, and my dog.**  
 10 Q. And the dog.  
 11 I think you say on page 2 of your statement at  
 12 paragraph 9 -- we don't need to go to it -- that you'd  
 13 fallen asleep on the sofa in your living room watching  
 14 a film.  
 15 **A. Yes, yes.**  
 16 Q. Was Pily asleep as well?  
 17 **A. Yes, Pily was asleep on the sofa and I was actually just**  
 18 **resting against the sofa on the floor.**  
 19 Q. At page 3 of your statement, paragraph 11, if you could  
 20 just be shown that, you say:  
 21 "11. I was woken by a loud banging at my door. It  
 22 was just BANG, BANG, BANG."  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. You go on to say:  
 25 "(Later — indeed within a very short time, as to

Page 22

1 which see below — I assumed that it was a neighbour who  
 2 banged on my door, trying to make sure I was awake and  
 3 knew about the fire."  
 4 Was that your assumption at the time? When you were  
 5 woken up by the banging, did you think it was  
 6 a neighbour?  
 7 **A. I was just woken up by the banging and I had to go and**  
 8 **investigate what the banging was.**  
 9 Q. At that point, when you woke up, could you smell  
 10 anything in particular?  
 11 **A. No, no.**  
 12 Q. Okay. Now --  
 13 **A. I think -- I mean, there was -- yes, you know, because**  
 14 **I got up quickly, you know, jumped up, but I don't know**  
 15 **whether there was a smell of burning or anything, you**  
 16 **know, I can't remember that.**  
 17 Q. You went straight to your front door, did you?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. And you opened it?  
 20 **A. I opened it.**  
 21 Q. And Helen Gebremeskel was there, was she?  
 22 **A. Sorry?**  
 23 Q. Who was there?  
 24 **A. Nobody was there.**  
 25 Q. Nobody was there.

Page 23

1 **A. Yeah, nobody was there. I was just confronted by a wall**  
 2 **of acrid, black smoke.**  
 3 Q. Not a firefighter at any rate?  
 4 **A. No.**  
 5 Q. At page 3 of your statement, paragraph 10, you say:  
 6 "10. I cannot recall what time I was woken and  
 7 first became aware of the fire ..."  
 8 And you say you don't recall looking at your watch:  
 9 "I have recently become aware that the first of my  
 10 two 999 calls was at about 1.56am."  
 11 We'll come to that.  
 12 Then you piece it together and you say:  
 13 "... I do not think that less than 25 minutes or  
 14 more than 35mins passed by, so I think I was woken  
 15 between 1.20am but not later than about 1.30am."  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. Why do you think that the time range is 25 to  
 18 35 minutes?  
 19 **A. I'm not too sure. I didn't look at my watch at any time**  
 20 **since I woke up. Even though I had my watch on,**  
 21 **I didn't look at -- so I didn't know exactly what the**  
 22 **time was, you know, I was just guessing that that was**  
 23 **the range of times that was -- you know, so until**  
 24 **I found out what time my call was to the Fire Brigade,**  
 25 **I have no timelines of anything. If you ask me this**

Page 24

<p>1 <b>minute or that minute, I don't know anything.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Okay.</p> <p>3 You say you went to the front door and there was</p> <p>4 nobody there.</p> <p>5 <b>A. Nobody there.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You opened it.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, I did.</b></p> <p>8 Q. You noticed a burning smell at that stage.</p> <p>9 <b>A. Well, I was in shock when I opened the door because</b></p> <p>10 <b>I couldn't see anything. There's a wall just a metre or</b></p> <p>11 <b>metre and a half in front of us, usually a white wall,</b></p> <p>12 <b>which is like the encasing of the lift, and I couldn't</b></p> <p>13 <b>even see that. It was just total darkness and the smoke</b></p> <p>14 <b>just came rushing into the flat.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Before you opened the front door, and as you tell us in</p> <p>16 paragraph 12, you'd noticed a burning smell as you</p> <p>17 arrived in the corridor of your flat.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. You say it was not more serious than the smell of</p> <p>20 burning toast. What did it actually smell like at that</p> <p>21 stage?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Just smells like something was burning. I mean, I can't</b></p> <p>23 <b>actually say that it was a chemical or plastic, it was</b></p> <p>24 <b>just a burning smell. You knew that something was</b></p> <p>25 <b>burning, but I couldn't actually, you know, tell you</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes, I said, "Hello?" because somebody just banged on my</b></p> <p>2 <b>door. So, yes, "Hello?" and nothing. Nothing.</b></p> <p>3 Q. No response?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No response.</b></p> <p>5 Q. I know it's difficult, but did you get any kind of</p> <p>6 impression about where the smoke was coming from?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No. Initially, I was in shock, but it kind of probably</b></p> <p>8 <b>maybe registered in my mind that it might have been next</b></p> <p>9 <b>door or something, because the smoke was there. You</b></p> <p>10 <b>know, I had no initial reasoning as to why the smoke</b></p> <p>11 <b>would come from any other part of the building.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Were you able to smell the smoke?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, of course, it has a smell.</b></p> <p>14 Q. What was the smell?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Just of burning. You know, it was smoke. But</b></p> <p>16 <b>I couldn't say it was a plastic or it was an organic</b></p> <p>17 <b>smell or -- yeah, it didn't necessarily register in my</b></p> <p>18 <b>nostrils, you know, what it was. I just knew that</b></p> <p>19 <b>something was burning and there's smoke, so your senses</b></p> <p>20 <b>are just telling you that. I didn't kind of sit down</b></p> <p>21 <b>and analyse and say it smells like this or smells like</b></p> <p>22 <b>that.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Okay. But it made no general impression on you about</p> <p>24 what it might be, apart from the fact that it was smoke?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Not initially. I was a bit more confused why it was</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 <b>exactly what it smelled like.</b></p> <p>2 Q. You say in the next paragraph:</p> <p>3 "... I was met by what I can only describe as a</p> <p>4 thick black wall of smoke. It was in the corridor and</p> <p>5 the smoke immediately started to come in from the</p> <p>6 corridor inside the entrance way of my flat."</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. "The smoke was so thick that I could not see the wall</p> <p>9 opposite my front door, which is only about a metre</p> <p>10 away."</p> <p>11 Did you hear anything in the lobby?</p> <p>12 <b>A. In the lobby, not at that time. I remember a noise</b></p> <p>13 <b>afterwards when we went out into the corridor, but that</b></p> <p>14 <b>was just like a whining noise. It wasn't like a fire</b></p> <p>15 <b>alarm. You'd think a fire alarm would wake everybody up</b></p> <p>16 <b>and that traditional sound of "dingalingaling". No, it</b></p> <p>17 <b>was not like that, it was more of a wailing, whining</b></p> <p>18 <b>noise. But that was afterwards, I remember that.</b></p> <p>19 <b>I don't remember any noise in particular the first time.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So the wailing, whining noise, which I'm interested in,</p> <p>21 you didn't hear at this stage but you did hear later.</p> <p>22 Did you hear it when you eventually evacuate?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I heard that when I eventually evacuated, yes. I didn't</b></p> <p>24 <b>register initially the first time.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you call out into the lobby?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 <b>there rather than what was burning. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. In that short time, did you notice anything about the</p> <p>3 temperature in the lobby?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Not initially then, no.</b></p> <p>5 Q. At paragraph 14, at the bottom of page 3 of your</p> <p>6 statement, you say:</p> <p>7 "14. I noticed no kind of light in the corridor or</p> <p>8 any sound of an alarm. All I remember hearing was a</p> <p>9 faint whirring noise, almost a background noise."</p> <p>10 Now, in your statement you say you can hear a</p> <p>11 whirring noise.</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes. Whirring ...</b></p> <p>13 Q. Looking back on it now, is that right?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I guess so, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. So some sort of whirring noise did register with you at</p> <p>16 the time at least when you did your statement.</p> <p>17 <b>A. When I did my statement, yes, so if I remember it -- but</b></p> <p>18 <b>to truly register in my brain, I just remember when we</b></p> <p>19 <b>came out into the smoke, that was much more evident in</b></p> <p>20 <b>my recollection.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Yes, I follow.</p> <p>22 Going back to the first sentence of that paragraph</p> <p>23 you say:</p> <p>24 "14. I noticed no kind of light in the</p> <p>25 corridor ..."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 Would the lights in the corridor normally be on in 2 the middle of the night?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes, absolutely. It would be very bright. There would 4 also be emergency lighting. There was emergency 5 lighting next to my door. So they removed the emergency 6 lighting and put one next to our door.</b></p> <p>7 <b>And, yes, it would've been bright and light. But 8 I just saw nothing. It was just intense black smoke. 9 Like if you set a tyre on fire.</b></p> <p>10 Q. At page 4, if you just go over the page, you say at the 11 top of that page at paragraph 15:</p> <p>12 "15. I do not believe that I opened the door for 13 more than a couple of seconds and after I slammed the 14 door shut, I noticed that there was a haze of smoke left 15 in the entranceway of the flat and some of it had got 16 into the corridor leading to the living room. It was 17 quite a thin haze of smoke."</p> <p>18 Then you go on to describe the density of the smoke 19 by reference to the pictures which the inquiry have 20 provided to you.</p> <p>21 Did the smoke continue to come into the flat after 22 you'd closed the door?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No, I don't believe so.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Again, did you get a chance of smelling the smoke at 25 that stage?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 <b>because it's solid concrete.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Then you go on to explain what measures you took to 3 protect yourselves.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Paragraphs 19 onwards.</p> <p>6 During that period, going back and waking up Pily 7 and getting towels, was any more smoke coming in?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Not that I can remember, no. But I did get some towels, 9 I did that like straight away before I actually went and 10 woke my wife up. Just went to the bathroom, put the 11 bath on, just threw some towels in there and then put 12 one across the bottom of the main door.</b></p> <p>13 Q. When you put one across the bottom of the main door, was 14 there any smoke beginning to come in at that stage or 15 was it clear?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Not that I noticed, no.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Just a question about running the bath. Did you notice 18 any change in the water pressure that you --</p> <p>19 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>20 Q. In comparison?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I didn't.</b></p> <p>22 Q. At paragraph 24 of your statement, on page 5, you 23 explain the process. You say you had woken up Pily and 24 took her back to the living room. You say:</p> <p>25 " 24. This process was nor hurried, as I knew that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Yes, because you can smell it -- you know, it was now, 2 like, hovering on the ceiling, so you had an inkling 3 that there was, you know, smoke.</b></p> <p>4 Q. In that moment, when you saw that there was smoke which 5 had come into your flat from the lobby outside, did you 6 have any thoughts about what you should do next?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Not necessarily at that time, like, but -- yes. I just 8 thought then, well, something's happened, and then 9 I made a decision to, you know, wake my wife up to tell 10 her.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You didn't attempt to leave the flat at that stage?</p> <p>12 <b>A. No, no.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Can you just tell us why you didn't think at that stage 14 "I must leave"?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Because --</b></p> <p>16 Q. Or "We must leave".</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yeah. I just thought that, you know, over all the years 18 before the refurbishment, the flats would be okay. 19 We're in a compartment and it would be safe and we have 20 fire doors and, you know, they're meant to be for 21 60 minutes, and the Fire Brigade will come and deal with 22 any initial fire that was necessarily -- I thought it 23 was on my floor at the beginning. I mean, after several 24 phone calls from my friend, I realised it was something 25 different, but I just thought we'd be safe in our flat</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 we would have to wait some time for rescue."</p> <p>2 Can I just ask you: why did you think that?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Because I started getting phone calls from my friend 4 Simon, and he was just asking me to leave the flat. But 5 on consideration, I thought it was too dangerous to go 6 into the main lobby with my wife, because she was very 7 frail.</b></p> <p>8 Q. You hadn't called 999 by that point?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>10 Q. What made you believe that the LFB would be coming to 11 your flat to rescue you and Pily?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Because in the beginning, I didn't know the extent of 13 what was actually happening to us or to everybody. So 14 I just thought someone will come up, the fire officers 15 will deal with wherever the smoke was or the fire, and 16 they'll knock on our door and say, "Are you okay?" That 17 was my hunch.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did you form any impression in your own mind at that 19 time as to how long that might take?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes, I thought it would take quite a short time. You 21 know, usually the local Fire Brigade are very close by, 22 and if the fire was on my floor, then I would get 23 a knock saying, "Are you okay? We're sorry, we've dealt 24 with the fire."</b></p> <p>25 Q. At paragraph 24, continuing with it, you go on to say:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

8 (Pages 29 to 32)

1 "... it was obvious to me that I could not leave on  
 2 my own with Pily because she was simply too frail for me  
 3 to be able to manage getting her down and out of the  
 4 tower on my own."  
 5 Then you say:  
 6 "I was aware that we would not be able to use the  
 7 lifts in the tower and I just could not be confident  
 8 about getting her out safely on my own via the stairs,  
 9 particularly due to the thickness of the smoke and her  
 10 frailty."  
 11 I just want to ask you about the thickness of the  
 12 smoke in that part of your sentence there.  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. What did you know at that time about the smoke  
 15 conditions in the stairs?  
 16 **A. I didn't know anything.**  
 17 Q. So the thickness of the smoke, is that the thickness of  
 18 the smoke in the lobby --  
 19 **A. In the lobby, the lift lobby.**  
 20 Q. -- that you'd seen?  
 21 **A. Yes. It may have registered in the back of my mind that**  
 22 **if we can get to the stairwell, we'll be okay. But it**  
 23 **was just so thick, you know, it would've panicked my**  
 24 **wife.**  
 25 Q. No, I understand.

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1 You referred a minute ago to telephone calls from  
 2 your friend.  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. That's Simon Jolly?  
 5 **A. Simon Jolly, yes.**  
 6 Q. He lived nearby, I think.  
 7 **A. In Barandon Walk.**  
 8 Q. You had a number of calls with him, I think, before you  
 9 called 999.  
 10 **A. Yes, I did, yes.**  
 11 Q. During those calls, did Simon Jolly pass any advice on  
 12 to you?  
 13 **A. Yes, initially he said there's a fire in the tower, and**  
 14 **then the calls got more and more, you know, distressed,**  
 15 **and he was like screaming at me like, "You need to leave**  
 16 **now", like, "You need to leave, get out." I was just**  
 17 **saying, "Look, I don't think I can, I don't think" --**  
 18 **but he was just panicking. He was really distraught.**  
 19 Q. And these calls all preceded, did they, your first 999  
 20 call, which we have at 01.56?  
 21 **A. Yes, yes. I think he may have even said that he's**  
 22 **phoned the Fire Brigade and have I phoned the Fire**  
 23 **Brigade.**  
 24 Q. He said, as you've told us, "You need to leave now."  
 25 **A. Yes.**

Page 34

1 Q. "Get out."  
 2 We know that you didn't act on that advice, at least  
 3 straight away; why is that?  
 4 **A. Because I thought that, you know, someone would come for**  
 5 **us. I didn't want to put my wife at risk. If I was**  
 6 **there by myself, I probably would've just left. But my**  
 7 **wife was very frail, very delicate, and I didn't want to**  
 8 **put her life at risk by going into the smoke.**  
 9 Q. Paragraph 29 on page 6, you say at the start of that  
 10 paragraph:  
 11 "29. There may have been a third call from him  
 12 before I called the fire brigade myself, but I think it  
 13 was after he told me that he had called the fire brigade  
 14 on my behalf. He said that he had told them what flat  
 15 Pily and I were in. By this point he was sounding quite  
 16 panicked."  
 17 Did he pass on any advice that he had got from the  
 18 Fire Brigade to you during that call, do you remember?  
 19 **A. Not that I remember. He was just asking me to "Leave**  
 20 **now, please, leave now."**  
 21 Q. Do you remember whether he told you that the Fire  
 22 Brigade had told him to tell you to stay put?  
 23 **A. Not that I remember, no.**  
 24 Q. The first call that you make is at 01.56.20.  
 25 The transcript reference for that is LFB00000334. If

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1 we can just have that, please, up on the screen.  
 2 You can see from the top strapline of blue letters  
 3 that in the group of numbers second from the right, it  
 4 says: "015620".  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. So that's 01.56.20 --  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. -- which is the time of the call.  
 9 At paragraph 30 of your statement -- we don't need  
 10 to go to it -- you say you made this call when you were  
 11 standing in your kitchen; is that right?  
 12 **A. Yes, I was in the kitchen.**  
 13 Q. That faces west.  
 14 **A. Yes, it does. Yes, it does.**  
 15 Q. We can see that if we need to from the layout of your  
 16 flat. It faces west.  
 17 My question is: could you see anything out of your  
 18 window at the time you made this call?  
 19 **A. Yes, I had probably already been to the window.**  
 20 **I didn't look out the kitchen window because there's**  
 21 **a tight space and we had a fridge in that kind of area.**  
 22 **But the next window along in the living room, I looked**  
 23 **out the window there.**  
 24 Q. If you look at the first page of the transcript --  
 25 **A. I looked out of several windows, though.**

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<p>1 Q. Okay. And did you see anything out of those windows?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, I saw, you know, people downstairs. I saw blue</b></p> <p>3 <b>flashing lights. I see people shouting, but I couldn't</b></p> <p>4 <b>necessarily hear what they were saying. I see people</b></p> <p>5 <b>congregating down near the station when I was looking</b></p> <p>6 <b>out that way, and when I went and looked on the other</b></p> <p>7 <b>window, I see traffic congregating on the A40 elevated</b></p> <p>8 <b>section there.</b></p> <p>9 <b>And then -- yeah.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Did you see any signs of fire or smoke?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Afterwards, yes. So when I looked further out the</b></p> <p>12 <b>window a little bit of time afterwards to my right when</b></p> <p>13 <b>I was looking north -- and also I could see the</b></p> <p>14 <b>reflection against the school. They had a big glass</b></p> <p>15 <b>atrium in the school, so the reflection of the fire was</b></p> <p>16 <b>actually against that, so you could actually see -- you</b></p> <p>17 <b>know, not perfect, but, you know, the glow, and also</b></p> <p>18 <b>I could see at another stage the flames or the glow</b></p> <p>19 <b>coming towards my part of the building.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Can I just ask you to go back to the layout of your</p> <p>21 flat. I just want to follow something up, if I can,</p> <p>22 which is IWS0000063.</p> <p>23 The kitchen is to the bottom right-hand corner of</p> <p>24 this --</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, that's correct.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 any signs of smoke or fire from that window?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Oh, no, no.</b></p> <p>3 Q. You couldn't?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes. I didn't actually look out the kitchen -- I went</b></p> <p>5 <b>to the next window --</b></p> <p>6 Q. I see.</p> <p>7 <b>A. -- and looked.</b></p> <p>8 Q. So the next one being the one opposite the dining room</p> <p>9 table?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Or next to it.</p> <p>12 Going to the call, you say on page 2, if we can just</p> <p>13 go back to the transcript:</p> <p>14 "CALLER: Oh, hi. Good evening. I think you know</p> <p>15 about it already, we're in Grenfell Tower. The whole</p> <p>16 tower's on, on fire, and we're on the 19th floor."</p> <p>17 Just pausing there, when you said "The whole tower's</p> <p>18 on, on fire", how did you know that?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Well, I didn't necessarily know the whole tower is on</b></p> <p>20 <b>fire, it was what Simon was -- so I'm just repeating</b></p> <p>21 <b>what my friend told me, so the whole tower is on fire --</b></p> <p>22 <b>I mean, I didn't actually know the severity of what was</b></p> <p>23 <b>actually happening.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Yes, I see. So --</p> <p>25 <b>A. I was just repeating what he told me.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 Q. -- diagram, so we have the west face of the building at</p> <p>2 the bottom and the north to the left as it's presented</p> <p>3 on the screen in front of us.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Between the kitchen and the living room, there appears</p> <p>6 to be a wall to the right of the round table that we're</p> <p>7 looking at.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Is that a wall or a sliding screen?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No, that's sliding doors.</b></p> <p>11 Q. On the night of the fire, was that door open or closed,</p> <p>12 do you remember?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, we always had it opened, never tend to close them.</b></p> <p>14 Q. So when you were making your call in the kitchen, you</p> <p>15 could see out of the kitchen window to the west. Could</p> <p>16 you also see out of the living room windows to the</p> <p>17 north?</p> <p>18 <b>A. If I'd looked, yes. I was quite near where -- I was</b></p> <p>19 <b>probably standing where the washing machine was, so --</b></p> <p>20 <b>but if I moved a step or two, yes, I could see out to</b></p> <p>21 <b>the west and probably out to the north, but you probably</b></p> <p>22 <b>wouldn't be able to see anything unless you go towards</b></p> <p>23 <b>the window and look down because we were very high up.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Focusing back on the question I asked you earlier on,</p> <p>25 when you looked out of the kitchen window, could you see</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 Q. You go on to say:</p> <p>2 "OPERATOR: You're on the 19th floor, are you?"</p> <p>3 "CALLER: Yeah, we can't go outside because there's</p> <p>4 too much smoke and everything.</p> <p>5 "OPERATOR: Too much smoke. No, don't go outside.</p> <p>6 What flat are you in please?</p> <p>7 "CALLER: 165."</p> <p>8 Then you go on to say towards the bottom of the</p> <p>9 page:</p> <p>10 "CALLER: The fire alarm's gone off and the Fire</p> <p>11 Brigade are on site, and everything else, but I just</p> <p>12 wanted to ...</p> <p>13 "OPERATOR: Yeah, no, that's all right. What I'll</p> <p>14 do, I'll let them know where you are. They will be</p> <p>15 coming door to door to make sure everyone's safe. The</p> <p>16 fire is actually on the 4th floor, okay? So ...</p> <p>17 "CALLER: Okay."</p> <p>18 A number of questions just about that passage which</p> <p>19 I've just read to you.</p> <p>20 First of all, when you refer to a fire alarm, what</p> <p>21 are you referring to?</p> <p>22 <b>A. The smoke alarm in my flat.</b></p> <p>23 Q. The smoke alarm in your flat.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. How long before this call did the smoke alarm go off?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

1 **A. Oh, straight away when I opened the front door, but**  
 2 **I just ripped the battery out.**  
 3 Q. Right.  
 4 Going back to page 2 of the transcript, towards the  
 5 bottom of the page, after the reference to the fire  
 6 alarm, you say:  
 7 "... but I just wanted to ..."  
 8 I know it's difficult to try and piece this  
 9 together, but do you have any idea or recollection of  
 10 what you were trying to tell the operator?  
 11 **A. No. I probably just wanted to make sure that they know**  
 12 **that we're here and that they knew that there was a fire**  
 13 **and, you know -- and I think by what I saw out the**  
 14 **window, I'm sure hundreds of people must have phoned**  
 15 **them. So I knew that they knew that -- I just wanted to**  
 16 **say that we are still here, we're waiting, or we're --**  
 17 **you know.**  
 18 Q. At page 3 of the transcript, you say, just before  
 19 halfway down:  
 20 "CALLER: Yeah, there's, there's - it's only, it's  
 21 only smoke cos I opened the front door and so smoke came  
 22 in. I've closed the front door. It's just in the  
 23 corridor."  
 24 Does that mean at that point there was no more smoke  
 25 coming into your flat?

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1 **A. There was no more smoke coming into my flat.**  
 2 Q. She then goes on to advise you to put towels and  
 3 blankets around the door and leave the windows closed,  
 4 as you can see on the rest of that page.  
 5 I think you'd already taken those steps by that  
 6 stage.  
 7 **A. Yes, I did, yes. I had like fire safety training at**  
 8 **work on stuff like this.**  
 9 Q. Yes. Then she says, three-quarters of the way down the  
 10 page:  
 11 "OPERATOR: Put - that's it, put them all round the  
 12 door, leave the windows closed cos I know there's a lot  
 13 of smoke outside as well, and they'll make their way up  
 14 to you, okay? If anything changes give us a call back,  
 15 okay? But, yeah, stay where you are. All right then?  
 16 Thank you.  
 17 "CALLER: Thank you very much.  
 18 "OPERATOR: Bye bye."  
 19 Did you feel reassured by the advice that the  
 20 operator had given you to stay in your flat?  
 21 **A. Yes. I mean, yes, because in my mind I was still**  
 22 **thinking that, you know, I was going to get a knock on**  
 23 **the door to say, you know, the fire's gone out and**  
 24 **everything. I know my friend Simon was shouting down**  
 25 **the phone, but I still registered that it's safer to be**

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1 **in my flat rather than try to -- as I say, if I was by**  
 2 **myself, I would've just left and attempted to go down**  
 3 **the stairwell.**  
 4 Q. We know from the call that you weren't asked by the  
 5 operator about your age or Pily's age, or whether you or  
 6 Pily had any mobility issues.  
 7 **A. Yes, they never asked any of that.**  
 8 Q. We know that she didn't ask that question. Is there any  
 9 reason why you didn't volunteer that information to the  
 10 operator? Why didn't you say, "Why wife's got mobility  
 11 difficulties"?  
 12 **A. Mm, no, I didn't know at the time, I was just --**  
 13 **whatever came to my mind then to make sure that they**  
 14 **knew that we were there. That was my main hunch that**  
 15 **you know that we're here -- you know. I didn't think**  
 16 **about asking about -- you know, my wife was very frail**  
 17 **and she can't walk or hardly walk or anything. Yeah, it**  
 18 **wasn't -- yeah, it wasn't as bad as -- I just don't know**  
 19 **why. I just said what I said.**  
 20 MR MILLETT: Okay.  
 21 Mr Chairman, we've been going for exactly an hour  
 22 and now is a convenient moment for a break.  
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. It is a convenient moment.  
 24 MR MILLETT: Yes. Mr Burton, is it convenient to you?  
 25 THE WITNESS: Absolutely, yes.

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Burton, we'll have a short break  
 2 now. Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence  
 3 while you're out of the room.  
 4 If you go with the usher, we'll start again at  
 5 11.10. All right?  
 6 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.  
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.  
 8 All right, 11.10, then, please.  
 9 (11.00 am)  
 10 (A short break)  
 11 (11.10 am)  
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Burton?  
 13 THE WITNESS: Absolutely.  
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Happy to carry on? Good, thank you.  
 15 Yes, Mr Millett.  
 16 MR MILLETT: Mr Burton, thank you for coming back to us.  
 17 **A. You're welcome.**  
 18 Q. I want to show you a document which I was going to show  
 19 you before --  
 20 **A. The newsletter.**  
 21 Q. The newsletter, absolutely.  
 22 Before I do, I should just explain to you and  
 23 everybody else that this document is in the public  
 24 domain, it's available on the internet if anybody wants  
 25 to find it, but it also has a Relativity

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1 reference: ART00002606. That's the first page of it.  
 2 We can see that it's a TMO/Rydon Grenfell Tower  
 3 regeneration newsletter, July 2014, "What's been  
 4 happening?" and various things.  
 5 Over the page, if you go, please, to page 2, you can  
 6 see at the very bottom of the page, if we can just have  
 7 that blown up, please, "Emergency fire arrangements":  
 8 "Our longstanding 'stay put' policy stays in force  
 9 until you are told otherwise. This means that (unless  
 10 there is a fire in your flat or in the hallway outside  
 11 your flat) you should stay inside your flat. This is  
 12 because Grenfell was designed according to rigorous fire  
 13 safety standards. Also, the new front doors for each  
 14 flat can withstand a fire for up to 30 minutes, which  
 15 gives plenty of time for the fire brigade to arrive."  
 16 My question is: do you remember ever seeing this  
 17 newsletter with this advice in it?  
 18 **A. We had many newsletters over the refurbishment. So they**  
 19 **did keep us up-to-date with things, but, I mean, I can't**  
 20 **specifically say I saw that actual one and everything,**  
 21 **but I did tend to read through them to get an update,**  
 22 **yes.**  
 23 Q. Right. Whether it was this one or another one, do you  
 24 remember seeing this advice or advice like it?  
 25 **A. I mean, I can't recall that paragraph, you know, but**

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1 **it's there, so I may have read it, but I can't recall.**  
 2 **We got quite a few of these updates over the course of**  
 3 **the two years or so.**  
 4 Q. Do you remember when you got these updates whether this  
 5 fire safety advice was repeated, whether it was  
 6 a regular feature of these newsletters?  
 7 **A. Not that I know. They was talking about the**  
 8 **surroundings or what was going to happen, you know,**  
 9 **maybe some timelines, but that part, I don't remember.**  
 10 Q. Can I then go back to where we were just before the  
 11 break.  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. Your 999 call, your first one, which we've had at  
 14 LFB00000334.  
 15 After this 999 call finished, where were you in the  
 16 flat? Were you still in the kitchen?  
 17 **A. I was still in the kitchen, yes.**  
 18 Q. Where was Pily?  
 19 **A. On the sofa --**  
 20 Q. Now, at --  
 21 **A. -- I believe --**  
 22 Q. -- paragraph 33 of your statement, if you can just turn  
 23 to that, which you'll find on page 8, you say:  
 24 "33. All the windows in the flat were closed. I  
 25 decided to move us into the bathroom in the flat, I

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1 think between the two 999 calls, though it is possible  
 2 that I went back to the kitchen to make the second 999  
 3 call, so as not to panic Pily."  
 4 Why did you move to the bathroom?  
 5 **A. I think it was the desperation of Simon on the phone.**  
 6 **So I thought if anything was going to happen, we'll wait**  
 7 **in the bathroom. So if the fire did come to the**  
 8 **bedrooms or the living room, I thought the safest place**  
 9 **would be in the bathroom. So I just put us in the**  
 10 **bathroom, sat Pily on the side of the bath.**  
 11 Q. Right. Why the bathroom particularly?  
 12 **A. Because the bathroom, there was access to water, maybe,**  
 13 **and also it was near the front door. If we had to**  
 14 **leave, that would be the place to go from.**  
 15 Q. At paragraph 34, you say:  
 16 "34. I remember exiting the bedroom, closing the  
 17 door behind me and going to get Pily and moving her into  
 18 the bathroom."  
 19 Just pausing there, you say you exited the bedroom.  
 20 At what point did you go into the bedroom?  
 21 **A. I went to the bedroom when I took my wife -- because it**  
 22 **all happened quite, like, slowly and calmly, it wasn't**  
 23 **a panic or anything, so I decided that -- I thought if**  
 24 **we have to go, my wife -- we need to get dressed. So**  
 25 **I quickly went and got dressed, jeans and a T-shirt,**

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1 **I think, because it was a very warm, still night, and**  
 2 **then I slowly got my wife up, took her to the bedroom,**  
 3 **you know, put, you know, trousers, socks, shoes, top,**  
 4 **cardigan, just got her dressed on the bed, and then**  
 5 **I thought let me, you know -- I think I maybe had taken**  
 6 **her back to the living room then. We were just very**  
 7 **calm and relaxed.**  
 8 **Then I thought go back to the bedroom because**  
 9 **I might need some ID, so I went and picked up our**  
 10 **passports and just put them in my back pocket. And then**  
 11 **after maybe some phone calls from Simon, I decided maybe**  
 12 **it's time to go to the bathroom.**  
 13 Q. Just picking up on the phone calls from Simon, at  
 14 paragraph 34 of your statement, you go on to say:  
 15 "During this time, I got a further call from Simon  
 16 who was telling me to go into the kitchen which is more  
 17 on the west side of the tower. He thought it was  
 18 probably safest if we were in there."  
 19 Did he explain why he thought it was safest?  
 20 **A. Probably -- you know, I think actually there were maybe**  
 21 **more phone calls and I, you know, moved from the**  
 22 **bedroom, go to the living room, go from the living room**  
 23 **to the kitchen, and then I decided that maybe we were**  
 24 **going to leave to go to the bathroom. But he was**  
 25 **probably seeing the wall of fire coming across, and he**

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1 probably was saying, you know, "If you're in your  
 2 bedroom, that's going to be the first on that north side  
 3 to come in contact with the fire."  
 4 Q. Did he say that?  
 5 A. No, I'm just speculating, sorry, but that's what I'm  
 6 speculating about. He didn't actually say -- he was  
 7 just saying, "Get out of the bedroom or living room, go  
 8 to the kitchen."  
 9 So I was just speculating that if I'm going to be  
 10 somewhere in the flat, it's going to be the furthest  
 11 point away from wherever the fire was coming from, and  
 12 it was coming from, you know, that east, north, point.  
 13 Q. Did you move to the kitchen as per his advice?  
 14 A. Yes, I made the phone calls in the kitchen, but even  
 15 then I still wasn't really overpanicked or anything, but  
 16 I just thought, let me just move to the bathroom, we've  
 17 got a water supply there. I didn't know what was going  
 18 to be ensuing, what was going to happen, even though he  
 19 was, you know, saying, "Get out" or "Move".  
 20 Q. You say that you moved from the bedroom and went to the  
 21 living room, from the living room to the kitchen; where  
 22 was Pily during this time?  
 23 A. Yes, that's when I kind of moved her, like, around with  
 24 me.  
 25 Q. All right.

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1 During that period of, as it were, touring the flat  
 2 before you ended up in the bathroom, did you look out of  
 3 the windows of the flat?  
 4 A. Yes, I probably looked out several times the window,  
 5 looked out the bedroom window, looked out to the  
 6 north-facing window near the corner, looked out the --  
 7 it was more kind of, you know, to see what was going on,  
 8 you know. Now there's lots of blue lights flickering  
 9 from every corner that you can think of, like maybe on  
 10 Bramley Road near the tube station. We can't see like  
 11 the south-east corner, so I don't know what was going on  
 12 that side of the building, but, you know, maybe on  
 13 Silchester Road was another road there.  
 14 So there's more -- not fascination, that's not the  
 15 right word, but I was inquisitive about the things.  
 16 And also the A40 was -- I think traffic was now  
 17 stopping on the A40 to look at the building.  
 18 Q. During that period of going around the flat, did you  
 19 notice when you looked out of the windows any signs of  
 20 smoke or fire?  
 21 A. No. Except when I looked -- sorry, I do apologise --  
 22 once I looked out the north-facing window, then I could  
 23 see the reflection and the fire -- you know, that wall  
 24 of -- a glow coming along, you know. Because back in  
 25 the day it was a bit more easier where we had the single

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1 concrete column, you could stick your head out. I could  
 2 probably see St Mary's Hospital in the distance and the  
 3 Post Office Tower if I looked out. But now with the new  
 4 cladding squared off, it was a little bit more  
 5 difficult. But I could see that glow coming across.  
 6 Q. Could you see the actual glow itself or was it reflected  
 7 in the walls of the academy?  
 8 A. No, I could see the academy bit but I could actually see  
 9 the glow itself now, it was coming -- but as I said  
 10 maybe in my statement, I'm not too sure, I never saw the  
 11 fire entering my flat.  
 12 Q. Moving, then, to your second 999 call, and that is  
 13 LFB00000344, you made that call at 02.13.03.  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. If we have that on the screen, you can see it there,  
 16 Mr Burton. If you look at the transcript for that on  
 17 the first page, the second group of numbers from the  
 18 right: 021303, 02.13.03.  
 19 Before we look at the detail of the call, do you  
 20 remember where you were when you made this call?  
 21 A. Again, in the kitchen.  
 22 Q. You went back to the kitchen?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. So that Pily couldn't hear you?  
 25 A. Yes, I didn't want to alarm her.

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1 Q. What motivated this call?  
 2 A. Probably from what I'm seeing out the window and Simon's  
 3 call, I just wanted to be reassured a little bit that  
 4 they were coming for us, that they know that we were  
 5 there.  
 6 Q. On page 2, you start the call by saying:  
 7 "CALLER: Oh, hi, this (Inaudible) from 165 Grenfell  
 8 Tower. I know you --  
 9 "OPERATOR: 165?  
 10 "CALLER: Yeah, Grenfell Tower. Our tower block is on  
 11 fire --  
 12 "OPERATOR: Yeah.  
 13 "CALLER: -- and we're trapped in the 19th floor, but  
 14 nobody's coming and the flames next-door's getting very  
 15 close to our windows now, and the smoke's in the houses  
 16 (Overspeaking)"  
 17 Just on that little passage, why did you say  
 18 nobody's coming?  
 19 A. Because I still thought they would've come to our flat,  
 20 you know. There was lots of fire engines around and  
 21 I was just kind of -- I mean, I can't speak on behalf of  
 22 the Fire Brigade, I just thought if there's so many fire  
 23 officers, you'd do a floor-by-floor search to come. And  
 24 they knew that we were there, Simon informed them that  
 25 we were there. I thought, you know, they should be here

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<p>1 by now. I didn't know the difficulties that they were 2 having, and I thought it was just a methodical way of 3 doing things, like send a group of guys to floor 1, 4 floor 2, floor 3, and there would be a team just coming 5 for us and just escort us out.</p> <p>6 Q. That's what you expected, is it?</p> <p>7 A. That's what I expected, yes.</p> <p>8 Q. What had led you to expect that?</p> <p>9 A. Probably, you know, fires that have happened in the 10 tower before. Not at this scale. You know, as I said, 11 there was a fire opposite us in our neighbour's house at 12 one time, and the Fire Brigade came, put the fire out, 13 and it was very, very, you know, quickly done. So that 14 was my expectation, that, you know, there's a tower 15 block and someone would come methodically to go through 16 every single floor and just move us out. Even though 17 I was getting it in my ear from Simon, "You need to go 18 now, the whole tower's on fire, leave now, please, 19 please", it still kind of didn't register what happened.</p> <p>20 You know, unless our house was on fire and that 21 moment of fight/flight, you know, it would be difficult. 22 I would've left -- I mean, I wouldn't have left my wife, 23 never, but we would've gone in the end if the fire 24 would've come into our -- I would've had to say, "Let's 25 go now." But I wasn't taking that chance because, you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 and I've looked at the other evidence that has been 2 given to us, and it seemed that I came out the tower 3 maybe 02.33, or I was downstairs, but on the other 4 evidence, maybe from forensic architects or some other 5 thing, our flat was already on fire at 02.34. So 6 I didn't have enough time, but I didn't know the scale 7 of what was going to be happening.</p> <p>8 Q. Just teasing something out of the last answer. You say 9 you saw a wall of fire.</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Was that wall of fire at the level of your flat?</p> <p>12 A. I think it was maybe even higher. I think it was, to my 13 right, just a horizontal wall of fire coming across. 14 Maybe at an angle, I'm not too sure. I couldn't tell 15 you it was at angle this. But it just seemed it was 16 probably higher than my flat.</p> <p>17 Q. Did you get any sense of how fast it was moving 18 laterally towards you?</p> <p>19 A. No, not really, no.</p> <p>20 Q. You go on to say:</p> <p>21 "CALLER: ... and the smoke's in the houses 22 (Overspeaking)" 23 What did you mean by that?</p> <p>24 A. There was smoke in our house from when I opened the 25 door. I think a couple of times I opened the door,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 know, there wasn't such a panic. I wasn't panicked 2 myself enough.</p> <p>3 Q. Of course, this is your second 999 call.</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. We've seen your first 999 call.</p> <p>6 Was there anything in the first 999 call that you 7 took away from that call which had led to the 8 expectation that the Fire Brigade would be with you by 9 now?</p> <p>10 A. Yes, I just thought if they know that we're here, they 11 will come for us. So I don't know whether it's the 12 wrong assumption, but I just thought, okay, they know 13 that we're here, so I'll get a knock on the door.</p> <p>14 Q. Just focusing on the passage we're on, just above the 15 middle of that page on page 2, you say:</p> <p>16 "CALLER: ... and the flames next-door's getting very 17 close to our windows now ..."</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Just on that, where could you see flames?</p> <p>20 A. So if I looked out onto the north side, because I looked 21 out quite far, they were coming from the north-east of 22 the building. So it was just a wall of fire.</p> <p>23 But even then, I still didn't register that it was 24 going to, you know, be in our flat very shortly. I've 25 looked at the evidence and I know what time I came out,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 I think.</p> <p>2 But, yeah, it was -- I didn't see like smoke -- 3 I mean, some other people's statements say that they had 4 smoke coming through the windows, coming through, you 5 know, holes, but I didn't kind of register that. It was 6 just something I said. I don't know, sorry.</p> <p>7 Q. You say, just moving ahead in the call to page 4, at the 8 top of that page, that there's smoke in the whole house.</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. The question is, as you see from the second item down:</p> <p>11 "OPERATOR: ... Is the smoke okay at the moment?" 12 "CALLER: (Overspeaking) smoke in the whole house." 13 "OPERATOR: Okay." 14 "CALLER: Not bad smoke; we've got (Overspeaking) 15 "OPERATOR: But you're okay?" 16 Did you have smoke in the whole flat?</p> <p>17 A. Well, it was the smoke from opening and closing the 18 doors. That was the only smoke. There wasn't other 19 smoke coming in from the windowsills or anything else 20 like that.</p> <p>21 And, you know, after time, the smoke dissipates into 22 other rooms, but then afterwards, when I went to put my 23 wife into the bathroom, I closed the bedroom doors, the 24 living room door, the kitchen door. So I just closed 25 all the doors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 Q. So at the time of this second call -- is this right? --</p> <p>2 you had only opened the front door into the lobby once?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I may have opened it again, sorry. I just --</b></p> <p>4 Q. Right. But the only smoke that had come into the flat</p> <p>5 was from the lobby?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Was from the lobby, yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Okay.</p> <p>8 At that stage, was that smoke having any physical</p> <p>9 effect on you?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No, not really. No.</b></p> <p>11 Q. What about Pily?</p> <p>12 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Just going back a page, a slightly different topic on</p> <p>14 this same call, towards the bottom of the page, the</p> <p>15 operator says:</p> <p>16 "OPERATOR: Yeah, we are trying to get to you, but</p> <p>17 we've got --</p> <p>18 "CALLER: Yeah.</p> <p>19 "OPERATOR: -- numerous people trapped in the flats.</p> <p>20 So --</p> <p>21 "CALLER: Yeah, I understand.</p> <p>22 "OPERATOR: -- we just want to sort of try and</p> <p>23 assess how bad it is, but do you -- are you okay?</p> <p>24 When she said, "we just want to sort of try and</p> <p>25 assess how bad it is", what did you think the Fire</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 <b>other flats on that right-hand side. I mean, I didn't</b></p> <p>2 <b>know or see any fire on the west side or, like, flats</b></p> <p>3 <b>below us or anything else like this. So I just thought</b></p> <p>4 <b>they were just going on that side, so they would have to</b></p> <p>5 <b>do floor-by-floor, but the fire was there, so -- but</b></p> <p>6 <b>I was just confident that they were coming for us.</b></p> <p>7 Q. You were confident they would come for you; did you have</p> <p>8 any thoughts at the time about how long that might now</p> <p>9 take?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No, I just made a thing that they're coming and</b></p> <p>11 <b>reassured my wife that they were on their way.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Again, on that call -- and I haven't shown it all to you</p> <p>13 but it is right -- you weren't asked whether either you</p> <p>14 or Pily had any mobility difficulties.</p> <p>15 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Again, you didn't volunteer that information on that</p> <p>17 call.</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. My question remains the same question I asked you</p> <p>20 before: is there any reason why you didn't tell the</p> <p>21 operator that your wife had mobility difficulties?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I don't know. I don't know why it didn't come to mind.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Can I then take you back to your witness statement and</p> <p>24 go, please, to page 9.</p> <p>25 You say in paragraph 40 on that page:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 Brigade was up to? What was it doing?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Maybe I just thought they were just checking every</b></p> <p>3 <b>single floor and they would get to us at some stage.</b></p> <p>4 <b>You know, I can see now flames coming up the side of</b></p> <p>5 <b>the building, the phone calls from Simon, the reflection</b></p> <p>6 <b>from the school, you know, I knew that's -- you know,</b></p> <p>7 <b>but I was still a little bit confident that they'll come</b></p> <p>8 <b>and knock on the door and just -- you know, and</b></p> <p>9 <b>everything will be all right. Maybe they'll just put</b></p> <p>10 <b>the fire out. I didn't comprehend the scale of things.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Right.</p> <p>12 <b>A. And -- yeah.</b></p> <p>13 Q. The call then ends on page 5. At the top of the page:</p> <p>14 "OPERATOR: -- any worse, ring us back, but we are</p> <p>15 trying to get to you."</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. When the operator told you "we are trying to get to</p> <p>18 you", what did you think they were doing?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes, I thought they were going to come. I probably said</b></p> <p>20 <b>to my wife, "Don't worry, look, they're coming for us</b></p> <p>21 <b>now."</b></p> <p>22 Q. Did you get any kind of impression as to whether the LFB</p> <p>23 were prioritising other rescues ahead of you?</p> <p>24 <b>A. By the kind of analytical thing of seeing the wall of</b></p> <p>25 <b>fire, I think, you know, they must have been going to</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 "40. When I heard the noise outside our front door,</p> <p>2 I immediately went to the front door and shouted out</p> <p>3 from the inside and repeatedly struck the door with the</p> <p>4 palm of my hand. I was shouting 'hello' and 'we're</p> <p>5 here'."</p> <p>6 Let's just look at 38. You say in the second part</p> <p>7 of that paragraph:</p> <p>8 "It felt like an age before anything happened</p> <p>9 between the time of that second call and when I heard</p> <p>10 noises outside in the corridor, but I now realise that</p> <p>11 it cannot have been for more than 10 minutes or so."</p> <p>12 How do you calculate or estimate the 10 minutes?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Because I tried to analyse from -- the timelines are</b></p> <p>14 <b>very sketchy in my head about everything that happened,</b></p> <p>15 <b>so I'm just kind of estimating. I don't know the exact</b></p> <p>16 <b>times, I don't know actually how long we were in the</b></p> <p>17 <b>flat, I don't know the time of the bang on the door; it</b></p> <p>18 <b>just seemed that we were doing things calmly, you know,</b></p> <p>19 <b>getting my wife dressed, sitting down, taking the calls,</b></p> <p>20 <b>you know, it wasn't like a panic or rush, and I'm just</b></p> <p>21 <b>trying to figure out by the picture of myself being</b></p> <p>22 <b>downstairs and the time of the call. So that's where</b></p> <p>23 <b>I've got that kind of --</b></p> <p>24 Q. Right.</p> <p>25 <b>A. That kind of number, yeah.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

15 (Pages 57 to 60)

<p>1 Q. So would it be fair to summarise your estimation process 2 as saying, well you start with 02.13 as the time of the 3 second call and 02.33 as your exit time?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes, and take about the time it takes to come down the 5 stairs, I don't even know how long that took, and -- so 6 that's the analysis of how -- working that out.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Where were you when you heard the bang at the door, or 8 noise at the door?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, so my wife was sitting on the bath and I was just 10 standing, like, holding her hand, and I just heard 11 a little noise or something at the door. So I thought: 12 oh, maybe the Fire Brigade are here. So I just went and 13 instead of just opening the door, I just started banging 14 on the door.</b></p> <p>15 Q. What was the noise you heard at the door?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I don't know, maybe somebody talking or a voice or 17 something like that.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Was it easy to hear the noises from the bathroom?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No, not really. Not really. I don't know what it was 20 that triggered me to -- I heard something so I just 21 acted.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Do you think you would've heard those noises if you'd 23 been somewhere else in your flat, like the living room?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No, I don't believe I would've.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Were the noises at the door directed at you or were they</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 <b>161, Debbie.</b></p> <p>2 Q. You then describe at paragraph 41:</p> <p>3 "41. I then heard a voice from outside telling us 4 to be prepared to come out and that we should get towels 5 that were completely wet." 6 You go on to describe the preparations that you made 7 to get you, Pily and your dog out of the flat.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Where were the firefighters at that stage when you were 10 making these preparations?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I'm not too sure. They just told us, you know, "We know 12 you're there, we're just going to go and check your 13 neighbour." Then I heard an almighty bang, several 14 bangs, and then we just waited. So I just made sure the 15 towels -- put some more water on the towels that were in 16 bath, and then I tried to get my wife to stand up and go 17 to, like, near the front door. And then I tried to put 18 a towel on her, and she was just like, "Get away, don't 19 put that on me". Put one on my dog, Lewis -- I don't 20 know why I did that -- and we just waited until they 21 returned.</b></p> <p>22 Q. When they returned, did they bang on the door again?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, I think -- boom -- there was a kick or a bang or 24 something like this, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did any of those firefighters ask you whether you or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 just --</p> <p>2 <b>A. I just heard a noise and I just started banging.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Right.</p> <p>4 You went to the front door, you say, and shouted out 5 from the inside -- I'm sorry, this is paragraph 40, if 6 we just have that back up on the screen -- you say: 7 "40. When I heard the noise outside our front door, 8 I immediately went to the front door and shouted out 9 from the inside and repeatedly struck the door with the 10 palm of my hand. I was shouting 'hello' and 'we're 11 here'. I think I repeated this several times. I 12 believe I heard a response saying something like that 13 they knew I was there but they wanted to check the 14 neighbours. I heard a bang on Fatima's door, which is 15 Flat 164."</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes. I just thought it was Fatima's door because the 17 bang was loud. They said they were checking our 18 neighbour and then I heard an almighty bang several 19 times, boom, so I just thought it was -- it was so loud, 20 I just thought it was the flat as soon as you come out 21 our flat door to the right, 164, because it was loud.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Right. The front door to 164 is adjacent to yours?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. To your right, I think.</p> <p>25 <b>A. To my right, yes. But I found out it was our friend at</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 Pily had any mobility or any other issues?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, no.</b></p> <p>3 Q. How many firefighters did you see or sense were there?</p> <p>4 <b>A. At that point, I didn't know how many were outside. But 5 once we opened the door, I didn't know how many were 6 there, but I just sensed that somebody grabbed my wife, 7 somebody grabbed me.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Yes.</p> <p>9 <b>A. I didn't see them -- I mean, I didn't register what they 10 looked like, it was just like an arm coming out of the 11 smoke, the smoke just gushed into the flat, and then -- 12 I didn't really even see properly the fire officers. 13 I just see an arm come for my wife. I think the officer 14 may have stepped in, but another arm came for me, and 15 that was -- because they said, "Be prepared, get ready, 16 we're coming, open the door now."</b></p> <p>17 <b>So --</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did you open the door to them?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. And then at that moment smoke rushed in?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, the smoke rushed in, and I said, "I've got my dog 22 here." The fireman said, "I'm really sorry, we've got 23 to go now", and that was it.</b></p> <p>24 Q. When do you recall that the firefighters first realised 25 that Pily had mobility difficulties?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

16 (Pages 61 to 64)

1 **A. I don't think they ever knew. You know, I think the**  
 2 **fire officer, once Pily went out into the -- so, you**  
 3 **know, we went out into the darkness, and it was**  
 4 **completely, completely dark. And I think then I had my**  
 5 **hand around my wife's waist, and then when we went into**  
 6 **the darkness, I lost her. So I started screaming,**  
 7 **"Where's my wife? Where's my wife?" and somebody said**  
 8 **"Look, I've got her."**  
 9 **And ...**  
 10 Q. Then you crossed the lobby.  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. With the firefighter?  
 13 **A. With the firefighters, yes.**  
 14 Q. When you got to the stair door, who opened the door to  
 15 the stairs, do you remember?  
 16 **A. It was dark, I never saw anything. I didn't see the**  
 17 **door opening, I didn't see how we got into the**  
 18 **stairwell. We were just shuffling along. The gentleman**  
 19 **had me very tightly on my left arm, and I thought that**  
 20 **the fire officer and myself went first, I believe, but**  
 21 **I've read otherwise that we didn't. But I just thought**  
 22 **that we went first, but I didn't -- I thought my dog**  
 23 **would come, you know, afterwards.**  
 24 MR MILLETT: Take a moment. Take a moment.  
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Do you want a break?

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1 THE WITNESS: No, no, I'm fine, thank you.  
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Just take a moment.  
 3 (Pause)  
 4 **A. Yes. So we just -- I don't remember the stairwell door**  
 5 **opening or closing because it was just dark.**  
 6 **Of course, I've got a towel over my head, my eyes**  
 7 **are open, my eyes are closed, my eyes are open, my eyes**  
 8 **are closed, towel -- but there was no light.**  
 9 Q. Just some questions on the lobby.  
 10 How long -- and it's very much an estimate, of  
 11 course -- do you think it took for you to cross the  
 12 lobby from your front door to the stair door?  
 13 **A. Maybe 10 seconds. Just shuffled along. We weren't**  
 14 **dragged, we were just shuffled along and there was -- it**  
 15 **wasn't far.**  
 16 Q. During that --  
 17 **A. That's probably from where I'm sitting to where you're**  
 18 **standing, just a little bit more.**  
 19 Q. During that period, you said earlier in your evidence  
 20 this morning that you registered a whirring or whining  
 21 sound.  
 22 **A. Yes, a whining sound, that was going on. So it wasn't**  
 23 **alarm bells or anything else, it's just this "woo"**  
 24 **sound.**  
 25 Q. How loud was it?

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1 **A. It was audible, audible. It wasn't, like, super loud,**  
 2 **but it was just constant whining. I don't know what it**  
 3 **was.**  
 4 Q. Had you ever heard it before?  
 5 **A. Not in that capacity. I mean, I don't know whether it**  
 6 **was the extractor system, because I've heard that going**  
 7 **off and making noise, but it was just a mixture -- yes,**  
 8 **just this whining noise, I don't know. I don't know**  
 9 **where it was coming from.**  
 10 Q. You say you had heard the extractor system going off  
 11 before. That's before the fire?  
 12 **A. That's before the fire. That used to make noise.**  
 13 **I mean, the extractor system has always been there, but**  
 14 **I remember them upgrading it and cleaning it. One day**  
 15 **they had the front panels off and it was nice and shiny**  
 16 **and clean in there. But the vents have always been**  
 17 **there; that's part of the fabric of the building.**  
 18 **But one day I saw they took the grille off and it**  
 19 **was all nice, clean, shiny metal inside. So they**  
 20 **upgraded it or just cleaned it out, I don't know.**  
 21 Q. These noises that you heard the extractor fan making,  
 22 was that after the refurbishment or --  
 23 **A. Yes, more after the refurbishment. Before I never used**  
 24 **to notice. I mean, I probably knew what they were for,**  
 25 **but it was more after the refurbishment that that**

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1 **noise -- it's mainly on the ground floor where the lift**  
 2 **lobby is. You hear it a lot then, but --**  
 3 Q. Did you ever talk to anybody at the TMO about that  
 4 noise?  
 5 **A. Personally, no, I didn't. I didn't.**  
 6 Q. Did you hear it when you were inside your flat at any  
 7 time?  
 8 **A. No.**  
 9 Q. So you heard it, and you say it wasn't loud.  
 10 Could you compare it with a vacuum cleaner? Louder  
 11 or softer than a vacuum cleaner?  
 12 **A. It could've been -- I mean, there was a lot going on.**  
 13 **It's not as -- you know, probably vacuum cleanerish,**  
 14 **yeah, but I wasn't registering. I just know that there**  
 15 **was a whining noise, but I was more concerned about**  
 16 **where my wife was and what was happening to all of us.**  
 17 Q. The smoke that you saw when you went out into the lobby,  
 18 was that thicker than or the same as the smoke that you  
 19 first saw when you first opened your door?  
 20 **A. No, it was the same. It was just acrid, black smoke.**  
 21 **It looked like someone had set fire to a tyre in our**  
 22 **lobby, and just that jet black smoke that we were, you**  
 23 **know, having to breathe in. But imagine setting fire to**  
 24 **a tyre and then sticking your face in it and staying**  
 25 **there. That's how it felt.**

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1 Q. Did it have any physical effect on you?  
 2 **A. Yes, afterwards, yes, absolutely. I was sick for a long**  
 3 **time. I collapsed several times. I had to go back to**  
 4 **hospital. I had --**  
 5 Q. I'm sorry to cut across your evidence, but during your  
 6 progress across the lobby, did it have any immediate  
 7 physical effect on you?  
 8 **A. Just the effects of taking a gulp of that, you know.**  
 9 **There's no clean, fresh air to take in, so you have to**  
 10 **take that acrid, black smoke into your lungs, and your**  
 11 **next breath would be another one, and another one, and**  
 12 **another one because there's no clean air, so you just**  
 13 **have to, you know, take it in.**  
 14 Q. Did the towels not help?  
 15 **A. When I was going down the stairwell, I found myself that**  
 16 **I couldn't breathe, so I just thought to myself: look --**  
 17 **because I used to do scuba diving, so I thought: you**  
 18 **don't have to breathe every nanosecond. If you go scuba**  
 19 **diving, the first 10 or 15 dives you run out of oxygen**  
 20 **very quickly because you panic to breathe, but**  
 21 **afterwards you take your breathing much slower.**  
 22 **I decided that even though we're going around and around**  
 23 **and around and around and around, I just thought if**  
 24 **I just kind of control my breathing -- but then it was**  
 25 **just so hot that I got the corner of the towel and**

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1 **twisted it around and stuck it as far back into my**  
 2 **throat as possible, because it was just hot on the back**  
 3 **of my throat. It was just burning.**  
 4 **So I just couldn't -- and the towel was moist, and**  
 5 **so that kind of maybe alleviated it a little bit, but of**  
 6 **course you've got to take a breath, so ...**  
 7 **And it was in the darkness. And even going down the**  
 8 **stairs, you know, I don't know how many stairs, maybe**  
 9 **eight stairs, you've got to run down eight, there's**  
 10 **a flat bit, eight again, a flat bit, eight again, in the**  
 11 **dark. It's like asking you to go to platform 1 on**  
 12 **Chancery Lane tube station. It's hard to fathom where**  
 13 **you are. You don't want to run downstairs because you**  
 14 **know it's stairs, and you know you've got to move, and**  
 15 **it's just the bravery and the strength of the fire**  
 16 **officer running along the wall, while I was going on the**  
 17 **inside of where the railings were.**  
 18 Q. I'm going to come to the stair conditions in a bit more  
 19 detail in just a moment.  
 20 Before I do, can I just ask you, still in the lobby,  
 21 did you notice any change in temperature in the lobby  
 22 between leaving your flat and going into the lobby?  
 23 **A. Yes, the temperature changed. It was much hotter.**  
 24 **I mean, there was like a whoosh, like I could feel that**  
 25 **the temperature changed. But I think the biggest**

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1 **temperature change was in the stairwell. It was just**  
 2 **that initial shock that was in the -- out of my flat and**  
 3 **there was an atmospheric change, of course, but**  
 4 **I remember more heat in the stairwell.**  
 5 Q. Just staying with the lobby for the moment, could you  
 6 give us some impression about how hot it was in the  
 7 lobby, comparing it with something like a hot English  
 8 summer's day or a sauna?  
 9 **A. No, in the lobby, not necessarily -- I think the sauna**  
 10 **bit was the stairwell, but more of a summer's day kind**  
 11 **of -- there was a temperature change, so it's not that**  
 12 **I registered the differential, but the stairwell was --**  
 13 **that's like that vacuum of like walking into a sauna,**  
 14 **that's a different atmosphere.**  
 15 Q. That's my next question: when you get into the stairs,  
 16 was that change in temperature immediate?  
 17 **A. No, as I went further down the stairwell, it got hotter.**  
 18 Q. Okay.  
 19 **A. Then I was holding onto the rail, and then I don't know**  
 20 **what happened, the heat was just unbearable. I didn't**  
 21 **see any fire, I didn't see anything, but I just know**  
 22 **that I was holding onto the rail and it got hotter and**  
 23 **hotter, and then I could not touch it. It was like**  
 24 **maybe opening my car and touching the engine straight**  
 25 **after it's just been turned off. You wouldn't want to**

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1 **touch the metal, and then I couldn't. So I couldn't**  
 2 **touch the -- and I don't know where we were in the**  
 3 **stairwell, what floor or anything, I just understood**  
 4 **that maybe this is it, maybe fire's going to come now or**  
 5 **maybe there's been a gas explosion in the stairwell**  
 6 **because there was a gas pipe running the whole length of**  
 7 **the -- I mean, with my friend Shah, we discussed that**  
 8 **with the TMO, with the council, why -- you know,**  
 9 **an afterthought of we just had this £10 million**  
 10 **refurbishment, you put all new false ceilings, and now**  
 11 **your secondary thought is, oh, we forgot the gas, so**  
 12 **we're going to put more pipes and more things into your**  
 13 **houses and change things around, and I maybe thought**  
 14 **that one of the gas pipes had blown because the heat was**  
 15 **very intense.**  
 16 Q. Was that a thought you had while you were descending the  
 17 stairs?  
 18 **A. Yes, I think because I couldn't register why there would**  
 19 **be so much heat in the area that you're meant to be the**  
 20 **safest in. So the stairs are meant to be the**  
 21 **protection, the shell, the inner core where people**  
 22 **should be safe to get out of the tower, and I just**  
 23 **didn't comprehend how that much heat was in that thing.**  
 24 **Did it come from outer flats into the stairwell, or was**  
 25 **it produced in the stairwell and maybe the gas had**

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<p>1 <b>ruptured and been on fire?</b></p> <p>2 <b>I mean, I didn't see any fire. There wasn't like</b></p> <p>3 <b>a panic where -- most of my thoughts were about</b></p> <p>4 <b>breathing and, like, where is my wife? If I'm suffering</b></p> <p>5 <b>like now, what is she going through? You know, I didn't</b></p> <p>6 <b>know that she'd already collapsed and everything else</b></p> <p>7 <b>like this. But my mind was like: I'm not going to make</b></p> <p>8 <b>this, so, you know, where is my wife?</b></p> <p>9 Q. I understand.</p> <p>10 I know it's very difficult, but I want to see if</p> <p>11 I can unpick a little bit of the temperature changes as</p> <p>12 you come down.</p> <p>13 So when you leave the lobby and you enter the stairs</p> <p>14 for the first time, put your foot on the stairs, so you</p> <p>15 know you're in the stairs --</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. -- did you notice a change in temperature at that point?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No, not from --</b></p> <p>19 Q. From the lobby to the stairs?</p> <p>20 <b>A. -- initially coming out of the -- I think my mind was</b></p> <p>21 <b>registering on: okay, this is the stairs, you know, so</b></p> <p>22 <b>now we're going to go down the stairs in pitch black.</b></p> <p>23 <b>We came down the stairs a bit and then I think I stepped</b></p> <p>24 <b>on somebody. I think there was a body in the stairwell.</b></p> <p>25 <b>So I was like, whoa, and I was just trying to register,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 <b>A. The problem is that I can remember the heat, I can</b></p> <p>2 <b>remember the railing, but I have a total -- I know</b></p> <p>3 <b>I said some things in my statement, but I have a total</b></p> <p>4 <b>blackout of how or when I came into or got handed over.</b></p> <p>5 <b>I don't remember anything of the bottom part of the</b></p> <p>6 <b>stairs. I tried in my mind to, you know, see what</b></p> <p>7 <b>happened, but there was a point where I thought I was</b></p> <p>8 <b>finished, I was buckling, I couldn't breathe.</b></p> <p>9 <b>I don't believe that I passed out. I don't</b></p> <p>10 <b>believe -- I think the fire officer's statement would've</b></p> <p>11 <b>said, "This guy's passed out" or something like this, so</b></p> <p>12 <b>I don't believe I passed out, but I don't have in my</b></p> <p>13 <b>mind now the recollection of the bottom half, of coming</b></p> <p>14 <b>out or meeting anybody or being handed over. I got</b></p> <p>15 <b>nothing in my brain about that at all.</b></p> <p>16 <b>My next realisation, my next awakening, was being in</b></p> <p>17 <b>the atrium, and I think I already had a discussion with</b></p> <p>18 <b>somebody that I wasn't leaving the tower.</b></p> <p>19 <b>So there's a lot of things that I just -- I know</b></p> <p>20 <b>I read my statements and said there's a handover or</b></p> <p>21 <b>something like that, but in my head now, I've got</b></p> <p>22 <b>nothing at all recollection of what happened at that</b></p> <p>23 <b>those bottom stairs, coming into the light or into fresh</b></p> <p>24 <b>air or anything. I've got nothing at all in my brain.</b></p> <p>25 <b>I've tried to search, but I don't have nothing at</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 <b>that felt funny. Because I looked down, I couldn't see</b></p> <p>2 <b>my feet, and then I kind of thought, that can't be,</b></p> <p>3 <b>maybe it's a fire hose or something like that. I was</b></p> <p>4 <b>just trying to -- but then we continued down. I don't</b></p> <p>5 <b>know if there was things in the way in the stairs, but</b></p> <p>6 <b>that initial of me stepping -- I thought I stepped on</b></p> <p>7 <b>somebody, and that happened quite quickly, I think.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Before that experience, did you notice a change in the</p> <p>9 temperature in the stairs?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Not necessarily from the lobby into that stairs, but</b></p> <p>11 <b>once we were in the stairs, there was a differential</b></p> <p>12 <b>change to the atmosphere and the heat.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Once you were into the stairs, and how big was the</p> <p>14 change in temperature once you'd got into the stairs?</p> <p>15 <b>A. As we went further down, it got hotter and hotter and</b></p> <p>16 <b>hotter, yeah.</b></p> <p>17 Q. At what point -- again, it's difficult, I know, to be</p> <p>18 precise about these things -- after how many flights or</p> <p>19 so do you think you began to notice it getting hotter?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I couldn't guesstimate about -- I just didn't know where</b></p> <p>21 <b>I was or anything else.</b></p> <p>22 Q. You described the hot handrail and the heat.</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Was there a point during your descent when it began to</p> <p>25 cool down a bit, or at all?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 <b>all.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So you don't remember at what point you first saw light?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No. The next realisation in my mind is standing next to</b></p> <p>4 <b>the green door to the boxing ring. So I must have had</b></p> <p>5 <b>a discussion that I was not leaving the tower until</b></p> <p>6 <b>I know where my wife is.</b></p> <p>7 <b>I'm sorry, I just don't have that visual in my head</b></p> <p>8 <b>at all.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Okay.</p> <p>10 Before that blank period, is there a point you do</p> <p>11 remember when you registered the heat being at peak</p> <p>12 intensity or --</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, when I was having to take my hand off the rail.</b></p> <p>14 <b>So --</b></p> <p>15 Q. That's very helpful. But just trying to see if I can</p> <p>16 get a bit more out of this, roughly how many flights do</p> <p>17 you think you'd gone down when it got to that point?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you whether it's</b></p> <p>19 <b>on the 3rd floor, the 10th floor, or even the</b></p> <p>20 <b>16th floor. I couldn't -- less than the 16th floor,</b></p> <p>21 <b>because we'd been going around and around, but I could</b></p> <p>22 <b>not tell you exactly the point of -- I don't think</b></p> <p>23 <b>I blacked out or collapsed or fell over, but I just</b></p> <p>24 <b>don't know. I have no recollection of coming into fresh</b></p> <p>25 <b>air, coming into being handed over or maybe somebody</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

1 else taking me. I don't know what happened.  
 2 Q. You say "less than the 16th floor, because we'd been  
 3 going around and around".  
 4 A. Yes, so we'd been going around and around for a bit, and  
 5 then I don't know where the heat was coming from, and it  
 6 was just getting hotter and hotter, and then I just  
 7 vaguely remember just the heat of the banister. That  
 8 was just intense. But the brave fire officer, he was --  
 9 I remember him reassuring me, "You can do it, we're  
 10 nearly there, let's go. We can do it, we're nearly  
 11 there, let's go, you're going to make it." So I can  
 12 hear that ringing in my head, even though I never even  
 13 saw the gentleman. But I just -- yeah, I just --  
 14 I don't remember anything in that kind of section.  
 15 Q. Outside the tower you were treated, I think, by the  
 16 paramedics.  
 17 A. Oh, but before, I must have had some discussion, because  
 18 I was at the gym door, and then time just stopped. It  
 19 just seemed forever and ever and ever, and I was  
 20 panicking, because I didn't know whether my wife was out  
 21 first or she was behind me, because, you know, I didn't  
 22 know what was happening. But I knew that I was standing  
 23 my ground and I wasn't going to leave that tower until  
 24 I knew where my wife was.  
 25 And then -- boom -- the door burst open, and, you

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1 know, four fire officers had my wife, one on each limb,  
 2 so they were holding her backwards. Apart from her  
 3 little top, she had no clothes on, no socks, no shoes,  
 4 no underwear, no trousers, no cardigan, and I just  
 5 thought she was dead. I thought maybe she got burnt or  
 6 something's happened in that stairwell, and, you know,  
 7 she had no clothes on. So I was just standing there in  
 8 total disarray and shock. What's happened to her? She  
 9 dead, they're just bringing her out.  
 10 They come past me and they didn't even stop to look  
 11 at me, really, but I had the towel, so I just threw it  
 12 over her, and they just continued. But I think we  
 13 waited, I don't know how long it was, at the bottom,  
 14 because we had to wait for fire officers or police  
 15 officers with riot shields, because now the debris  
 16 outside the front, main door was raining. I mean, they  
 17 was coming down.  
 18 So we had to have a shelter. So the officers had my  
 19 wife still like this (Indicates), and then we waited to  
 20 be rushed out of the tower, under where the garages are  
 21 and then led away.  
 22 Q. Did you see Pily being treated outside?  
 23 A. What happened was I tried to make my way across the  
 24 green, and there was a commotion with people coming to  
 25 us, and everything else.

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1 I turned round once and saw the whole of the  
 2 building totally ablaze, and that will stick in my head,  
 3 you know, forever, just that one snapshot.  
 4 And then I got -- I think near Bomore Road there was  
 5 three mats, so there was maybe a red mat, a yellow mat  
 6 and a green mat, triage mats, big ones. I think they  
 7 were split into like four as well, and I think I just  
 8 got taken over to the green mat, and I sat down against  
 9 the wall and tried to catch my breath, because I was in  
 10 total disarray.  
 11 I think I saw some people that I knew, Petra and her  
 12 husband, they were sitting near a tree, and just kind  
 13 of -- but then I was in total panic because I looked  
 14 over and I saw somebody --  
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Take a moment if you want.  
 16 A. I saw somebody having CPR. So I thought, you know,  
 17 after seeing my wife coming out with no clothes on --  
 18 and I thought she was dead.  
 19 So I just -- and I tried to get up and there was  
 20 people around, "Are you okay?" I was just saying,  
 21 "Where is my wife? I need to get my wife." Then all of  
 22 a sudden somebody just said, "Is this your wife?" and  
 23 she just come walking over. So after a little bit more  
 24 investigation, I think it was a gentleman having CPR and  
 25 I don't think he made it.

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1 So we embraced, and then I tried to get up, but then  
 2 I think I collapsed, and then they brought me over to  
 3 the yellow mat and started putting an oxygen mask over  
 4 me and giving me oxygen.  
 5 And then I was like trying to get back to my wife  
 6 because I wasn't really being a good patient, because  
 7 I wanted to get up, and then somebody said, "Oh, your  
 8 wife is gone." So I said, "Gone where?" Then they  
 9 said, "They've taken her." I said, "Where?" So they  
 10 went off and I said, "Go and find out where they're  
 11 taking her", and they come back and said, "I think  
 12 they're going to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital."  
 13 So when some more paramedics and people came for me,  
 14 I was demanding I need to go to -- because I think our  
 15 local hospital for that area is like St Mary's or  
 16 Charing Cross -- Charing Cross I think is our local for  
 17 that area, so you automatically get taken, but I was  
 18 saying, "I'm not going nowhere unless you take me to  
 19 Chelsea and Westminster, my wife is there."  
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, do you have a number of  
 21 other questions?  
 22 MR MILLETT: I have three or four on the same topic and then  
 23 I'm finished.  
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I wonder whether Mr Burton should  
 25 have a break.

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1 Would you like a break now, Mr Burton?  
 2 THE WITNESS: No, no, I'm fine, thank you.  
 3 MR MILLETT: We will take a break anyway at the end of these  
 4 questions, Mr Chairman. We'll take the customary break.  
 5 If the witness is content to continue for another  
 6 5 minutes or so --  
 7 THE WITNESS: Yes, sure.  
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Okay, thank you very much.  
 9 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.  
 10 I think we know that you were taken in an ambulance  
 11 and then you couldn't find her, and it took 12 hours to  
 12 find out where she was. It turned out that she'd gone  
 13 to the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead.  
 14 **A. Yes, because I got taken in the ambulance. I got taken**  
 15 **on a stretcher, but once I was in the ambulance, the**  
 16 **mood got lighter with the ambulance people there. I was**  
 17 **kind of still trying to catch my breath and soot was**  
 18 **coming out everywhere and coughing, but it got lighter.**  
 19 **I thought I'm going to go to be reunited.**  
 20 **But when I got to Chelsea and Westminster, she**  
 21 **wasn't there, and I saw a friend of mine from a company**  
 22 **that I used to work for, he was working in A&E, so**  
 23 **I told him, "Please, go and find my wife, she's here,**  
 24 **she's here." So I was very emotional in the hospital**  
 25 **because he was telling me, "I can't find her".**

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1 Q. You say in your statement that it took until 6.00 pm the  
 2 next evening.  
 3 **A. 6.00 or 3.00, I'm not too sure of the time. Yes,**  
 4 **6.00 -- oh, no, it wasn't 6.00, it was maybe 3.00,**  
 5 **I think, sorry.**  
 6 Q. How were you able in the end to discover where she was?  
 7 **A. It was actually a phone call that came in to me.**  
 8 **I already spoke to my sister, so my sister was on the**  
 9 **case. Other people, people were phoning me. I think**  
 10 **one of my first phone calls was actually from New**  
 11 **Zealand where my friend was watching it in daylight from**  
 12 **New Zealand. Other people were phoning. Because I did**  
 13 **actually when I was on the triage take time to just text**  
 14 **my mother, my sister, my son-in-law, my grandson, like,**  
 15 **"Don't worry, we're okay" or something like this.**  
 16 **I just left it like that.**  
 17 Q. Were you aware of any system in place for finding out  
 18 where Pily had been taken or was it just a question of  
 19 ringing around, trying pot luck?  
 20 **A. I don't know about the systems, but there was a --**  
 21 **because I worked in hospitals for 12 or something years,**  
 22 **you know, I've always worked in hospitals, but when**  
 23 **there's major incidents, there's an information**  
 24 **close-down, so it's even difficult for families and**  
 25 **press and other people to find out. They don't even put**

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1 **your name on your band, they just, you know, MI001 or**  
 2 **whatever, or something like this. So it was very**  
 3 **difficult. And I actually got a phone call maybe from**  
 4 **the hospital to say that she's here.**  
 5 Q. Going to paragraph 63, just for a second, on page 21,  
 6 you say:  
 7 "63. It took me a full 12 hours to finally found  
 8 out where Pily was. She had been taken to the Royal  
 9 Free Hospital. After hours in Accident & Emergency and  
 10 then transferred to a ward, I phoned around people that  
 11 I knew at different hospitals asking them if they could  
 12 look out for Pily. Eventually I received a call from  
 13 the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead to tell me that  
 14 Pily was there and was safe."  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. So, first of all, you were in A&E at Chelsea and  
 17 Westminster, were you?  
 18 **A. Chelsea and Westminster, yes.**  
 19 Q. Did you ask the staff there to find Pily?  
 20 **A. Yes, I did.**  
 21 Q. What did they tell you?  
 22 **A. I asked the nurses, the doctors, everybody that would**  
 23 **listen, "Where is my wife? She's been brought here."**  
 24 **I was quite adamant that she's here. Then I met my**  
 25 **friend Paulo, and I told him to go and look. I said,**

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1 **"You have access to, you know -- you know my wife's**  
 2 **face, so you know my wife, so go and look for her,**  
 3 **please."**  
 4 Q. Were the services at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital  
 5 able to tell you at least how to go about finding her?  
 6 **A. No, no.**  
 7 Q. Then you received a call from Royal Free. Did they tell  
 8 you how they got hold of you?  
 9 **A. No.**  
 10 Q. So it was a call out of the blue, was it?  
 11 **A. It was a call out of the blue saying, "Your wife is here**  
 12 **at the Royal Free Hospital."**  
 13 **So I decided that I'm not going to stay there**  
 14 **anymore, and I'll get out and go.**  
 15 MR MILLETT: Mr Burton, I've come to the end of my  
 16 questions. I think now may be the time for our  
 17 customary break so I can check my notes to see if  
 18 there's anything else I need to ask you or whether other  
 19 people have things they would like me to ask you.  
 20 So, Mr Chairman, if we can rise for a short time.  
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll have a short break at this  
 22 point, Mr Burton, until 12.20.  
 23 As I said before, please don't talk about your  
 24 evidence to anyone while you're out of the room. If you  
 25 would like to go with the usher now, she'll look after

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1 you.  
 2 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Thank you.  
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, 12.20, please.  
 4 (12.15 pm)  
 5 (A short break)  
 6 (12.20 pm)  
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, Mr Millett has a few  
 8 questions, he says, so we'll see where we go.  
 9 THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you.  
 10 MR MILLETT: Mr Burton, just a few. Thank you very much for  
 11 coming back to us.  
 12 This is really just to treble check something. You  
 13 told us that the smoke came into the flat as a result of  
 14 opening the front door to the lobby, once, perhaps  
 15 twice.  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. Once the front door was closed and you had wet towels  
 18 put in place --  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. -- did you see any smoke coming through either the  
 21 bottom, top or the sides of the door?  
 22 **A. No, I didn't.**  
 23 Q. Different question: you told us that you worked in  
 24 hospitals.  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 Q. Is it also right that your wife, Pily, had also worked  
 2 in hospitals?  
 3 **A. Yes, that's correct, for many years.**  
 4 Q. So in that respect, would it be right that you and she  
 5 knew the hospital system, if I can put it that way, you  
 6 knew your way around the London hospital system quite  
 7 well?  
 8 **A. Yes. I mean, my wife was like a contract manager for**  
 9 **facilities, for catering and domestics and cleaning, and**  
 10 **I've had several different job roles, like I used to run**  
 11 **the catering at Charing Cross Hospital, it was a big**  
 12 **major hospital, 500-plus beds, St Mary's, run the**  
 13 **catering at St Mary's, I've run private hospitals.**  
 14 **So I had an idea of -- you know, because I do**  
 15 **training for staff on health and safety, and I've had**  
 16 **fire training.**  
 17 **But, I mean, I think you're probably getting at the**  
 18 **system of communications for families to find, you know,**  
 19 **their loved ones in hospital.**  
 20 **But I've had lots of kind of training.**  
 21 **I mean, in a major hospital, you know, if you're in**  
 22 **the office and the fire alarm goes off, you go down the**  
 23 **stairwell and you go congregate in areas.**  
 24 **If the fire is on a ward, for the patients, you**  
 25 **don't evacuate the patients, you decamp them from one**

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1 **ward to another. So it's a decamping system and other**  
 2 **people go and wait in car parks everything else. We've**  
 3 **had many of those in the hospital system.**  
 4 Q. My question is really -- or I haven't really asked it  
 5 yet, but were you able as a result of your and, indeed,  
 6 Pily's experience and career working in the hospital  
 7 environment -- did that enable you to draw on the help  
 8 of friends and colleagues or ex-colleagues to be able to  
 9 find Pily?  
 10 **A. Yes, because people were phoning me -- yes,**  
 11 **I understand.**  
 12 **You know, yes, actually I think one of my directors**  
 13 **called during the night as well. I think he runs**  
 14 **Chelsea and Westminster hospital, and some other**  
 15 **people -- because my phone was -- I didn't get much**  
 16 **sleep even though I was -- the nursing staff were very**  
 17 **adamant that I just sit there quietly and take in**  
 18 **oxygen, but I was a bit more vocal about, you know,**  
 19 **I need to find -- and people were phoning me, even**  
 20 **though it was very late and early into the morning,**  
 21 **people knew about it very, very quickly.**  
 22 **But at that stage, I think it was just my colleague**  
 23 **Paulo that I was kind of begging when I first arrived at**  
 24 **Chelsea and Westminster to go and try and find -- you**  
 25 **know, I knew a lot of people already in the hospital in**

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1 **the domestics and catering services at Chelsea and**  
 2 **Westminster, but, yeah, we were kind of shut off to the**  
 3 **world, you know. We were put into a ward and, you**  
 4 **know -- I remember going and visiting my wife on the**  
 5 **ward and they had police officers there stopping people**  
 6 **coming in. People were saying that their friends or**  
 7 **their -- even people saying they were related and still**  
 8 **trying to get onto the ward.**  
 9 **So when I went to Hampstead hospital, yeah, there**  
 10 **was police officers and everything there guarding my**  
 11 **wife, and I think Rebecca.**  
 12 Q. Were you ever told of the selection process that was  
 13 used to decide which hospital people from Grenfell were  
 14 sent to?  
 15 **A. No. I was never -- usually I think from the tower**  
 16 **catchment area, I think Charing Cross is the local**  
 17 **hospital, because it probably doesn't take very long to**  
 18 **get there, and Chelsea and Westminster. Also St Mary's,**  
 19 **Paddington.**  
 20 **I think it's just to do with catchment areas.**  
 21 **I think it's probably their operating system for the**  
 22 **ambulance to say we're going to this. I didn't know**  
 23 **about the wider scale because, I mean, I know -- I mean,**  
 24 **I was at St Mary's Hospital during the 7/7 bombings and**  
 25 **I know that they lock down the hospitals and stuff like**

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1 this and people come from different parts of what was  
 2 happening in London, mainly to do with the speciality of  
 3 the hospital. So if they found someone maybe with  
 4 a heart attack but they were in Russell Square, they  
 5 might take them to UCL or might take them St Mary's.  
 6 It's all -- I'm not too sure exactly how their systems  
 7 work to have an understanding of what happened.  
 8 Q. Mr Burton, I have one final question for you, and it's  
 9 this: is there anything, over and above your written  
 10 witness statement and over and above what you've told us  
 11 today, about the events of the night, what you heard,  
 12 what you saw, what you smelt, what you felt, that you  
 13 think it's important for the chairman to know?  
 14 A. I've been deliberating about this question because  
 15 you've asked it many times, and I thought if I was going  
 16 to write something down, or make a speech or something,  
 17 but I just know that -- I will just keep it sweet --  
 18 this is an historic event. The consciousness of the  
 19 nation is looking at all of us, you know, how this  
 20 inquiry, how the police investigation is going.  
 21 But this is so important that it has to stop here.  
 22 We've seen failings and failings -- I've been failed so  
 23 many times -- you know, failings and failings and  
 24 failings with other fires and other lessons not learnt.  
 25 So Grenfell has to stand for something, and it's to

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1 stop here about how people are treated and how the  
 2 loopholes in the system need to be closed, you know.  
 3 We as the survivors and everything, we're dealing  
 4 with multi-billion-pound corporations. We're fighting  
 5 against a system that is broken, and they know it's  
 6 broken, but, you know, they usually put a sticking  
 7 plaster over it and move on.  
 8 No disrespect with inquiries, but I think that's  
 9 just a system initially to save the government of the  
 10 day any embarrassment: oh, we're going to have  
 11 an inquiry to find out the truth, and then time lapses,  
 12 we do get hopefully to the bottom of this and to find  
 13 out the truth, but it's over a long period of time.  
 14 We've spent times with the Hillsborough families,  
 15 we've spent time with other people, Doreen Lawrence.  
 16 I've been going around the country myself, going up to  
 17 Manchester, Plymouth and Portsmouth, talking to people,  
 18 and they are absolutely scared of living in tower blocks  
 19 with that cladding still on. So the system is not  
 20 working.  
 21 We meet up with, I mean, the Prime Minister  
 22 downwards, you know, all the housing ministers. They  
 23 talk the talk, but, you know, this has to be the one  
 24 where it stops.  
 25 Justice for me is that, you know, this never happens

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1 again, you know, we have a fair system. We've got a lot  
 2 to deal with, especially in this environment at the  
 3 moment, but it has to stop here. It can't go on and  
 4 then we'll be talking about another major incident where  
 5 there is a fire and a loss of life and then we're  
 6 talking about: did we learn any lessons from Grenfell?  
 7 Did we learn anything from Hillsborough. Did we learn  
 8 anything from anything? It has to mean serious stuff.  
 9 I mean, we've all been through a lot. I mean, we've  
 10 got families here now, you know, that have lost multiple  
 11 people, and it's been very, very challenging.  
 12 So, you know, the weight of responsibility is  
 13 yourself, you know, to make recommendations now and put  
 14 them into place now, not just wait for a report and then  
 15 the government say, "Yes, we've got the report and now  
 16 we're going to think about another consultational  
 17 process to go through things." It has to stop here with  
 18 Grenfell.  
 19 And Grenfell I believe will mean something, you  
 20 know, changes in regulations, changes in attitudes,  
 21 social housing, all these big things that previous  
 22 governments have been just, you know, wiping away  
 23 because it's not their concern at the moment, and that's  
 24 why lives are lost.  
 25 So the lessons have to be learnt here and now, and

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1 stop here, I think.  
 2 You know, that's what I feel I have to say.  
 3 MR MILLETT: Mr Burton, thank you, and thank you for that in  
 4 particular.  
 5 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.  
 6 MR MILLETT: I just want to say thank you to you for coming  
 7 here today and giving us evidence. It's not easy. And  
 8 your assistance with our investigations has been  
 9 immensely helpful, so thank you very much.  
 10 THE WITNESS: You're more than welcome, thank you.  
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I would like add to my thanks,  
 12 Mr Burton.  
 13 You rightly draw attention to the importance of the  
 14 inquiry, and you've played your part in it by coming to  
 15 give your evidence and talking about what must have been  
 16 a dreadful experience. It must have taken a lot of  
 17 courage to do it, and I'm well aware of that, so --  
 18 THE WITNESS: Yes, a lot has happened on this journey.  
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.  
 20 THE WITNESS: During the journey, I had emergency open heart  
 21 surgery as well and other things have happened along the  
 22 way, and you know, yeah, it's --  
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: This is another step on your long  
 24 journey.  
 25 THE WITNESS: Yes.

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<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And we're all very grateful to you                  2 for taking it and coming to tell us all about your                  3 experience. Thank you very much.                  4 THE WITNESS: Thank you.                  5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, now, you're free to go. Would                  6 you like to go with the usher, she'll look after you.                  7 THE WITNESS: Wonderful. Thank you very much.                  8 (The witness withdrew)                  9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.                  10 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, it is now 1.35 and I would like,                  11 if I may, to use the next 25 minutes by doing a little                  12 bit of the reading in of witness statements that I was                  13 proposing to do this afternoon. I hope that doesn't                  14 inconvenience you --                  15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: No, no, that's a good idea. Let's                  16 make use of the time.                  17 MR MILLETT: -- and people in this room.                  18 There are a number of statements I'm planning to                  19 read in. We won't get to them all by the time 1 o'clock                  20 comes, so what I'm hoping to do is finish the reading                  21 off after the next oral witness, who will come at                  22 2 o'clock.                  23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That's perfectly all right.                  24 MUSTAFA ABDU (evidence read into the record)                  25 MR MILLETT: Can I start, then, with the statement of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 see any fire or smoke in my flat but there was a slight                  2 smell of smoke. I put on my tracksuit and trainers,                  3 took my phone, wallet and car keys and left my flat,                  4 closing the front door behind me. The front door did                  5 not close automatically."                  6 Then he explains about the fire alarms in his flat.                  7 Then he says at 11:                  8 "11. As I entered the landing in front of my flat,                  9 I could smell smoke. I was only on the landing for a                  10 matter of seconds but I could see the smoke getting                  11 thicker. I could still see through the smoke and it                  12 appeared normal - blackish in colour and not                  13 particularly hot or cold. The lights on the landing                  14 were on. I believe that there was a fire alarm on the                  15 landing but this did not sound on the night of the fire.                  16 All the other doors on the floor were shut and there was                  17 no one else on the landing. I remember hearing the                  18 ventilation which was unusual, I assume this was because                  19 the motor was moving faster to try to extract the smoke.                  20 "12. I pushed open the door that leads from the                  21 landing to the stairway and made my way down the stairs.                  22 This door shut automatically. As I went down the stairs                  23 the smoke was getting thicker. It was thick and black                  24 and the smell was getting stronger. It forced me to                  25 cover my face with my hood.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1 Mr Mustafa Abdu, reference IWS00000307, and his exhibit                  2 MA/1 to MA/3 at IWS00000308.                  3 He was a resident of flat 184 on the 21st floor with                  4 an exit time of 01.28 am.                  5 His statement is dated 17 May 2018 and it stands                  6 under a statement of truth on page 5 of the statement.                  7 He lived alone at flat 184 before the fire, and had                  8 lived there for 27 years, having moved there in 1990.                  9 He lived with his brother, Abdulcadir Abdu, until 2012,                  10 when he left to live with his wife and children very                  11 nearby. They can see each other, in fact -- or could --                  12 from the windows.                  13 His statement is written in English, although his                  14 first language, as he explains is Tigrigna.                  15 He covers his experience of the fire itself at                  16 paragraphs 9 through to 17.                  17 I should just pick out one or two paragraphs in that                  18 section.                  19 He says at paragraph 9:                  20 "9. On 14 June 2017 I was woken at 01:10 by a phone                  21 call from my brother. I know that this was the time                  22 because I checked my phone afterward. My brother told                  23 me that the tower was on fire, he said he could see the                  24 fire and smell the smoke. He pushed me to leave                  25 quickly, telling me to 'run for your life'. I could not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 "13. By the time I reached the tenth floor I began                  2 to panic. I had lost visibility due to the smoke and I                  3 became worried that the fire had spread inside the                  4 building and I couldn't see it because of the smoke.                  5 The smoke was hot and had a horrible, strong smell which                  6 is difficult to define. It seemed to be coming from the                  7 lower floors. I entered the landing on the tenth floor                  8 and couldn't see anything due to the smoke. The lights                  9 on the landing were off and the door between the landing                  10 and the stairwell was shut. I pressed the button to                  11 call the lift but the lifts had stopped working. I                  12 re-entered the stairwell and thought about going back up                  13 to my flat but something told me to carry on going down                  14 the stairs.                  15 "14. As I went down from the tenth floor the smoke                  16 got thicker and thicker. I passed people going down the                  17 stairs, everyone was rushing to get out but I was able                  18 to pass people and move between floors easily. I had my                  19 mouth covered and was holding my breath trying not to                  20 inhale the smoke, I can't remember whether other people                  21 were coughing. I passed a man who I later realised to                  22 be a resident going up the stairs. I passed another man                  23 helping his elderly father to escape and two other                  24 people - a lady and a man. I would not be able to name                  25 them but they were people I recognised from the tower.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>

<p>1 "15. I cannot remember if the doors leading from 2 the stairway to the landing on other floors were open. 3 It was dark and I was just concentrating on getting out. 4 I was familiar with the stairs and so I was able to 5 judge where to place my feet. There was little 6 congestion on the stairs at this point. 7 "16. On the way down I passed a firefighter who was 8 going up the stairs, he slowed down to let me pass and 9 told me to carry on going down the stairs. I don't 10 think he had a hose with him. I believe that this 11 happened at around the seventh floor. 12 "17. I reached the ground floor and left the tower 13 through the main door. Others were leaving at the same 14 time but I was able to walk straight out. It took me 15 about seven minutes to get down the stairs. Normally it 16 wouldn't take more than five minutes. I left the 17 building at about 01:25." 18 Like all other statements that are being read into 19 the record, Mr Chairman, his statement will be in the 20 record in its entirety and taken into account in its 21 entirety by the inquiry. 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 23 SAMIRA HAMDAN (evidence read into the record) 24 MR MILLETT: The next statement I would wish to read into 25 the record is the statement of Samira Hamdan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 was a fire in Grenfell Tower. 2 "12. I asked if it was near to her and she said she 3 thought it was lower down the building. I told her that 4 she did not need to worry if the fire was not near her. 5 I was not concerned at this point; I was just relieved 6 that the fire was not near her. I told her that if she 7 was told to leave she should come around to our house, 8 rather than wait outside the Tower. She seemed calmer 9 knowing that she could come to mine. The call ended 10 after a few minutes." 11 Then at paragraph 13 and following she describes how 12 she leaves the flat and goes out and looks at the fire. 13 She says at 17: 14 "17. I left our block of flats and walked out onto 15 [Redacted] Road. I wanted to take the usual route to 16 Grenfell Tower, via [redacted] and then past KA school. 17 As I got closer to the Tower I noticed there were lots 18 more people out than usual at that time. Some were 19 distressed, some were on their phones. I wanted to get 20 closer to the Tower but I reached a police cordon just 21 by the school and I was not allowed to pass. I could 22 hear sirens and knew the emergency services were all 23 there. I felt panicked but I reassured myself by 24 telling myself that everyone who needed to be there was 25 there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 [IWS00001180]. She is a relative of the Hamdan and 2 Belkadi family, residents of flat 175, four of whom died 3 in the fire. 4 This statement is dated 21 September, 2018. There's 5 a statement of truth in the first paragraph, the final 6 sentence, and the signature page is page 15 of this 7 statement. 8 At paragraph 2 she describes her family 9 relationships, and I'll read them aloud: 10 "2. My sister Farah Hamdan ... her husband Omar 11 Belkadi ... her children Malak Belkadi ... and Leena 12 Belkadi ... lived in 175 Grenfell Tower ... [Redacted] 13 was the only member of the family to survive the fire." 14 She, Samira, lived herself on Clarendon Walk, which 15 is close to Grenfell Tower, as we know, with her husband 16 and her children, and they moved to Clarendon Walk in 17 2004. 18 She describes the night of the fire from paragraph 8 19 onwards, and, at paragraphs 11 onwards, she describes 20 how she first became aware of the fire. 21 She says: 22 "11. At around 1 am my phone started ringing and I 23 saw it was Farah. I knew immediately that something was 24 wrong. I answered the phone and she sounded panicked. 25 I asked her what was wrong and she explained that there</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 "18. I saw one of my neighbours holding a man back 2 and trying to calm him down. I saw a police officer and 3 I told him that my sister and her family were in the 4 Tower. I think that this was around 1.30am. 5 "19. I had used up all my data so I could not 6 contact Farah by Whatsapp. I tried to call her instead, 7 but I was unable to get through. I kept looking up at 8 her window and thinking that the fire was not there and 9 repeating to myself that everyone was there who needed 10 to be there. " 11 Then at paragraphs 26 to 29, after the time mark of 12 about 2.00 am which she identifies at paragraph 25, she 13 describes speaking with Farah again on the phone and 14 walking around the tower from different angles. 15 At 27 she says: 16 "27. I did not want to panic her. I asked where 17 they were and if they were OK. She told me that they 18 were still in the flat. I felt very afraid but I did 19 not want to panic her. I asked if the girls were OK and 20 if they were awake and she told me that they were. She 21 told me that in order for them not to be afraid they 22 were playing a game. I asked if they were coming out 23 and she told me that the 999 operator had told them to 24 stay put and help was coming. I said 'Are you alright?' 25 and she said 'Yes, we're OK.' Although she sounded</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

<p>1 fearful, she seemed reassured that the operator had told                  2 them that help was on the way. And knowing my sister, I                  3 know that she would not have wanted to alarm the girls.                  4 We ended the conversation as I did not want to                  5 monopolise her time.                  6 "28. The reality of the situation was hitting me.                  7 I turned to Taib and asked him, 'What is this? What's                  8 going on?' I was starting to feel fearful. Taib tried                  9 to reassure me. He said that they would be OK and that                  10 everyone who needed to be there was there. He told me                  11 that he thought that the Tower would go, but that they                  12 would be able to get everyone out.                  13 "29. I kept watching the tower. The flames were                  14 rising but they were not at Farah's flat yet. I think                  15 it was now approximately 2am."                  16 Then she describes how the fire gets closer to                  17 Farah's window.                  18 Then at 31 she says:                  19 "31. I kept asking Taib to call Omar. I was in a                  20 state of panic and shock and trying to comprehend what I                  21 was seeing. Taib kept trying, but the phone was                  22 engaged. I remember thinking that other people would be                  23 calling them, so he was probably on the phone to someone                  24 else. Eventually Taib was able to get through and I                  25 spoke to Farah. This was approximately 10 minutes after</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 lived on the 9th floor. I was relieved to see that she                  2 was out. She told me that her other family members were                  3 on the 21st floor and that she thought she could see                  4 them banging on the windows. I did not want to look                  5 that closely and see people trapped inside."                  6 Then at paragraph 44 she describes Taib trying to                  7 called Omar but not being able to get through, then the                  8 experiences she endured when trying to find her family                  9 which she explains from paragraph 53 onwards.                  10 Particularly at 66 to 68 on page 14, she says:                  11 "66. We finally arrived at the pediatrics intensive                  12 care unit. When we got to the bed I saw that it was                  13 [redacted]. She was covered in black soot.                  14 "67. The staff quickly reassured me that she was                  15 stable and not in any immediate danger. They explained                  16 that she had come in conscious but they had put her in                  17 an induced coma to get rid of all the toxins that were                  18 in her body.                  19 "68. I was struggling to absorb all the                  20 information. And then it hit me — where was everyone                  21 else? I said to the nurse, she has a baby sister and an                  22 older sister. The nurse said that no babies had been                  23 admitted but that there was a little girl aged around 10                  24 who was unaccompanied. I turned around and saw the                  25 child and I knew immediately that it was Malak. The</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 our last conversation. I tried not to sound panicked.                  2 I asked if they had been told to leave yet and what was                  3 going on. She said no they had not been asked to leave,                  4 they had been told to stay put and to put damp towels at                  5 the bottom of the door. I checked that they had done                  6 this and that the towels were wet. She relayed to me                  7 that they had done that already. I told her to make                  8 sure they were ready when they were told to leave. She                  9 told me that they were ready and she had Leena tied to                  10 her in the sling.                  11 "32. She asked if I could see the fire. I told her                  12 that I could. She asked where it was and if it was bad.                  13 I did not want her to be afraid and I was mindful that                  14 the children were with her. I said it would be OK and                  15 that everybody who needed to be there was there. She                  16 told me that the girls were with her; I could tell that                  17 she was fearful but she was talking in a calm manner in                  18 order not to scare the girls. I think it was working as                  19 I could not hear any commotion or panic from the girls.                  20 This was our last conversation."                  21 Then she describes at paragraphs 38 to 40 in                  22 particular what she saw when she got to Walmer Road                  23 outside the building, and in para 40 she says:                  24 "40. I saw the Wahabi family crying, so I went over                  25 and we embraced each other. I saw Hanan Wahabi who</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 nurse told me that she was very poorly. She was on the                  2 bed nearest the window."                  3 Mr Chairman, the rest of that statement, although                  4 I'm not reading it all, will of course stand as evidence                  5 in the record and be fully taken into account.                  6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.                  7 EL ALAMI HAMDAN (evidence read into the record)                  8 MR MILLETT: The next statement I wish to read, Mr Chairman,                  9 is the statement of Mr El Alami Hamdan [IWS00000176],                  10 another member of the bereaved family of the                  11 Hamdan-Belkadi family. He's the father of Farah, who is                  12 the sister of Samira, whose statement we've just read,                  13 and of course of Samira herself.                  14 His statement, I don't think I need to read any                  15 particular part of it into the record. It will stand in                  16 its entirety as evidence in the record.                  17 There's a statement of truth on page 3 over                  18 the signature.                  19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.                  20 MR MILLETT: It's a statement which is dated 18 May 2018.                  21 AMBROSE MENDY (evidence read into the record)                  22 MR MILLETT: The next statement I would wish to read into                  23 the record is the statement of Mr Ambrose Mendy                  24 [IWS00001075] dated 12 September 2018.                  25 It's a statement which has a statement of truth at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 page 3, over the signature on that page.                  2 I will just read one or two paragraphs of the                  3 statement into the record.                  4 He says at paragraph 2:                  5 "2. I am the cousin to Mary Mendy and her daughter                  6 [Khadija] Saye who lived on the 20th floor of flat 173                  7 of the Grenfell Tower.                  8 "3. I was granted core participant status and I                  9 have been present every day of the oral hearings. I                  10 have been actively involved in the family and community                  11 events for my cousin Mary and her daughter Khadija since                  12 their untimely passing.                  13 "4. I am now undertaking it as my priority in life                  14 to proactively engage in the inquiry process. We have a                  15 huge family [redacted] that has not accepted what has                  16 become of Mary and Khadija. They simply do not believe                  17 that this can happen in the western world and that my                  18 dear cousin and niece succumbed to such cruel and                  19 inhumane deaths."                  20 There are some questions he raises at paragraphs 6,                  21 7, 8 and 9, and at paragraph 10, he says:                  22 "10. I await the answers in the hope that one day I                  23 can explain the truth to my extended family and my                  24 family and begin the healing process."                  25 He ends by saying:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 the flat not stay in it in the event of a fire. We have                  2 no notice in our flat saying anything in the event of a                  3 fire. We did not have anyone come around to do any                  4 safety checks apart from the gas check every year."                  5 She explains at paragraph 12 how she was unhappy                  6 with the work done by the contractors because of the                  7 pipes and the gas work being done outside the tower.                  8 She says at paragraph 13:                  9 "13. Also as you walk down the stairs, there used to                  10 be floor numbers on the wall, so you knew which floor                  11 you were on, but they were removed since the                  12 refurbishment and the lights were put up."                  13 Paragraph 15 onwards she describes her experiences                  14 of the night of the fire itself.                  15 Just picking it up, if I can, at paragraph 17, she                  16 says this:                  17 "17. At about 12.30pm Youssef returned [redacted].                  18 We had a chat and he made tea to drink. He received a                  19 phone call and said that he had to go out. He left                  20 quickly and didn't finish his tea and didn't say where                  21 he was going. He didn't close the front door properly                  22 so I assumed he was just seeing a friend and could come                  23 back up. I closed the door and went back to the sitting                  24 room to wait and see what it was. I thought that I                  25 could smell a little bit of gas at this point. I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 "... I wish for my barristers to fight for justice                  2 and retribution until the very end."                  3 MOUNA EL-OGBANI (evidence read into the record)                  4 MR MILLETT: The next statement that I would wish to read                  5 into the record is that of Mouna El-Ogbani                  6 [IWS00000844]. She was a resident of flat 85 on the                  7 11th floor.                  8 It's a statement dated 15 May 2018, with the                  9 statement of truth over a signature on page 11.                  10 She exited the tower at 01.28 am.                  11 In summary, she had been a resident of the tower                  12 since March 2006. She lived there with her husband,                  13 Youssef Khalloud, and their three children.                  14 On the evening of 13 June 2017, Ms El-Ogbani was at                  15 home with their children. Mr Khalloud returned to the                  16 flat about 00.30 on 14 June.                  17 At paragraph 9 of the statement, she says this,                  18 under the title "Refurbishments", which starts just                  19 above paragraph 7:                  20 "9. No one gave us any information about the                  21 cladding or the work being carried out. They never                  22 showed us anything about it being safe. The fire doors                  23 in the communal areas were always shut and were painted                  24 during the refurbishment. We never received any fire                  25 safety talk and I have always been told to get out of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 initially thought it might be my phone overheating. I                  2 went to the kitchen to check the cooker but I couldn't                  3 smell anything in the kitchen. I think that Youssef                  4 left the flat at about 1.20am.                  5 "18. I then went to my bedroom and a friend of mine                  6 phoned me about 1.25am. Amina who lives [redacted].                  7 She asked if I was asleep. I said no but that I was                  8 just about to go to bed. She was speaking with a raised                  9 voice and sounded alarmed. She sounded frightened and                  10 like she was panicking. She said that the building was                  11 on fire and that she can see that the fire is                  12 approaching my floor; she asked if we could get out.                  13 What she said, and how she said it, alarmed me. I told                  14 her 'ok, ok, I'm going'. Youssef had returned while I                  15 was on the phone to Amina. I went to see him in the                  16 living room. He was on the phone now as well. Youssef                  17 was standing by the table on the west side of the room.                  18 I waited for a couple of moments for him to finish his                  19 conversation. I then told him what Amina had said. He                  20 then told me that Hisham told him the same thing. I                  21 asked him what we were going to do. He said let's get                  22 the children up and go out.                  23 19. I listened to him but I was panicking. I went                  24 to wake up [the children]. I told them get up we need                  25 to leave the flat. [Redacted] wanted to put on his</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 tracksuit bottoms but I said we had no time and that we                  2 just have to leave. He was wearing the green shorts and                  3 the shirt what he was sleeping in. I went into my                  4 bedroom to pick up a jacket behind the door and my scarf                  5 that was on top of the chest of draws. We had seen                  6 nothing of the fire and had not smelt anything in the                  7 flat apart from the gas that I thought I'd smelt                  8 earlier.                  9 20. Youssef picked up [Redacted] who was sleeping                  10 in our bed. We have shelves for the shoes by the door.                  11 I got to the door and [Redacted] said he want to put on                  12 his trainers but I told him that we didn't have time for                  13 that either. Initially I was first at the door and the                  14 others were behind me. I opened the door and as I tried                  15 to step out, I saw that the communal area by the lifts                  16 was black with thick smoke. I could see no lights. I                  17 then really panicked and started to cry. I closed the                  18 door. Youssef spoke sternly and told me to me stop                  19 crying and that we had to try again. After a short                  20 while I opened door the second time. The communal area                  21 was still black with smoke but a firefighter had opened                  22 the stair door and I saw the light to the stairwell. I                  23 saw the light through the smoke. The smoke was ceiling                  24 to floor. The smoke was thick and smelt very strongly.                  25 It smelled gassy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 emergency. I didn't say anything to Khadija's husband.                  2 He looked frightened.                  3 "24. We were going really quickly down the stairs.                  4 We were running down. At 1.25am we got the call from my                  5 friend and the police photo time if accurate indicates                  6 that we were exiting the building at 1.28am. I saw some                  7 firefighters coming up the stairs as I was going down                  8 but I can't tell you how many. I also saw firefighters                  9 enter the building as I was leaving the building."                  10 Mr Chairman, that is all I think I need to read                  11 aloud verbatim from Ms El-Ogbani's witness statement                  12 into the record. It will stand in its entirety, of                  13 course, and be taken into consideration in its entirety.                  14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.                  15 YOUSSEF KHALLOUD (evidence read into the record)                  16 MR MILLETT: I think the last statement I can read before                  17 the lunch break is Mr Youssef Khallood's statement.                  18 That is IWS00000473, and it's dated 23 May 2018.                  19 He was also a resident of flat 85 on the 11th floor.                  20 His statement is quite lengthy, and the signature                  21 page is page 17, standing under a statement of truth on                  22 that page.                  23 As I said I think before, he is the husband of Mouna                  24 El-Ogbani, whose witness statement we've just read from.                  25 There are one or two further paragraphs from his</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 "21. My neighbour Ali was standing between the                  2 lifts. We didn't speak. My focus was on getting to the                  3 stairs and getting out. Youssef was at the back, he                  4 told me later that he was locking the door while                  5 carrying [Redacted].                  6 "22. There was one male firefighter on our floor by                  7 the stairs. I don't remember what he was carrying or                  8 wearing. He told us to leave but we didn't discuss                  9 anything else. I then headed fast down the stairs to                  10 get out of the building. I was at the front holding                  11 [Redacted]'s hand and [Redacted] was just behind me.                  12 There were lights in the stairwell and from what I can                  13 remember the air was normal and there was no smoke on                  14 the stairs.                  15 "23. On the stairs I saw Mohammed Rasul[sic] with                  16 an older relative. He was helping the elderly gentleman                  17 down step by step. I think that this was about half way                  18 down when and we passed him. Also there was another                  19 neighbour; Khadija Khallooufi's husband was in front of                  20 us. I saw him after we passed Mohammed Rasul. He is                  21 also quite an elderly gentleman who wasn't moving so                  22 fast and we passed him. I think we passed some other                  23 men and women as we went down but I can't remember them.                  24 I apologised to Mohammed Rasul as we passed him as it                  25 felt rude or wrong somehow to pass someone in an</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 statement I should just read into the record.                  2 Paragraph 7, under the rubric "Fire safety" which                  3 starts just above paragraph 5, he says:                  4 "7. On my floor there was a fire alarm detector or                  5 a smoke alarm detector on the ceiling the middle of the                  6 floor outside the lifts. I am sure of this. To my                  7 knowledge, this detected heat and smoke. However it                  8 cannot have been working on the night of the fire as it                  9 did no go off when the hallway was filled with smoke."                  10 Then at para 9 he says:                  11 "9. I believe there were two silver vents on                  12 opposite sides of the communal hallway. There was one                  13 next to any front door. I believe these were supposed                  14 to be for sucking smoke or heat from the corridors and                  15 out of the building. I cannot remember ever noticing                  16 these work; they never made any noises to suggest they                  17 were working. If they had been working on the night of                  18 the fire then they would have been sucking smoke from                  19 the hallway, which they clearly were not doing."                  20 Then at paragraphs 10 to 14 he covers the advice on                  21 fire safety.                  22 He says in particular at paragraph 10 of that                  23 passage:                  24 "10. No one has ever explained to me what to do if                  25 there is a fire. We were never given any advice on what</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 to do in the case of a fire when we signed our tenancy 2 agreement and moved into Grenfell Tower. We were not 3 given a pack of papers or any leaflets on this subject. 4 We were also given no verbal advice on this. I had 5 never seen any notices in the hallway as to what to do 6 in the case of a fire. I had never seen any such sign 7 in any floors. 8 "11. Before 14 June 2017 my belief was that I would 9 have to go out of the building for safety of me and my 10 family in the event of a fire. Even if someone had told 11 me to stay in put, I would leave." 12 Then he describes his experiences on the night of 13 the fire itself from paragraphs 26 onwards. 14 I would draw particular attention to his passage 15 from paragraph 40 on page 11 dealing with his exit from 16 his flat, going across the lobby, down the stairs and 17 out of the building, which runs down to paragraph 47. 18 He says at paragraph 40: 19 "40. I closed the front door immediately after 20 opening it. Smoke had already come into the flat from 21 when I opened the front door, which set off the smoke 22 alarm in the corridor of my flat. I think it only set 23 off the one smoke alarm in the corridor but I am not 24 sure. 25 "41. Mouna was panicking after we opened the front</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 already walking towards the stairs and I followed them 2 and the light. They walked straight to stairs, and I 3 ran straight after them after locking up. It was very 4 difficult to breathe until we got to the stairs. I 5 thought if it was a long distance away we would not make 6 it. We didn't have masks or anything over our faces and 7 I was holding [redacted] with both hands. I did not see 8 Mr ALI or anyone else in the hallway at that point. 9 "44. When I got to the stairs, the door was held 10 open by a fireman with an oxygen mask on. Mouna and the 11 kids were already going down the stairs. The fireman 12 took off his mask and was shouting for people to get 13 out, hurry up. There were people already coming down 14 the stairs from above. I cannot remember who these 15 people were, as I was entirely focused on getting out. 16 The smoke made me scared, but did not want to show this 17 to my family who were all in front of me. I was 18 shouting at them things like, 'go down, go down', 'don't 19 stop' and 'carry on'. I was running down the stairs as 20 fast as I could. 21 "45. The stairs were clear; I do not remember 22 seeing any blockages of people and they were quite 23 clean. There was not much smoke in the stair well; 24 there was only a thin layer of smoke on the ceiling of 25 the stairs, as the door to the hallway had been opened.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 door and saw smoke. The kids were also worried. My 2 daughter [redacted] looked like she was about to start 3 crying. I was also panicking at the sight of the smoke 4 but I tried to hide my panic for the sake of my family. 5 I needed everyone to be focused on getting out of the 6 Tower. I spoke to Mouna and the kids to prepare them. 7 I told them to be calm, to focus and not to panic or 8 scream. I said we needed to go straight to the stairs 9 which are on the other side of the lobby, and to not 10 look back. I asked Mouna to pass our youngest child 11 [redacted] to me and I told her to take the two kids to 12 the stairs. I would be able to run from behind with 13 [redacted] in my arms. 14 "42. I opened the front door again around 2 or 3 15 minutes after opening it the first time. The smoke in 16 the hallway had become noticeably thicker than when I 17 first opened the door. Smoke now covered the whole 18 hallway half way down to the floor and I could not see 19 more than 1 or 2 metres into the smoke. It had a strong 20 smell, as if it was sponge that was burning. I cannot 21 remember if I could taste it. 22 "43. I let Mouna and the kids go out of the flat 23 first and I locked the door behind me using my key. I 24 turned around towards the stairs and saw a light coming 25 through from that direction. Mouna and the kids were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 You could smell this. However I was able to start 2 breathing properly in stairs. 3 "46. There were people already on their way down in 4 front of us, but I don't remember who they were. Mouna 5 told me later that she had seen a man helping his father 6 down in front of us but I do not remember what happened 7 to them. I was so focused on making sure my family got 8 out that I do not remember who we passed. There were 9 maybe people coming into the stairs from the floors 10 below but the stairs were not much busier. I did not 11 see any firefighters as I was coming down the stairs 12 other than the one we had seen holding the door open for 13 us on our floor. We had no problems running down the 14 stairs. 15 "47. Shortly before arriving at the mezzanine floor 16 I believe I saw two firemen in the corridors telling 17 people on the floor to get out. When we reached the 18 mezzanine floor of the Tower we came out of the 19 stairwell onto the landing of the mezzanine floor and 20 turned left to go down the last flight of stairs before 21 the exit. There was not much smoke on the mezzanine 22 floor; maybe just a little bit that you could smell. On 23 the last flight of stairs there was big glass window in 24 the stairwell. I saw there were lots of people outside 25 watching what was happening. At this stage I started to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

<p>1 feel safer, as I could see the ground. I could see 2 there were police officers and fire fighters who were 3 calling people to get out and directing which way people 4 had to go. I felt much safer when I saw them." 5 That is I think all I need to read from 6 Mr Khalloud's statement. 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right. 8 MR MILLETT: Again, like all the other statements, 9 Mr Chairman, it will stand in its entirety as evidence 10 to the inquiry and be taken into account accordingly. 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 12 MR MILLETT: That I think leaves me three witness statements 13 left to read into the record today and I hope I will be 14 able to do those at some point before close of evidence 15 today. 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Well, good, thank you very 17 much. 18 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, I've just been handed a note 19 I just want to -- oh, I understand there's been 20 a technical error with Ambrose Mendy's witness statement 21 that I do need to correct. It's an important matter, as 22 all these statements are important. 23 What I'm told has happened -- I'm afraid I didn't 24 notice it -- was that when I took you to Mr Mendy's 25 statement, Mouna El-Ogbani's statement was shown on the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 it's not, then I'm not sure we can do anything other 2 than offer to get it up at a later stage. 3 MR MILLETT: Well, I'd rather do it -- so he's aware of what 4 we're doing, in fairness to him, if we do it at 2.05 5 when we come back. It won't take very long. 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: It will be 2.10, but yes. 7 But before we rise, I should express gratitude to 8 all those who have taken the time and trouble to make 9 these statements. It must have taken a lot of effort on 10 their part, and they should know that we're very 11 grateful for the trouble they've taken and that the 12 whole of those statements will be taken into account as 13 part of the evidence before the inquiry. 14 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, that's been noted and I'm 15 grateful. 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. 17 Let's see if we can overcome the technical hitch 18 over the adjournment, and we'll sit again at 2.10. 19 MR MILLETT: Right. 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much. 21 MR MILLETT: Thank you. 22 (1.10 pm) 23 (The short adjournment) 24 (2.14 pm) 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 screen instead. 2 I apologise to Mr Mendy and everybody else. 3 Let me put Mr Ambrose Mendy's statement back on the 4 screen with the reference IWS00001075. 5 I suspect this may be my fault as I'm not sure 6 I read the reference into the record. 7 So can we just cover that? 8 IWS00001075. 9 (Pause) 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Do we have that? 11 (Pause) 12 MR MILLETT: No. 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Do you think we could do this after 14 the adjournment? 15 MR MILLETT: Mr Mendy is here and has come specifically to 16 hear his statement read into the record. It's immensely 17 important to him and I don't quite understand why that 18 is not available. We'll have to take that course. 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You have read it. 20 MR MILLETT: I have. 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So Mr Mendy has heard it read. 22 It's true that he is obviously aware that other 23 people have not been able to follow on the screen those 24 parts that you've read. 25 If it's not possible to get it up now, and I gather</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, can I begin now this afternoon 2 where I left off just before the lunch break, which was 3 discussing reading or re-reading back in Ambrose Mendy's 4 witness statement. 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Have we solved the technical 6 problem? 7 MR MILLETT: We have. I apologise. There was a deeper 8 technical difficulty which I think none of us had 9 anticipated, so I apologise to him in particular. 10 The reference is IWS00001075. 11 If we can now have that on the screen, please. 12 This is the first page of what is a three-page 13 statement. It's dated 12 September 2018. 14 It stands under a statement of truth on page 3, as 15 you can see, Mr Chairman. 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 17 MR MILLETT: I read into the record out loud paragraphs 2, 18 3, 4 and 10 and part of 11. 19 I think to do justice to that, I should just do that 20 again very briefly, if that's acceptable. 21 He says at paragraph 2: 22 "2. I am the cousin to Mary Mendy and her daughter 23 [Khadija] Saye who lived on the 20th floor of flat 173 24 of the Grenfell Tower. 25 "3. I was granted core participant status and I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

1 have been present every day of the oral hearings. I  
 2 have been actively involved in the family and community  
 3 events for my cousin Mary and her daughter Khadija since  
 4 their untimely passing.  
 5 "4. I am now undertaking it as my priority in life  
 6 to proactively engage in the inquiry process. We have a  
 7 huge family [redacted] that has not accepted what has  
 8 become of Mary and Khadija. They simply do not believe  
 9 that this can happen in the western world and that my  
 10 dear cousin and niece succumbed to such cruel and  
 11 inhumane deaths."  
 12 Then at paragraphs 5 through to 9 he makes some  
 13 observations.  
 14 And then at 10 he says:  
 15 "10. I await the answers in the hope that one day I  
 16 can explain the truth to my extended family and my  
 17 family and begin the healing process.  
 18 "11. I have complete faith in my legal team and I  
 19 wish for my barristers to fight for justice and  
 20 retribution until the very end."  
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.  
 22 MR MILLETT: That statement will stand in its entirety in  
 23 the record.  
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, and I've already thanked,  
 25 I think, Mr Mendy for taking the trouble to make it.

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1 MR MILLETT: Yes. As I said before, Mr Chairman, that's  
 2 right.  
 3 We then have three further statements to read into  
 4 the record, which I hope to make a little bit of time to  
 5 do after the next witness.  
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. The next witness is waiting,  
 7 so --  
 8 MR MILLETT: I'm going to call her now. She is Helen  
 9 Gebremeskel.  
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.  
 11 HELEN GEBREMESKEL (sworn)  
 12 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY  
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Ms Gebremeskel.  
 14 Would you like to sit down and make yourself  
 15 comfortable. Good.  
 16 Yes, Mr Millett.  
 17 MR MILLETT: Good afternoon, Ms Gebremeskel.  
 18 **A. Good afternoon.**  
 19 Q. Could I ask you, please, to give the inquiry your full  
 20 name?  
 21 **A. It's Helen Gebremeskel.**  
 22 Q. Thank you.  
 23 Can I start by thanking you very much for coming to  
 24 the inquiry today and giving evidence. It assists us  
 25 greatly with our investigations and we are extremely

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1 grateful to you.  
 2 **A. Thank you.**  
 3 Q. I should just say this: many of my questions will be  
 4 asking you to relive the events of that terrible night,  
 5 and sometimes witnesses find it difficult to do that.  
 6 If you need a break at any time or you feel you just  
 7 want to stop and just take a few seconds, please just  
 8 tell us, we can do that, or just stop and we will know  
 9 and we can just take a break or take a pause.  
 10 Also, sometimes when I'm listening to your evidence,  
 11 I'm looking at the screen or my notes. I don't mean any  
 12 disrespect when I do that; I'm very much listening to  
 13 what you've got to say. When I'm looking at the screen,  
 14 it's because I want to be following exactly what it is  
 15 you're telling me.  
 16 **A. Okay.**  
 17 Q. So I should also just say that sometimes my questions  
 18 may be a little difficult to follow, usually because  
 19 I haven't asked them very well. So if you want me to  
 20 repeat the question or put the question in a different  
 21 way, I'm very happy to do that.  
 22 **A. Okay, yes.**  
 23 Q. You've given two statements to the inquiry. The first  
 24 one, I think, is IWS00000933. That I think on the  
 25 screen there is page 1.

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1 I should just say you can either follow this either  
 2 on the screen on the desk in front of you or at the back  
 3 of the hall, or in the paper file which is on the desk  
 4 in front of you, whichever you're most comfortable with.  
 5 Is this the first page of your first statement,  
 6 Ms Gebremeskel?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. Can we please go to the last page, which is page 23.  
 9 You'll see a signature there.  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. Can you confirm that that's your signature?  
 12 **A. That is my signature.**  
 13 Q. Have you had an opportunity to read this statement  
 14 recently?  
 15 **A. I have.**  
 16 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. You've also made a supplemental statement, and that's  
 19 IWS00001141. If we can just have that on the screen as  
 20 well, please.  
 21 Thank you.  
 22 Is that the first page of your supplemental  
 23 statement?  
 24 **A. Yes.**  
 25 Q. If you turn to the last page, which is page 3 of that

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<p>1 statement, you'll see that there's a date                  2 17 October 2018 and a signature under a statement of                  3 truth.                  4 Is that your signature?                  5 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  6 Q. Again, have you had an opportunity to read this                  7 statement recently?                  8 <b>A. Yes, I have.</b>                  9 Q. Can you confirm, again, that its contents are true?                  10 <b>A. Yes, it is the truth.</b>                  11 Q. Thank you very much.                  12 There are, I think, three exhibits to this                  13 statement, HG/1, HG/2 and HG/3, which are at                  14 IWS00001140, IWS00001139, and IWS00001142.                  15 The first two of those, IWS00001140 and IWS00001139,                  16 are WhatsApp messages from your friend Nadia Choucair.                  17 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  18 Q. The last one is a WhatsApp voice message also from                  19 Nadia; is that right?                  20 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  21 Q. I'd ask that those exhibits are admitted into the                  22 record.                  23 So, Ms Gebremeskel, that's the formal part of the                  24 introduction to your evidence.                  25 Can I just then turn to some background questions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 As at the night of the fire, 13/14 June 2017, you                  2 were living, I think, at flat 186 with your daughter.                  3 She was 12 years old at the time, I think.                  4 <b>A. At the time, yes.</b>                  5 Q. And also your dog, Simba.                  6 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  7 Q. Nobody else in your flat? Nobody else living in your                  8 flat?                  9 <b>A. No, just the three of us.</b>                  10 Q. Can I just ask you one or two questions about the                  11 refurbishment.                  12 First of all, your floor number, before the                  13 refurbishment, was floor 18.                  14 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  15 Q. As a result of the refurbishment, I think it became                  16 floor 21, didn't it?                  17 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  18 Q. If I can ask you to look at your witness statement at                  19 page 17, your first witness statement. You say at the                  20 bottom of that page at paragraph 99:                  21 "99. With regard to the floor numbering on each                  22 level, after the renovations this became incorrect and                  23 out of sequence, due to the Tower having additional                  24 floors added at a later date. This meant that the flat                  25 we lived in had originally been on floor 18 but now it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p>
<p>1 As at June 2017, you were a resident of                  2 Grenfell Tower.                  3 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  4 Q. You had lived there for some three years by then; is                  5 that right?                  6 <b>A. On the 21st floor, yes.</b>                  7 Q. On the 21st floor.                  8 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  9 Q. That's flat 186?                  10 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  11 Q. Before you moved to flat 186, I think you lived in                  12 flat 191 on the 22nd floor.                  13 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  14 Q. Did you live anywhere else between moving out of                  15 flat 191 and moving into flat 186?                  16 <b>A. I've lived there for long time in flat 191.</b>                  17 Q. You say you moved into flat 191 in --                  18 <b>A. 1997.</b>                  19 Q. -- 1997.                  20 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  21 Q. My question is: when you moved out of flat 191, was                  22 there a gap before moving into 186 or did you move                  23 straight --                  24 <b>A. No, straight to 186, yes.</b>                  25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 became floor 21. The lifts therefore indicated that we                  2 lived on floor 21, but the council did not change the                  3 floor numbers in the stairwell, which still indicated                  4 that we were on floor 18."                  5 I just want to ask you about that.                  6 Does that mean that, as at the night of the fire,                  7 June 2017, the number on the wall in the stairwell                  8 opposite floor 21 still said 18 on it?                  9 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  10 Q. Are you sure about that?                  11 <b>A. 100 per cent.</b>                  12 Q. And how did you know that?                  13 <b>A. I know, I always take the stairs, all the time.</b>                  14 Q. Right.                  15 <b>A. Yes.</b>                  16 Q. So when you were taking the stairs, did you notice the                  17 floor numbering?                  18 <b>A. I always notice, yes.</b>                  19 Q. Were all the floors out of sync in that way or just                  20 floor 18?                  21 <b>A. Obviously when I come up, I come to my floor, which is</b>                  22 <b>18, but it's 21st floor, so that's why I know it's 18th</b>                  23 <b>floor is 21st floor, and it hasn't changed. It was</b>                  24 <b>there all the time. The whole time I was there, they</b>                  25 <b>haven't changed it.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p>

1 Q. Did you notice the numbering on other floors in the  
 2 stairwell?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. Did they have --  
 5 **A. Some of them.**  
 6 Q. -- the same problem?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. At paragraph 100, you say:  
 9 "100. I was aware of the error but up until the  
 10 fire it never impacted me."  
 11 First of all, did you ever take up the error, as you  
 12 call it, with the TMO at any time?  
 13 **A. No.**  
 14 Q. You say it didn't impact --  
 15 **A. I was always asking question why they didn't change, but**  
 16 **it didn't bother me and I didn't think this would**  
 17 **happen, so ...**  
 18 Q. You say it never impacted you. Did you know whether it  
 19 affected anybody else, the mismatching of the numbers on  
 20 the floor?  
 21 **A. What do you mean? Can you repeat that, please?**  
 22 Q. Do you know whether the fact that the numbers in the  
 23 stairs didn't match the level of the floor in the  
 24 building affected anybody else, to your knowledge? Did  
 25 anybody else suffer from it or have a problem because of

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1 it?  
 2 **A. Not that I talked to anyone, but I'm sure at the night,**  
 3 **you know, the firefighter, they must be confused, they**  
 4 **didn't know which floor to go to. But the other**  
 5 **resident, I haven't spoke to anyone, no.**  
 6 Q. We're still on page 18 of your statement, and you cover  
 7 the question of windows at paragraph 106 at the bottom  
 8 of the page. You say:  
 9 "106. The replacement windows that were installed  
 10 approximately three years ago were double glazed. They  
 11 had a large ledge whereas the previous windows did not.  
 12 The ledge was large enough to place a vase on. The  
 13 quality of the refurbishment was to my mind good, as the  
 14 windows appeared to be of good quality and looked very  
 15 nice. However, in retrospect although the windows  
 16 looked nice they appear to have had serious defects in  
 17 terms of the fire."  
 18 When you say in terms of the fire, what do you mean?  
 19 **A. I didn't have no problem with the window.**  
 20 **Can you repeat the question again, please?**  
 21 Q. Let me see if I can get to it this way.  
 22 First of all, were all your windows in the flat  
 23 replaced when the refurbishment was done?  
 24 **A. When was?**  
 25 Q. When the refurbishment was done --

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1 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 2 Q. -- were all your windows replaced?  
 3 **A. Yes, all of it, yes.**  
 4 Q. Did you ever notice any problems with the windows after  
 5 they were replaced?  
 6 **A. No.**  
 7 Q. Did you ever notice any draughts coming through around  
 8 the windows?  
 9 **A. No, the reason why, I always leave the window open,**  
 10 **I like my fresh air, so therefore I didn't notice**  
 11 **anything.**  
 12 Q. Okay.  
 13 **A. No.**  
 14 Q. Right.  
 15 So when you say in your statement at paragraph 106  
 16 at the top of page 19:  
 17 "... in retrospect although the windows looked nice  
 18 they appear to have had serious defects in terms of the  
 19 fire."  
 20 Are you referring to defects that you knew about or  
 21 noticed before the fire?  
 22 **A. Can you say that again, please?**  
 23 Q. The defects that you're referring to, the serious  
 24 defects, are those defects that you noticed before the  
 25 fire happened?

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1 **A. The defect of the -- I didn't get that. Sorry.**  
 2 Q. Okay. I am just trying to work out what you're  
 3 referring to in your statement here when you refer to  
 4 serious defects in terms of the fire.  
 5 Well, let me ask you: what are the defects that  
 6 you're referring to here? You refer to serious defects.  
 7 Can you tell us what those are?  
 8 **A. Are you talking about the windows?**  
 9 Q. Yes.  
 10 **A. There was no defect. I didn't see any -- that's all I'm**  
 11 **saying.**  
 12 Q. Okay.  
 13 At page 21 of your statement, you have paragraph 121  
 14 in the middle of that page, and you say:  
 15 "121. Our front door had been changed at the time  
 16 that the modifications were carried out on the flat.  
 17 I did not notice anything specific about the door as it  
 18 is not something that I would take much notice of."  
 19 That follows on from something you say at the end of  
 20 paragraph 120, which is:  
 21 "To clarify the door did not have an automatic hinge  
 22 to close the door and you had to close it after you."  
 23 I've read it to you in that order because I want you  
 24 to help me with one or two things about that.  
 25 When the door was installed, when it was changed,

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<p>1 did it become self-closing? Was it a self-closing door?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, I have to shut it.</b></p> <p>3 Q. You still had to shut it?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Did you ever have a self-closing door?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Not that I -- no.</b></p> <p>7 Q. After the new door was fitted, did you notice if there</p> <p>8 were any gaps around it?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You didn't notice any air coming in or any breeze?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did you ever hear mechanical sounds or the sounds of</p> <p>13 a ventilation system operating when you were standing in</p> <p>14 the lobby at any time?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No, I'm always rushing to go to work, and when I come</b></p> <p>16 <b>home, I'm late and I just want to go home. I didn't</b></p> <p>17 <b>notice none of that.</b></p> <p>18 Q. I am just going to show you a couple of photographs</p> <p>19 taken by our experts inside the building. Okay?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>21 Q. After the fire. Before they're shown on the screen, are</p> <p>22 you all right to look at the photographs inside the</p> <p>23 building?</p> <p>24 <b>A. That's fine.</b></p> <p>25 Q. These are BLA00002513 and BLA00002514.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 133</p>	<p>1 any organisation or any individual about what you should</p> <p>2 do in the event of a fire somewhere in Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Can the witness please be shown INQ00000063.</p> <p>5 Ms Gebremeskel, this is a photograph of a sign --</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. -- taken from beside the lifts on floor 3 of the</p> <p>8 building after the fire by our experts.</p> <p>9 Have you ever seen this before?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes, I have.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Do you remember where you saw it?</p> <p>12 <b>A. There was one downstairs, which is the main entrance, by</b></p> <p>13 <b>the lift, and the next one was on our floor, my floor,</b></p> <p>14 <b>which is 21st floor.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Again, by the lifts?</p> <p>16 <b>A. By the lift, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Did you ever read it?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, I have.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did you notice at the very top underneath "Fire Action -</p> <p>20 Grenfell Tower", it says:</p> <p>21 "There is a 'stay put' policy for residents unless</p> <p>22 the fire is in or affecting your flat:</p> <p>23 Did you read that bit?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I have, but then again it was put down just a few months</b></p> <p>25 <b>before the fire. It was not there before.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 135</p>
<p>1 These are photographs taken on the 6th floor, so not</p> <p>2 your floor. You can see that at both ends of the lobby,</p> <p>3 you've got vents. You've got vents on the left-hand</p> <p>4 photograph, which is taken towards the north wall of the</p> <p>5 lobby, and the vents are just under the ceiling, and on</p> <p>6 the right-hand side of the screen we have the same</p> <p>7 photograph taken in exactly the opposite direction,</p> <p>8 towards the south wall, where the vents are towards the</p> <p>9 floor.</p> <p>10 Did you ever notice that there were vents there?</p> <p>11 <b>A. To be honest, no.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay. We can take those down.</p> <p>13 Going back to page 21 of your statement, at</p> <p>14 paragraph 119, you say:</p> <p>15 "119. Prior to the fire, I believed that if there</p> <p>16 was a fire we should just get out, but this was contrary</p> <p>17 to what we were told by the emergency services on the</p> <p>18 night of the fire. When realised that there was a fire,</p> <p>19 my first reaction was to get out. This was based on</p> <p>20 common sense. The reason I didn't stay put was due to</p> <p>21 common sense that it was better to just get out or we</p> <p>22 would be trapped."</p> <p>23 I'll come back later on to what you say in the rest</p> <p>24 of that paragraph.</p> <p>25 Did you ever get any information or any advice from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 134</p>	<p>1 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Was there any advice in the form of a sign attached to</p> <p>4 anywhere in the building before this sign first went up?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You moved into the building first in 1997. I wonder if</p> <p>7 the witness could be shown IWS00000500.</p> <p>8 This is a sign which has been the subject of some</p> <p>9 evidence from some previous witnesses who lived in the</p> <p>10 tower who have come to the inquiry.</p> <p>11 Can I just ask you: have you ever seen this sign</p> <p>12 before?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I haven't seen it. I don't remember, no.</b></p> <p>14 Q. All right.</p> <p>15 Going back to the sign that we were looking at</p> <p>16 before, INQ00000093, could we just have that back up</p> <p>17 again, where it says, a third of the way down:</p> <p>18 "If you are safely within your flat &amp; there is</p> <p>19 a fire elsewhere in the block."</p> <p>20 Then in green it says -- it's not very easy to read:</p> <p>21 "You should initially be safe to stay in your flat</p> <p>22 keeping the doors and windows closed.</p> <p>23 "On arrival the Fire Brigade will make an assessment</p> <p>24 and will assist with evacuation if required."</p> <p>25 Do you remember reading that bit of the sign?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 136</p>

1 **A. Yes, I do remember reading it, yes.**  
 2 Q. Right.  
 3 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 4 Q. What was your take-away message from this sign, having  
 5 looked at it, about what the advice you were being given  
 6 was?  
 7 **A. It doesn't matter, you know. I mean, there is a fire in**  
 8 **the building. Even though there's an instruction, but**  
 9 **as a common sense, you just need to get out. You don't**  
 10 **want to take a chance. That is my belief, so ...**  
 11 Q. Can I then turn to the night of the fire itself.  
 12 On that night, you were I think at home with your  
 13 daughter and your dog.  
 14 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 15 Q. There was no one else there?  
 16 **A. No.**  
 17 Q. At paragraph 13 of your statement on page 3, you explain  
 18 that you were asleep when you were woken up by the sound  
 19 of a smoke alarm in your kitchen going off. Then you  
 20 say you went to your kitchen and saw there was a fire  
 21 and grabbed your daughter and left.  
 22 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 23 Q. There's a lot of history in that. I just want to break  
 24 it down, if I can, just a little bit.  
 25 First of all, I wonder if we could just have on the

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1 screen MET00012593.  
 2 This, I should tell you, Ms Gebremeskel, is  
 3 a cross-section of Grenfell Tower at level 1  
 4 effectively.  
 5 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 6 Q. So you have flat 6 in the top right-hand corner, the  
 7 north-east corner, and all of the flats from this level  
 8 upwards are the same in terms of configuration within  
 9 the floor.  
 10 So although this isn't your floor, the layout of the  
 11 lobby and the flats is essentially the same.  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. If we could just have flat 6 blown up on the plan, this  
 14 would equate to flat 186, which was your flat.  
 15 First of all, just looking at this schematic plan,  
 16 was the layout of your flat the same or more or less the  
 17 same as is shown here on the plan?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. Yes?  
 20 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 21 Q. We can see you have two bedrooms. Which bedroom were  
 22 you asleep in on the night of the fire?  
 23 **A. Next to the bathroom. Opposite the bathroom.**  
 24 Q. So the middle room, effectively?  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 Q. What about your daughter?  
 2 **A. She was sleeping with me that night.**  
 3 Q. Okay.  
 4 I think you said in your statement that there were  
 5 two smoke alarms installed by RBKC, one in the kitchen  
 6 and one in the hallway; is that right?  
 7 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 8 Q. Were they working on the night of the fire?  
 9 **A. The kitchen one, yes.**  
 10 Q. Did that go off?  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. It did?  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. You say at paragraph 13 that when you woke up you could  
 15 smell smoke.  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. Just trying to recall that moment, was that as soon as  
 18 you woke up?  
 19 **A. No, the alarm went off first.**  
 20 Q. Right.  
 21 **A. And then after that, I smelt smoke.**  
 22 Q. Okay.  
 23 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 24 Q. And you could smell smoke in your bedroom?  
 25 **A. Yes, it was coming there strong, yes.**

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1 Q. Do you remember what it smelt of, the smoke?  
 2 **A. Just smell of -- I can't remember. Just a burning --**  
 3 **like a plastic, yes.**  
 4 Q. Right, okay.  
 5 When you woke up, did you put your light on?  
 6 **A. Yes, I did.**  
 7 Q. Could you see any signs of smoke in your bedroom?  
 8 **A. I did, on the hallway, yes.**  
 9 Q. What about in your bedroom?  
 10 **A. On the corridor.**  
 11 Q. In the corridor?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. What about in your bedroom?  
 14 **A. No, it didn't come to my bedroom.**  
 15 Q. Okay.  
 16 At paragraph 14 you say:  
 17 "14. I recall that upon entering the kitchen, I saw  
 18 the extractor fan in the kitchen window had broken away  
 19 and disintegrated due to fire."  
 20 If I can ask you to be shown, please, BLAR00000003,  
 21 page 23.  
 22 This is a photograph of a window from the kitchen in  
 23 flat 13, Grenfell Tower, taken after the fire.  
 24 Did your kitchen window look like the one in this  
 25 picture?

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<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. With the extractor fan in the top right-hand corner set</p> <p>3 into a panel?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. So when you came into the kitchen, by reference to this</p> <p>6 picture, can you explain what was on fire?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Basically the extractor, it was burnt, and it was in</b></p> <p>8 <b>pieces on the floor, and then there is a hole like the</b></p> <p>9 <b>fire was coming in.</b></p> <p>10 Q. So the hole, was it the hole where the fan unit was</p> <p>11 sitting, or was it a square hole where the panel had</p> <p>12 been?</p> <p>13 <b>A. It was the square. I remember it -- because I didn't</b></p> <p>14 <b>want to stay, the only thing I was thinking about is</b></p> <p>15 <b>just to get out, take my daughter and get out. I didn't</b></p> <p>16 <b>think that -- I know that it was in pieces on the floor</b></p> <p>17 <b>and there was a fire coming in. That's why I just get</b></p> <p>18 <b>out, yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Just so that we're really clear about this, the hole was</p> <p>20 a square hole, not a round hole?</p> <p>21 <b>A. A square, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Right.</p> <p>23 I know this is difficult because you weren't there</p> <p>24 for very long, but do you remember whether there was any</p> <p>25 fire coming from anywhere else around the window.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 At paragraph 15 of your statement you refer to going</p> <p>2 to your bedroom to get your daughter.</p> <p>3 And you say in the third line:</p> <p>4 "I grabbed her, and she picked up Simba (our dog)</p> <p>5 and we left our flat. As we stepped outside of our flat</p> <p>6 that is when I called the fire brigade as set out</p> <p>7 above."</p> <p>8 How long do you estimate you spent in your flat from</p> <p>9 the point you woke up to the point you left or the point</p> <p>10 you called the Fire Brigade?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Everything happened so fast, but I will assume -- I'm</b></p> <p>12 <b>not 100 per cent sure -- about 5 minutes, 5/6 minutes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. As you left your flat, did you notice what the smoke</p> <p>14 conditions in the flat were?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I just closed the door, so I don't know.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Okay. Did you notice any smoke at all in the flat or</p> <p>17 was it --</p> <p>18 <b>A. When I came out from my flat?</b></p> <p>19 Q. As you were leaving.</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes, there was, yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Was there much smoke in your flat by the time you left?</p> <p>22 <b>A. As I say, I don't remember, but everything was happening</b></p> <p>23 <b>so fast and I just -- my main priority was just to take</b></p> <p>24 <b>my daughter and just get out, so therefore I don't know.</b></p> <p>25 Q. When you left your flat, I think you said you closed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>
<p>1 <b>A. No, that's the only place where it was coming, through</b></p> <p>2 <b>the extractor.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Was there any smoke coming into your kitchen at that</p> <p>4 point?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, there was smoke, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Do you remember what the colour of the smoke was?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It was black, but it's not very thick. It was black,</b></p> <p>8 <b>yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did you smell it? Did it have a particular smell?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes, yes. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>11 Q. What was the smell?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Like a plastic.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Again, like a plastic?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Was it the same smell as you smelt in the hallway?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Did that smoke at that time have any physical effect on</p> <p>18 you?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Not at that time, no.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Roughly -- and it's bound to be rough -- how long do you</p> <p>21 think you stayed in the kitchen?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I didn't stay long.</b></p> <p>23 Q. No. Seconds? Can you estimate in terms of --</p> <p>24 <b>A. About 5/10 seconds.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 your door behind you.</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, I did.</b></p> <p>3 Q. That's right?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>5 Q. When you went into the communal lobby --</p> <p>6 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>7 Q. -- and leave flat 6, come out of your door, you turn</p> <p>8 right?</p> <p>9 <b>A. When you come out you turn left, not right. Left.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Left?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did you turn left or did you turn right?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I came out and, yes, I turned left.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did you notice what the conditions were like in the</p> <p>17 communal lobby at that point?</p> <p>18 <b>A. To be honest, when I came out, I thought it was only my</b></p> <p>19 <b>flat was on fire, until I see my neighbour, so --</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay. We'll come to that in a moment.</p> <p>21 Can we just go back to MET00012593.</p> <p>22 So you come out of your front door.</p> <p>23 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>24 Q. And your front door is -- I think we can see it -- to</p> <p>25 the bottom left-hand corner of the flat plan, isn't it,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

<p>1 where it comes out into the lobby?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>3 Q. So you went out into the lobby and you would've turned</p> <p>4 right, wouldn't you? Because left is a wall.</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, actually, yes, to the right, sorry.</b></p> <p>6 Q. It's okay. You're working with your recollection; I'm</p> <p>7 working with the plans.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>9 Q. And sometimes they mismatch.</p> <p>10 Do you remember the moment you came out what the</p> <p>11 smoke conditions were like?</p> <p>12 <b>A. There was not too much smoke.</b></p> <p>13 Q. There was not too much smoke?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Did you see where the smoke was? Was there like a layer</p> <p>16 of smoke or was it different?</p> <p>17 <b>A. As I say, there was not so much smoke and so many thing</b></p> <p>18 <b>was happening at the same time, so I didn't notice.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Again, you may give the same answer to this question,</p> <p>20 but let me ask it anyway: did you notice any particular</p> <p>21 sound when you came out into the lobby?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes, there was a noise, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. A noise. Can you describe that noise for us?</p> <p>24 <b>A. It's alarm, but not like alarm. I can't describe it,</b></p> <p>25 <b>but there was a noise.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 "012654", which is 01.26.54, which is the time of your</p> <p>2 call.</p> <p>3 You are put through to the Fire Brigade and we</p> <p>4 start, as we see, at page 2:</p> <p>5 "CALLER: Oh my God, can you hurry please.</p> <p>6 "OPERATOR: Hello, fire brigade.</p> <p>7 "CALLER: What is happening? Oh my God.</p> <p>8 "OPERATOR: Hello?</p> <p>9 "CALLER: Hello, fire brigade please."</p> <p>10 First of all, it was a man you were speaking to,</p> <p>11 I think, wasn't it?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I don't remember.</b></p> <p>13 Q. You don't remember?</p> <p>14 <b>A. (Indicated dissent)</b></p> <p>15 Q. Right, fair enough.</p> <p>16 Do you remember where you were when you made this</p> <p>17 call? Were you inside your flat leaving or were you</p> <p>18 already in the lobby?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I was already in the lobby.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Mm.</b></p> <p>22 Q. You say halfway down the page:</p> <p>23 "CALLER: Can you send someone? There is a fire in</p> <p>24 186 Grenfell Tower.</p> <p>25 "OPERATOR: Yeah, we're actually already there, so we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>
<p>1 Q. Was it a noise you've heard before?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, I never heard it before, no.</b></p> <p>3 Q. I don't want to put ideas in your mind, but was it</p> <p>4 an alarm-like noise or was it like a machine noise?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I'm not sure, but there was a noise, very strong noise.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Did you detect where the noise was coming from?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I have no idea.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Was it a high noise or a low noise?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It was very high.</b></p> <p>10 Q. High.</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Sitting here and doing your best to try to compare it</p> <p>13 with a machine, could you compare it with any machine,</p> <p>14 like a domestic machine of some kind?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Probably.</b></p> <p>16 Q. What kind of machine would you say it sounded like?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Erm ... I can't -- sorry.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay. We may come back to that later on when you go</p> <p>19 back into the lobby.</p> <p>20 Now, we have your call time for your first 999 call</p> <p>21 at 01.26.54, and the transcript for that call is</p> <p>22 LFB00000306.</p> <p>23 Ms Gebremeskel, the time of this call you can see</p> <p>24 from the group of numbers second from the right in the</p> <p>25 long blue line of figures and details. It says,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>	<p>1 have a lot of fire engines. Where are you?</p> <p>2 "CALLER: (inaudible) on Grenfell Tower. Everyone is</p> <p>3 out.</p> <p>4 "OPERATOR: Yeah, where exactly are you in the tower?"</p> <p>5 "CALLER: In the building, in the building, the whole</p> <p>6 building, there has been a fire."</p> <p>7 Just pausing there, when you say the whole building,</p> <p>8 why do you think you were telling the operator that it</p> <p>9 was the whole building?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Because after I saw -- as I say to you, I thought it was</b></p> <p>11 <b>only my flat was on fire, until I see my neighbours, and</b></p> <p>12 <b>they are the one who told us that it's the whole</b></p> <p>13 <b>building.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 I'll come back to this call in a moment, but in your</p> <p>16 statement, if you could just go to paragraph 16, page 4</p> <p>17 of your statement, you say:</p> <p>18 "16. Having listened to the 999 tape, now, it seems</p> <p>19 that there was some confusion and the operator I was</p> <p>20 speaking to believed that we were not inside our flat or</p> <p>21 the Tower. I believe the confusion was caused when I</p> <p>22 was talking to the fire operator I said that, 'they are</p> <p>23 out', referring to my neighbours from flat 182, the</p> <p>24 El-Wahabi family who were on the landing outside their</p> <p>25 flat. I was not referring to me and my daughter having</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 left the Tower."</p> <p>2 Just trying to picture what was happening. You make</p> <p>3 the call when you were in the lobby. Had you seen the</p> <p>4 family?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Before you made the call or while you were making it?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No, I saw the family.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Okay. Before you made the call?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Okay. Did you talk to them?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, I just say to them, "There is a fire in my house."</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did they say anything to you?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, they say it's the whole building.</b></p> <p>14 Q. They said it was the whole building?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Okay. And where were they when you saw them?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Outside their flat.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Outside their flat?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>20 Q. That's, I think, flat 182; is that right?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Do you remember which members of the family you saw?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I saw all of them.</b></p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Right. Do you want to have a break?</p> <p>25 Mr Chairman, I think maybe --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 <b>A. At that point, all of us, we wanted to take the stairs,</b></p> <p>2 <b>and when we opened the fire exit door, there was a whole</b></p> <p>3 <b>bunch of people and they were telling us to go back up</b></p> <p>4 <b>to our flat.</b></p> <p>5 Q. I'll come to that in a moment because I do want to ask</p> <p>6 you a bit more about that.</p> <p>7 Before I do, can I just ask you this: did you see</p> <p>8 any other neighbours on your floor at that time?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Can you remember who you saw?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Marcio, my neighbour, 183.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did you see anybody else?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I saw a lot of people which they come to our floor from</b></p> <p>14 <b>the lower floor.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Did you see Mustafa Abdu from flat 184?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>17 Q. You describe at paragraph 17 of your statement how you</p> <p>18 went to wake up Marcio Gomes --</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. -- before trying to leave the tower by the stairs.</p> <p>21 Was that after your 999 call?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. What did you do? Did you knock on his door?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. You had to wait a little bit of time, I think, for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>
<p>1 THE WITNESS: No, I'm fine.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like to stop or do you</p> <p>3 just need a moment?</p> <p>4 THE WITNESS: No, no, I'm fine.</p> <p>5 MR MILLETT: Just take a moment.</p> <p>6 (Pause)</p> <p>7 Are you okay to continue?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. We can take a longer break if you need.</p> <p>10 <b>A. I'm fine.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Okay. I'll just try and take this slowly.</p> <p>12 Do you remember who you spoke to, which member of</p> <p>13 the family you spoke to?</p> <p>14 <b>A. As I said to you, everything was going fast, but I did</b></p> <p>15 <b>speak to the family, but I cannot say who. But I did</b></p> <p>16 <b>speak to them.</b></p> <p>17 Q. They said to you the fire is in the whole building. Did</p> <p>18 they say anything else to you?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Hm?</b></p> <p>20 Q. Did they say anything else to you?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Did you say anything else to them?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Do you remember a conversation with anybody in that</p> <p>25 family about whether you should go into their flat, 182?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>	<p>1 Marcio to open the door.</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. During that time, did you notice any change in the</p> <p>4 conditions in the lobby you were standing in?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Actually, after I knock Marcio's door, and when he open</b></p> <p>6 <b>I say, "There is a fire", and then we went to the fire</b></p> <p>7 <b>exit to get out, and that's when they told us to go back</b></p> <p>8 <b>to our flat.</b></p> <p>9 Q. I am going to ask you about going to the stairs and</p> <p>10 seeing the people coming up in just a moment.</p> <p>11 Before I do, can I just take you back to your 999</p> <p>12 call, just to finish that off. LFB00000306, and turn to</p> <p>13 page 3.</p> <p>14 You can see the advice on that page. The operator</p> <p>15 says:</p> <p>16 "OPERATOR: Right, just stay outside, okay?"</p> <p>17 "CALLER: Can you please hurry please. Send someone</p> <p>18 please.</p> <p>19 "OPERATOR: We're already there, okay?"</p> <p>20 "CALLER: There is a fire.</p> <p>21 "OPERATOR: Yeah, I know there's a fire and the fire</p> <p>22 brigade are already there, okay, we've got (inaudible)</p> <p>23 going.</p> <p>24 "CALLER: It's the whole building.</p> <p>25 "OPERATOR: Stay outside, okay?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

<p>1 When you were told "We're already there", the Fire 2 Brigade said, "We're already there", what did you expect 3 them to be doing? 4 <b>A. Obviously they are in the building, if they say they are 5 there, to look into it.</b> 6 Q. Did you get any assurance or comfort from what you were 7 told on that call? 8 <b>A. At the time, yes.</b> 9 Q. What did you expect would happen? 10 <b>A. Well, as that's their profession, you know, obviously 11 they are there to rescue us and they know, you know, so 12 that was my hope, for them to come and take us out.</b> 13 Q. You then knock on Marcio's door and the family comes. 14 Then I think you all leave and go to the stairs; is that 15 right? 16 <b>A. Pardon?</b> 17 Q. The whole of the Gomes family came out -- 18 <b>A. Together.</b> 19 Q. -- and you all went to the stair door together. 20 <b>A. Yes.</b> 21 Q. Did the stair door open? Did somebody open the stair 22 door? 23 <b>A. I opened it.</b> 24 Q. You opened it? 25 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 this point. I think it was about 1.30am and there was 2 smoke but not so much that we couldn't see each other." 3 At that point, is it just you opening the stairs or 4 was Marcio with you? 5 <b>A. Are you talking about after or before?</b> 6 Q. No, at this point. So early on. 7 <b>A. No, early on, he didn't try to come out, because when we 8 tried to get out, that's when the people told us to go 9 back up to our flat.</b> 10 Q. Yes. 11 <b>A. And that's when Marcio, he called us and we went to his 12 flat, and we stayed there until the end, until we got 13 out.</b> 14 Q. And you -- 15 <b>A. But at that time there was no smoke.</b> 16 Q. No smoke? 17 <b>A. There was, but not too much.</b> 18 Q. Right, okay. That's -- 19 <b>A. We can still see each other, yes.</b> 20 Q. You describe people going up the stairs. How many 21 people roughly do you think you saw? 22 <b>A. There was a lot of people.</b> 23 Q. Can you describe whether they were wearing nightwear or 24 whether they were dressed for escape? 25 <b>A. I remember only one person, but I don't remember the</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p>
<p>1 Q. Did you notice what the conditions were like in the 2 stairs at the time? 3 <b>A. It's too dark, you can't see nothing.</b> 4 Q. You couldn't see? 5 <b>A. Nothing.</b> 6 Q. Why couldn't you see anything? 7 <b>A. Because of the smoke.</b> 8 Q. Can you describe the smoke at that time? 9 <b>A. It was black, thick smoke.</b> 10 Q. How did that compare with the conditions in the lobby in 11 the 21st floor at that time? 12 <b>A. The same thing. It was dark.</b> 13 Q. So let's see if I can just explore this a bit more. 14 At the time you knock on Marcio's -- 15 <b>A. There was no smoke.</b> 16 Q. There was no smoke? 17 <b>A. No.</b> 18 Q. By the time they came out -- 19 <b>A. No, I went inside to their house and I stay there.</b> 20 Q. Okay. Let's just take this a little bit more slowly. 21 Paragraph 18 of your statement, you say: 22 "18, Once we had woken Marcio, while he was still at 23 his door, I went to the fire exit door leading to the 24 stairwell on the landing to see about escaping down the 25 stairs, I opened the fire door but did not go down at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>	<p>1 <b>rest of them, and I don't remember what they were 2 wearing, so ...</b> 3 Q. Still in paragraph 18, you say four lines up from the 4 bottom, "They told us to go back to our flat." 5 The "us" there, is that you and your daughter? 6 <b>A. And El-Wahabi as well.</b> 7 Q. And? 8 <b>A. El-Wahabi, 183.</b> 9 Q. I see, okay. So you were all together trying to go out? 10 <b>A. Yes.</b> 11 Q. When they told you to go back, do you remember who told 12 you that? 13 <b>A. The people was from the lower floor, they're trying to 14 come to our floor.</b> 15 Q. Did they tell you who had told them to go upstairs? 16 <b>A. Well, I assume they'd been told by the professionals, 17 which is the firefighter. They must have told them.</b> 18 Q. Right. Do you remember -- 19 <b>A. They're giving us the instruction as well, yes.</b> 20 Q. That's an assumption you've made? 21 <b>A. Yes, that's what I assume, yes.</b> 22 Q. When you went back to Marcio Gomes, did you tell him 23 that the firefighters had said, "Go upstairs"? Do you 24 remember telling him that? 25 <b>A. I don't remember telling him, but I'm sure I must have,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p>

1        **yes.**  
 2        Q. Okay.  
 3        **A. No, he call us, actually. He saw the whole situation.**  
 4        **He was outside his door, I remember. When they told us**  
 5        **to go back to our flat, that's when Marcio, he say,**  
 6        **"Come" and we went to his flat.**  
 7        Q. I follow.  
 8        **A. Yes.**  
 9        Q. Then I think you say at the top of page 5 and  
 10        paragraph 19:  
 11        "19. At this time, I noticed that other residents  
 12        on the floor went into flat 182."  
 13        That was where the family we discussed earlier had  
 14        lived.  
 15        Do you remember how many people went into flat 182?  
 16        **A. I can't remember, but there were a few people following**  
 17        **them, I know that.**  
 18        Q. Did you actually see people go into flat 182 yourself?  
 19        **A. I didn't see, but I saw them following. So everyone was**  
 20        **running, and I went to Marcio's flat and some of them**  
 21        **went upstairs. As I said to you, there was a lot of**  
 22        **people, a lot.**  
 23        Q. Okay.  
 24        **A. So ... I'm not 100 per cent sure how many, so ...**  
 25        Q. Would you be able to describe those people who you

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1        thought were going into flat 182 or who were following  
 2        the family?  
 3        **A. I couldn't.**  
 4        Q. Okay, you couldn't.  
 5        I know that you then went into flat 183.  
 6        **A. Yes.**  
 7        Q. The Gomes family's flat.  
 8        **A. Mm-hm.**  
 9        Q. When you went in there, what were the conditions like?  
 10        **A. There was no smoke in the house at that time, at that**  
 11        **point.**  
 12        Q. You say in your statement at paragraph 21:  
 13        "21. [My daughter] and I went into Marcio's flat  
 14        with Simba. We closed the door behind us. It was about  
 15        1:30 am when we went into their home."  
 16        **A. Yes.**  
 17        Q. How do you know or how were you estimating what time it  
 18        was when you went into their flat?  
 19        **A. Because I had my phone the whole time with me.**  
 20        Q. So it was about three or four minutes after that?  
 21        **A. Yes.**  
 22        Q. At paragraph 22 of your statement, you say:  
 23        "22. Around this time. I received calls from  
 24        various people including friends and family from outside  
 25        the Tower. They were all telling me that we needed to

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1        get out of Grenfell Tower. They were crying on the  
 2        phone and telling us we had to get out as they said it  
 3        looked really bad. My cousin Kay Karidan, was on the  
 4        phone to me as well telling us to get out."  
 5        Did they tell you why you needed to get out?  
 6        **A. Obviously the fire was going around and it was not**  
 7        **stopping, so -- we cannot see from the inside but they**  
 8        **can see it from the outside, and we didn't even know how**  
 9        **bad it was, so ...**  
 10        Q. At paragraph 23 you say:  
 11        "23. Around the same time Marcio was on the phone  
 12        to the emergency services who were telling him that we  
 13        should stay in the flat and that someone would come and  
 14        rescue us."  
 15        Did you actually hear him on the phone to the  
 16        emergency services?  
 17        **A. I didn't hear, but that's what everyone was saying to us**  
 18        **whenever we spoke to them. They told us to stay in**  
 19        **and ...**  
 20        Q. You say at the same time Marcio was on the phone to  
 21        emergency services. Do you know which services he was  
 22        speaking to?  
 23        **A. I can't remember because there was a lot of phone call**  
 24        **that was coming up and we were calling, so I don't**  
 25        **remember.**

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1        Q. The reason I am asking you the question, Ms Gebremeskel,  
 2        is because the first LFB call we have for Marcio was his  
 3        call at 02.21.04, so about 50 minutes later.  
 4        So my question is: are you sure he was on the phone  
 5        to the emergency services at that early stage when you  
 6        first went into the flat?  
 7        **A. I'm not sure.**  
 8        Q. Before you went into the flat, while you were still in  
 9        the lobby, do you remember whether there was any smoke  
 10        coming from your flat, 186?  
 11        **A. No.**  
 12        Q. No, there wasn't?  
 13        **A. I only see it inside, not from outside.**  
 14        Q. At paragraph 24 of your statement, you explain who was  
 15        in the flat: Marcio and Andrea and their children, and  
 16        your daughter and the two dogs, Simba and Lilly, Lilly  
 17        being the Gomes' dog.  
 18        **A. Yes.**  
 19        Q. You say in the next paragraph, 25:  
 20        "25. As stated above we were sitting in the living  
 21        room trying to decide what to do. There was smoke  
 22        coming under the front door of the flat."  
 23        How long after you came into the flat did smoke  
 24        start coming under the Gomes' front door?  
 25        **A. I think I would say half an hour.**

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<p>1 Q. Is that an estimate?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. About half an hour.</p> <p>4 At that point, when smoke started coming in under</p> <p>5 the door, were there towels there already or --</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes, Marcio, he was doing that.</b></p> <p>7 Q. So that would be about 2.00 am, then?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Probably, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did you see any smoke coming into the flat from anywhere</p> <p>10 else?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, we saw it in Marcio's house.</b></p> <p>12 Q. No, when you were in Marcio's house --</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, the smoke was coming in, yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. You told us about the front door, but when you were in</p> <p>15 Marcio's house, did you see smoke coming into that house</p> <p>16 from anywhere else?</p> <p>17 <b>A. There was smoke -- a lot of smoke coming, and ...</b></p> <p>18 <b>obviously it's from the hallway.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Yes. So apart from smoke coming in under the front</p> <p>20 door --</p> <p>21 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>22 Q. -- do you remember seeing smoke coming into the flat</p> <p>23 from anywhere else, like windows or --</p> <p>24 <b>A. By the window, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Do you remember which window you saw smoke coming in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 161</p>	<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Are you happy to carry</p> <p>2 on?</p> <p>3 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.</p> <p>5 When you're ready, Mr Millett.</p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>7 Ms Gebremeskel, thank you very much for coming back</p> <p>8 to us.</p> <p>9 I just want to ask you about what was happening in</p> <p>10 the Gomes flat when you were there. Can I ask you,</p> <p>11 please, to be shown the floor plan again, which is</p> <p>12 MET00012593.</p> <p>13 Can I ask you, Ralph, please, to expand flat 3 or</p> <p>14 what equates to 183.</p> <p>15 Ms Gebremeskel, on this plan I'm showing you a plan</p> <p>16 of what the Gomes' flat roughly looks like. I'm not</p> <p>17 sure myself yet whether that's exactly the same interior</p> <p>18 layout because he has not given evidence yet.</p> <p>19 But can you just help us, you were describing seeing</p> <p>20 smoke coming in through the living room window once you</p> <p>21 were in the flat. Can you point out to us on this plan</p> <p>22 which window that is?</p> <p>23 <b>A. You know, in the tower, there is a lot of windows around</b></p> <p>24 <b>it. So basically we were in the living room, and the</b></p> <p>25 <b>smoke was coming from all the windows.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 163</p>
<p>1 from?</p> <p>2 <b>A. In the living room.</b></p> <p>3 Q. The living room?</p> <p>4 <b>A. His living room, yes.</b></p> <p>5 MR MILLETT: Okay. Right.</p> <p>6 Mr Chairman, it may be an appropriate time to take</p> <p>7 a break. I notice that we've been going an hour, and</p> <p>8 it's probably time to take a break.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Anyway, this is a convenient time.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: I'm in the middle of a long flow of questions</p> <p>11 all linked to the conditions in the Gomes' flat, so it's</p> <p>12 as good a time as any.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We had better take it now.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Yes, if I can.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, Ms Gebremeskel, we do have</p> <p>16 a break every now and then, and I think this would be</p> <p>17 a good time to take one.</p> <p>18 So we'll stop now until 3.20. Please don't talk to</p> <p>19 anyone about your evidence while you're out of the room.</p> <p>20 If you would like to go with the usher, she'll look</p> <p>21 after you. All right?</p> <p>22 3.20, then, please. Thank you.</p> <p>23 (3.10 pm)</p> <p>24 (A short break)</p> <p>25 (3.23 pm)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 162</p>	<p>1 Q. Right. All the windows in the living room?</p> <p>2 <b>A. All the windows, yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Okay.</p> <p>4 <b>A. And their house is -- it's open plan, they don't have</b></p> <p>5 <b>the sliding door. So basically the kitchen and the</b></p> <p>6 <b>living room is together.</b></p> <p>7 Q. I see.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Were the windows open or closed, do you remember?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No, we open it, at the time.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You opened it?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. The smoke was coming through the open windows, was it?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You say in your statement, paragraph 26:</p> <p>16 "26, At about 2:00 am Marcio said that he was going</p> <p>17 to knock on the door of the old, Filipino lady in the</p> <p>18 flat opposite. He went to her front door and opened it,</p> <p>19 and this was when we realised how bad the conditions</p> <p>20 were outside the flat."</p> <p>21 Just before we go on to the conditions, do you know</p> <p>22 what made Marcio get up and go to the lady opposite?</p> <p>23 <b>A. He was thinking to go and let her know there is a fire</b></p> <p>24 <b>in the building. That's why.</b></p> <p>25 Q. You say in your statement, "He went to her front door</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 164</p>

<p>1 and opened it". Do you mean the lady's front door?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, no, no.</b></p> <p>3 Q. You mean his --</p> <p>4 <b>A. His own door.</b></p> <p>5 Q. -- own front door?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Mm.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Do you know the Filipino lady?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Do you know what her name was?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Algaya, I think?</b></p> <p>11 Q. Ligaya.</p> <p>12 <b>A. Ligaya, yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Was it Ligaya Moore?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Did you know her?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I say hello to her but I'm not that close. But as</b></p> <p>17 <b>a neighbour we do say hello and, you know ...</b></p> <p>18 Q. You've given a time of this of about 2.00 am. Again,</p> <p>19 how do you remember it was 2.00 am?</p> <p>20 <b>A. As I say, I had my phone with me the whole time.</b></p> <p>21 Q. So when Marcio went to the door to go to warn Ligaya,</p> <p>22 did you notice the time on your phone?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I estimate it as when I went to his house, and it was,</b></p> <p>24 <b>I think -- I assumed it was right after half an hour.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Was this the first time that Marcio had opened his front</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 Q. Right.</p> <p>2 <b>A. Like chemical, but I can't describe what kind of</b></p> <p>3 <b>chemical, but I can smell it's like a chemical.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Is it like anything you'd smelt burning before? Did it</p> <p>5 remind you of anything in particular?</p> <p>6 <b>A. You mean in my house?</b></p> <p>7 Q. The smoke, yes, anything you've ever experienced before.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Mm ... not really.</b></p> <p>9 Q. You say you were all coughing due to the smoke. When</p> <p>10 did you all start coughing, do you think?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, because of the smoke was coming, it was getting</b></p> <p>12 <b>worse, it's not getting, you know -- that's why we start</b></p> <p>13 <b>smoke -- all of us were smoking -- I mean, coughing,</b></p> <p>14 <b>sorry.</b></p> <p>15 Q. So about the same time --</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. -- as the smoke was getting stronger, you started</p> <p>18 coughing?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Did you notice any physical effects that the smoke had</p> <p>21 on you? It was making you cough; was there any other</p> <p>22 physical effects on you or your daughter?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No, we're just coughing.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You mention heat. You say the heat was increasing.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p>
<p>1 door after you and your daughter had come into the flat?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Did you yourself see Marcio open the front door?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No, I didn't.</b></p> <p>5 Q. So when in your statement you say:</p> <p>6 "The smoke outside the front door at this time had</p> <p>7 become really thick and black."</p> <p>8 Is that something you saw or is that something</p> <p>9 Marcio told you?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No, when he opened the door and he told us how serious</b></p> <p>11 <b>it was, then obviously we went and we checked and there</b></p> <p>12 <b>was smoke coming in.</b></p> <p>13 Q. So you went and had a look yourself, did you?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I think I did, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You say in the fourth line in the same paragraph:</p> <p>16 "There was a strong smokey smell and it was getting</p> <p>17 worse. We were all coughing due to the smoke and it was</p> <p>18 getting harder to breathe and the heat was increasing."</p> <p>19 Was the smoke filling the flat up --</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. -- at this point.</p> <p>22 <b>A. (Nodded assent)</b></p> <p>23 Q. The smell of the smoke, can you describe the smell in</p> <p>24 any greater detail?</p> <p>25 <b>A. It was just a very strong burning smell.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p>	<p>1 Q. Do you remember whether you could tell whether the heat</p> <p>2 was coming from a particular direction or was it just</p> <p>3 all round heat?</p> <p>4 <b>A. It was all around.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Turning to page 6, paragraph 27, you say:</p> <p>6 "It was then that we realised we had to get out of</p> <p>7 the Tower and that we would die if we remained in the</p> <p>8 flat."</p> <p>9 What made you realise that?</p> <p>10 <b>A. It was getting worse. So if we stayed then we're going</b></p> <p>11 <b>to die, so ...</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did you have a discussion with Marcio or Andrea about</p> <p>13 having to get out, otherwise you might die?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes, Marcio, he was instructing us.</b></p> <p>15 Q. What did he say?</p> <p>16 <b>A. "We have to go out, we have to go."</b></p> <p>17 Q. You then go on in your same paragraph, 27, to say:</p> <p>18 "At this point Marcio said we had to escape and so</p> <p>19 he filled the bath tub with water and soaked towels in</p> <p>20 the bath and gave us two towels each (one bath towel and</p> <p>21 one tea towel)."</p> <p>22 Did you watch Marcio fill the bath?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, I saw him, yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Did you notice any problems with the water pressure when</p> <p>25 he did so?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 168</p>

1 **A. At the time, no.**  
 2 Q. Then you say:  
 3 "Marcio passed me the phone while he was doing this,  
 4 and I spoke to the emergency services. The Fire Brigade  
 5 operator told me to remain where we all were, and that  
 6 someone would come to rescue us."  
 7 I just want to ask you a little bit about that.  
 8 The first call that we have in the transcripts for  
 9 those calls for Mr Gomes, for Marcio, is at 02.21.04,  
 10 and that is LFB00000348.  
 11 We have seen the call and listened to the call.  
 12 There's only one caller on that call and it's Mr Gomes.  
 13 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 14 Q. My question is: do you think it's really right that you  
 15 spoke to the emergency services at that point, while he  
 16 was filling the bath?  
 17 **A. At the time, we had been calling friends to pass us**  
 18 **either to police officer or the Fire Brigade. But**  
 19 **I assume maybe I was using my phone, or --**  
 20 Q. Right.  
 21 **A. But we did talk to the police and the firefighter**  
 22 **outside, but there was a time that I used my phone to**  
 23 **call a friend and we asked them to pass it to us.**  
 24 Q. Okay.  
 25 **A. To the police.**

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1 Q. I see, okay.  
 2 **A. Mm.**  
 3 Q. When you say then:  
 4 "The Fire Brigade operator told me to remain where  
 5 we all were, and someone would come to rescue us."  
 6 Are you referring to a call made by you to a friend  
 7 who then passed you to a firefighter outside?  
 8 **A. Yes, or to the police officer, yes. I remember, yes.**  
 9 Q. Right, I follow.  
 10 While on the subject of the call that Marcio Gomes  
 11 made -- we have the transcript still on the screen --  
 12 can I ask you just to look at it. He says on page 2 at  
 13 the top, a quarter of the way down:  
 14 "CALLER: I'm reporting a -- yeah, I'm reporting the  
 15 fire at Grenfell Tower, which you should know about."  
 16 He goes on to explain you're still on the 21st  
 17 floor, and goes on to explain:  
 18 "CALLER: ... I've got a heavily pregnant wife."  
 19 At the top of page 3, he says:  
 20 "CALLER: Yeah, me and my wife, three kids and my  
 21 neighbour."  
 22 Did you hear him make this call, do you think?  
 23 **A. I don't remember.**  
 24 Q. You don't remember --  
 25 **A. But as --**

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1 Q. Sorry, go ahead.  
 2 **A. As I say, everything was going fast and we're all**  
 3 **confused, so ...**  
 4 Q. Do you remember Marcio Gomes telling you, after he had  
 5 filled the bath or around about that time, that he had  
 6 spoken to 999 and was told that the LFB knew where they  
 7 were and were going to come and get you? Did Marcio  
 8 tell you that that is what he had been told?  
 9 **A. Yes, that's what they've been saying. Obviously I don't**  
 10 **remember. You know, as I say to you again, it's very**  
 11 **confusing and ...**  
 12 Q. Going back to your statement, you say in 29:  
 13 "29. I called various people including Nadia  
 14 Choucair from Flat 193 on the 22nd floor upstairs ..."  
 15 Do you remember roughly what time you called Nadia?  
 16 **A. I think it was after 02.00.**  
 17 Q. How many times do you think you spoke to Nadia after  
 18 coming into Marcio's flat?  
 19 **A. I spoke to her a few times.**  
 20 Q. A few times?  
 21 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 22 Q. Do you remember, in any of those calls, what she said to  
 23 you?  
 24 **A. I was just telling them what was happening, what we were**  
 25 **doing.**

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1 Q. Did she say anything to you?  
 2 **A. She was just telling me she was in the house.**  
 3 Q. Anything else?  
 4 **A. I was telling her what we were doing, to fill up the**  
 5 **bath and, you know, just cover themselves with a towel.**  
 6 **I didn't even know how to do that; I saw Marcio doing**  
 7 **it, so I was just telling them what to do.**  
 8 Q. Did Nadia tell you what advice they had received in  
 9 their flat from the emergency services?  
 10 **A. Yes, but I found the text message and the voice message**  
 11 **after.**  
 12 Q. Sure.  
 13 **A. I didn't even know that she was calling me.**  
 14 Q. Sure.  
 15 During your calls that you did have with her, do you  
 16 remember her telling you what advice she'd received or  
 17 they had received?  
 18 **A. When I was talking to her, no.**  
 19 Q. Not while you were on the phone to her. Okay.  
 20 Do you remember roughly how long before you finally  
 21 made it out of the Gomes' flat you spoke to Nadia?  
 22 **A. Just before we went out.**  
 23 Q. Can you remember anything about that -- let's stop.  
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Just take a moment to settle  
 25 yourself.

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<p>1 (Pause)</p> <p>2 MR MILLETT: Ms Gebremeskel, we can take a break.</p> <p>3 THE WITNESS: No, I'm fine.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Just take some time. We'll wait for you.</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, it's obvious to all of</p> <p>6 us that the witness is finding this very difficult and</p> <p>7 very distressing, so possibly we could --</p> <p>8 MR MILLETT: Move on.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Not necessarily move on, but focus</p> <p>10 the questions on what we really need help on.</p> <p>11 (Pause)</p> <p>12 MR MILLETT: I'm sorry to ask you this. These questions are</p> <p>13 important to some of the families as well as to the</p> <p>14 inquiry, and we just want to see how we go. If it's</p> <p>15 difficult, I understand.</p> <p>16 In that last conversation that you had with Nadia,</p> <p>17 do you remember what she said to you?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes. As I said, I was instructing her and I was telling</b></p> <p>19 <b>her what we're going to do. I told her to fill up the</b></p> <p>20 <b>bath and to just, you know, soak the towel and cover</b></p> <p>21 <b>everyone. As I was saying that to her, she passed me to</b></p> <p>22 <b>her husband to explain to him, and I was telling him,</b></p> <p>23 <b>and when I told him what to do, he was crying. That was</b></p> <p>24 <b>the last conversation I had.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 173</p>	<p>1 flat?</p> <p>2 "CALLER: No, it's the flat next door, and it's</p> <p>3 already coming through the windows."</p> <p>4 That's what he says.</p> <p>5 My question is: do you remember Marcio making a call</p> <p>6 to 999 and saying those things?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Did I make the phone call?</b></p> <p>8 Q. No, do you remember him making the phone call and saying</p> <p>9 those things? Did you hear him say that?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I don't remember.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You don't remember that? Okay.</p> <p>12 Now, he says -- obviously we're going to look at</p> <p>13 this with him because he's going to give evidence later</p> <p>14 this week -- that he made this call after two failed</p> <p>15 attempts to leave the flat. So he tried to get out</p> <p>16 twice before he makes this call at about 2.45.</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Is that how you recall it, that you had two attempts to</p> <p>19 leave before about 2.45?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes, we tried to get out twice. Maybe that was that</b></p> <p>21 <b>time. I'm not quite sure.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Leave the call and go back to paragraph 32 of your</p> <p>23 statement on page 6. You say there that you decided to</p> <p>24 escape and you all headed to the front door of their</p> <p>25 flat:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 175</p>
<p>1 Going back to your statement, page 6, paragraph 31,</p> <p>2 you say:</p> <p>3 "31. Around this time, somewhere between 2:30 am and</p> <p>4 3:00 am Marcio's bedroom caught fire from the outside.</p> <p>5 The flames had come in from the outside of the Tower</p> <p>6 into his bedroom, but I did not see this but heard from</p> <p>7 him."</p> <p>8 First of all, you've put the time at 2.30 to</p> <p>9 3.00 am, Ms Gebremeskel. How do you reckon that? How</p> <p>10 do you get that time frame?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I'm not sure.</b></p> <p>12 Q. I may be able to help you a bit with Marcio's own calls</p> <p>13 and to see whether that fits with the time frame.</p> <p>14 Can I ask the witness please to be shown</p> <p>15 LFB00000672.</p> <p>16 This is a transcript of Marcio's second 999 call,</p> <p>17 timed at 02.46.58.</p> <p>18 Ms Gebremeskel, we can work that out because of the</p> <p>19 tiny numbers at the top, the second group of numbers</p> <p>20 from the right says "024658" where the little red dot</p> <p>21 is, so it's about 2.45 am.</p> <p>22 He makes a call and says:</p> <p>23 "CALLER: I am still waiting at flat 183, and the</p> <p>24 fire's already reached us.</p> <p>25 "OPERATOR: Okay, so where is the fire, is it in your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 174</p>	<p>1 "When we opened the front door of the flat, we were</p> <p>2 hit by thick, black smoke. I can't remember whether</p> <p>3 there was a lot of heat. It was so thick that we could</p> <p>4 not see our hands in front of our faces. We were</p> <p>5 already coughing from the smoke inside the flat but it</p> <p>6 was much worse when we opened the door. As we opened</p> <p>7 the front door the smoke bellowed into the flat. It</p> <p>8 took three attempts of opening the door and then</p> <p>9 retreating in before we decided to go for it."</p> <p>10 I've read all of that to you to give you the full</p> <p>11 context.</p> <p>12 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Over what period of time did you open the door three</p> <p>14 times before finally going out, do you think?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I can't remember.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did all of those attempts to leave happen after he told</p> <p>17 you that the fire had spread into his bedroom?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Do you remember before you finally did go whether Marcio</p> <p>20 Gomes made any more calls to 999?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No, I think at that point we get out, I think that</b></p> <p>22 <b>was ...</b></p> <p>23 Q. Okay.</p> <p>24 Do you remember, when you did finally go for it, as</p> <p>25 you put it, whether Marcio was on the phone to 999 at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 176</p>

1 that stage?  
 2 **A. I don't remember.**  
 3 Q. You don't remember?  
 4 **A. No.**  
 5 Q. Okay.  
 6 Just to give you the context, we have him making  
 7 a final 999 call at 03.25.45, as he's leaving the flat  
 8 and you're all crossing the lobby and going into the  
 9 stairs. But you don't remember him making that call?  
 10 **A. No.**  
 11 Q. Or being on the phone?  
 12 **A. (Indicated dissent)**  
 13 Q. Right, okay. I won't ask any questions about that.  
 14 Do you remember him saying "All put towels over your  
 15 heads, hold hands and go"?  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. You say in paragraph 33:  
 18 "33. We left in a line with me at the front followed  
 19 by Andrea, then [the three children] and Marcio, in that  
 20 order."  
 21 Do you remember how far Marcio was behind you or  
 22 behind the group?  
 23 **A. We were six of us, so we were following. I was leading,**  
 24 **so they were behind me.**  
 25 Q. Right.

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. Okay. So you went out into the smoke?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. Did you have a wet towel on your mouth and nose?  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. And your daughter, the same?  
 7 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 8 MR MILLETT: I just want to ask you about the smoke density  
 9 at the time. You say that it was thick black smoke.  
 10 I am going to show you a very short video clip. But  
 11 before I do -- I know you are okay to see this --  
 12 Mr Chairman, this may be distressing to some people.  
 13 I'll just explain what it is. It is a 30-second  
 14 video taken by Marcio Gomes whilst inside his flat, at  
 15 his front door, and when he opens the front door and  
 16 smoke comes billowing in. The purpose of my asking the  
 17 witness this question is to ask her to look at the video  
 18 and see the smoke and offer some exercise of visual  
 19 comparison. That's the point of it.  
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.  
 21 MR MILLETT: So I'm essentially giving a warning. If people  
 22 are going to find this video distressing, as well they  
 23 might because it may bring back memories of smoke on the  
 24 night, then they should either leave the room now or  
 25 should avert themselves. So I am just going to allow

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1 some seconds to go by.  
 2 I should also say that the video has audio on it of  
 3 people in the flat talking, but I think it's fair to say  
 4 the voices one can hear are the witness's for the most  
 5 part.  
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: From what you said earlier, do  
 7 I understand that the witness is aware of what it shows  
 8 and you've been asked --  
 9 MR MILLETT: Yes.  
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You understand what Mr Millett wants  
 11 to show you?  
 12 THE WITNESS: Yes.  
 13 MR MILLETT: Yes.  
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You are willing to see it?  
 15 THE WITNESS: Yes.  
 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, thank you.  
 17 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, we've prepared the ground for  
 18 that.  
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.  
 20 I think there's been enough time for anyone to leave  
 21 who wants to leave.  
 22 MR MILLETT: Can I then ask for Marcio's video at  
 23 IWS00000623 to be shown.  
 24 It's only 30 seconds, so I'm just going to play it  
 25 to you fully and then ask you some questions about it.

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1 So can it please be played  
 2 (Video Played)  
 3 Now, my first question is: when you see Marcio open  
 4 the door and see the black smoke -- we can go back to  
 5 it -- how does that smoke, that thickness and colour,  
 6 compare with the smoke that you eventually went out into  
 7 when you all finally left the flat?  
 8 **A. It's the same thing.**  
 9 Q. It's the same, right.  
 10 In the video -- we can also see this -- do you  
 11 remember whether at that time there was smoke coming in  
 12 under the door, even when it was closed?  
 13 **A. Yes, there was, yes.**  
 14 Q. We can hear in the background the sound of a shower. It  
 15 may be people didn't pick that up; I'm happy to play it  
 16 again. Do you remember that, that the shower was going?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. Do you know why Marcio Gomes had the shower going?  
 19 **A. There is a reason he's done it, but I think probably**  
 20 **maybe, you know, later on, we might not have the water,**  
 21 **so he was just filling it up in order to put the towel,**  
 22 **you know, to cover ourselves and to get out. Yes.**  
 23 Q. I think he himself says that he did so in order to  
 24 reduce the smoke --  
 25 **A. Yes, that as well, yes.**

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1 Q. Okay.  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. When you got out into the lobby, how far in front of you  
 4 could you see?  
 5 **A. You can't see nothing.**  
 6 Q. You couldn't see the lights on the wall?  
 7 **A. No.**  
 8 Q. I think you led the way to the stairs, staying in front.  
 9 How did you find your way to the stairs?  
 10 **A. I know my way out, I always take the stairs, so I know**  
 11 **which way to go.**  
 12 Q. When you got to the staircase door, do you remember  
 13 whether it was closed or whether it was open?  
 14 **A. No, it was closed.**  
 15 Q. It was closed?  
 16 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 17 Q. Before you get to the stairs, when you come out into the  
 18 lobby, do you remember hearing any noise?  
 19 **A. There was a lot of noises but I can't remember what it**  
 20 **was. But there was a lot of noise, a lot.**  
 21 Q. You told us earlier that when you'd come from your flat  
 22 to Marcio's flat you'd heard a high noise.  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. Like something you never heard before.  
 25 Could you still hear that noise when --

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1 **A. The same thing, yes.**  
 2 Q. Was it the same noise or louder?  
 3 **A. It was louder. It was louder. It was -- yes.**  
 4 Q. Did you notice any change in temperature between  
 5 Marcio's flat and the communal lobby?  
 6 **A. It was very hot. Very hot.**  
 7 Q. The lobby was hot?  
 8 **A. I don't remember in the lobby, but when I was taking the**  
 9 **stairs, I remember the heat, yes.**  
 10 Q. Right. Okay.  
 11 So you get into the stairs, and at the moment you  
 12 get into the stairs, how was the smoke in the stairs?  
 13 **A. The same thing, very thick.**  
 14 Q. The same?  
 15 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 16 Q. You describe at paragraph 34 -- I'll just summarise  
 17 it -- that there was water on the floor on the stairs.  
 18 **A. Mm.**  
 19 Q. Did you feel water on the stairs as soon as you came  
 20 into the stairs?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. At 37, if I can just ask you to look at that, you say:  
 23 "37. I was finding it hard to breathe going down  
 24 the stairs, and the temperature was very hot (like you  
 25 were in a very hot sauna) all the way as we travelled

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1 down the stairs."  
 2 Was that sauna-like heat something you experienced  
 3 as soon as you got into the stairs or was it some way  
 4 down?  
 5 **A. No, as soon as I get to the stairs.**  
 6 Q. Really?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. And as you went down, did it change?  
 9 **A. It was getting hotter, yes.**  
 10 Q. Getting hotter?  
 11 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 12 Q. How did the temperature when you went into the stairs  
 13 compare with the lobby that you'd just come out of?  
 14 **A. Because to come out from his house to go to the lobby,**  
 15 **we were just running, we just -- you know. So I didn't**  
 16 **feel that. But as I was going downstairs, that's when**  
 17 **I felt it, yes.**  
 18 Q. Did you touch the handrail?  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. How did you find it?  
 21 **A. As I say, I know where it is --**  
 22 Q. Sorry, it was a bad question.  
 23 When you touched the handrail, what did it feel  
 24 like? What did its temperature feel like?  
 25 **A. It was okay. I didn't feel no heat on that.**

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1 Q. Right.  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. You didn't find the handrail was hot itself?  
 4 **A. I don't remember that, no.**  
 5 Q. Were you able to hold onto it as you went down?  
 6 **A. Yes. Then again, you are confused, you are lost, so you**  
 7 **wouldn't feel it.**  
 8 Q. On your way down the stairs, do you remember whether you  
 9 saw any doors to stairs open?  
 10 **A. Which door?**  
 11 Q. The stairwell doors into lobbies, did you see any of  
 12 those open?  
 13 **A. The fire exit, you mean?**  
 14 Q. Yes.  
 15 **A. No, it wasn't, I opened it.**  
 16 Q. Sorry. On your way down, you went past --  
 17 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 18 Q. -- doors which would lead into lobbies on other floors?  
 19 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 20 Q. Do you remember whether, when you passed them, any of  
 21 them were open?  
 22 **A. It was still open because they were following me. So**  
 23 **they were holding the door until we go down.**  
 24 Q. Okay. So once you'd left your floor, floor 21, and had  
 25 started to come down the stairway --

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<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. -- down the building, do you remember whether when you</p> <p>3 passed other stair doors which led into lower lobbies at</p> <p>4 lower levels --</p> <p>5 <b>A. No, I didn't find any.</b></p> <p>6 Q. -- any of those doors were open?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No, I don't remember. I didn't see one.</b></p> <p>8 Q. At paragraph 36 of your statement, you say you found it</p> <p>9 very hard to breathe going down the stairs.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You explain that the tea towel was making it harder to</p> <p>12 breathe properly.</p> <p>13 Did you feel the effects of smoke inhalation as you</p> <p>14 were going down?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. What were those effects?</p> <p>17 <b>A. It was too much smoke, and as I was going down as well,</b></p> <p>18 <b>I was calling my daughter's name and I was inhaling</b></p> <p>19 <b>more, so that was making it difficult as well.</b></p> <p>20 Q. You were able to shout out, were you?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, I was shouting, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Could you get enough air into your lungs in order to be</p> <p>23 able to shout?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I was struggling, but still I was shouting so that my</b></p> <p>25 <b>daughter can hear me, you know.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 185</p>	<p>1 Q. I think in your statement at paragraph 41, you say:</p> <p>2 "41. The black smoke was very thick all the way</p> <p>3 down. It was not until I reached the second or first</p> <p>4 floor that the smoke was clearer."</p> <p>5 Did you notice that it was the 2nd or 1st floor, and</p> <p>6 could you tell that it was the 2nd or 1st floor when you</p> <p>7 got there?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I'm not sure, that's why -- I'm not sure.</b></p> <p>9 Q. At any point in your descent down the stairs, did you</p> <p>10 see any lights at all?</p> <p>11 <b>A. When I was going down?</b></p> <p>12 Q. Yes.</p> <p>13 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Did you pass anybody?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>16 Q. At paragraph 43 of your statement, you say, at the top</p> <p>17 of page 9:</p> <p>18 "43. When I reached the ground floor, I saw a</p> <p>19 fireman and I looked behind me and saw only Andrea and</p> <p>20 [a child]. I could not see [the other children] or</p> <p>21 Marcio."</p> <p>22 <b>A. Mm.</b></p> <p>23 Q. When you got to the ground floor, where was Andrea and</p> <p>24 the other child, do you remember where they were?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, they came right after me, and there was a bench,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 187</p>
<p>1 Q. Did you hear Marcio shouting?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Were you always in earshot of Marcio? Could you always</p> <p>4 hear him?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, but at some point I didn't hear them, so ...</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Mm.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Can you describe what other effects you were feeling as</p> <p>9 you were going down the stairs?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes, I was feeling dizziness and I thought I was going</b></p> <p>11 <b>to collapse. But I was just pushing myself to get out.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did you feel sick?</p> <p>13 <b>A. As in throwing --</b></p> <p>14 Q. As in --</p> <p>15 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Do you remember -- I know this is difficult to piece it</p> <p>17 all together -- whether there were any moments during</p> <p>18 your descent down the stairs when it was easier to</p> <p>19 breathe than at other times?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes, I found it easy when I get down, which is -- I'm</b></p> <p>21 <b>not sure -- either it was 1st floor or 2nd floor, that's</b></p> <p>22 <b>when I had fresh air and there was no smoke there,</b></p> <p>23 <b>so ...</b></p> <p>24 Q. Okay.</p> <p>25 <b>A. But it was the end, towards the end.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 186</p>	<p>1 <b>I remember. Andrea, she sat down, but she was lost, and</b></p> <p>2 <b>the little one, she came and she sat next to her until</b></p> <p>3 <b>I tell the firefighter when I found them.</b></p> <p>4 Q. I think you say that you saw these firefighters on the</p> <p>5 ground floor. Was this the first time that you'd seen</p> <p>6 any firefighters --</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. -- at all between leaving the flat and getting to the</p> <p>9 ground floor?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes, which is, I'm not sure, either 1st floor or</b></p> <p>11 <b>2nd floor, that's where I saw them. But I'm not sure</b></p> <p>12 <b>which floor it is.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Then in paragraph 45 you say you felt relieved you</p> <p>14 escaped. You say:</p> <p>15 "... I realised that [redacted] was not in the line</p> <p>16 anymore and was not following down the stairs ..."</p> <p>17 Then I think you explain in paragraph 46 that you</p> <p>18 told the fireman and he was shocked that you'd made it</p> <p>19 down from the 21st floor, and then promised that he'd go</p> <p>20 back and save your daughter.</p> <p>21 Do you know what he did next?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Pardon?</b></p> <p>23 Q. What did that fireman do next? Did you see what he went</p> <p>24 and did next?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, because I was telling him that I was going to go</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 188</p>

<p>1 <b>back to get my daughter, and he refused to let me back</b>  2 <b>to the tower. He say to me, "You need to get out, you</b>  3 <b>need to get out." As I say, he promised that he was</b>  4 <b>going to go and bring her back.</b>  5 <b>That's when they took me out, because I was not</b>  6 <b>wearing shoes, so they just lift me out and they took me</b>  7 <b>out from the building.</b>  8 Q. Did you see where Andrea and her younger daughter were  9 taken?  10 <b>A. Yes. As I told the firefighter, he told the other one</b>  11 <b>and they came, they took them as well.</b>  12 Q. Did you see them after you left the building?  13 <b>A. No, I haven't, no.</b>  14 Q. On page 10, at paragraph 50, you say you went to the  15 Kensington Sports Centre:  16 "... they took my blood pressure, tested my  17 breathing and checked my general well-being ..."  18 Who did that? Who did those tests?  19 <b>A. I mean, there were there a lot of professional people</b>  20 <b>which is from hospitals and all that, there was a lot of</b>  21 <b>ambulance there, so I assume it's one of them.</b>  22 Q. You refer to a nurse called Simone Williams --  23 <b>A. Yes.</b>  24 Q. -- in the triage area.  25 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 189</p>	<p>1 <b>sure.</b>  2 Q. Right.  3 <b>A. She knows that they've been taken to that hospital, so</b>  4 <b>she thought [redacted] might have been taken there as</b>  5 <b>well.</b>  6 Q. I see. Okay.  7 You then describe in detail in your statement that  8 your friends took you to King's College Hospital and  9 then Chelsea and Westminster Hospital to look for your  10 daughter.  11 <b>A. Mm.</b>  12 Q. Is this right: on the way to Chelsea and Westminster  13 your condition deteriorated so you went to the A&amp;E at  14 St Mary's, Paddington?  15 <b>A. Mm.</b>  16 Q. Then you were admitted there?  17 <b>A. Yes.</b>  18 Q. Do you remember roughly what time you got treatment at  19 St Mary's, Paddington?  20 <b>A. I think it was after 6 o'clock.</b>  21 Q. I think you then say, paragraph 66 of your statement, if  22 you can just go to that -- after describing your  23 experience at St Mary's, you say you were shown a photo:  24 "66. I looked at the photo and immediately  25 recognised that the photo was of my daughter. In the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 191</p>
<p>1 Q. She was not on duty that night but came along.  2 Do you remember anybody else who treated you?  3 <b>A. I don't, no.</b>  4 Q. Did anybody recommend that you be taken to hospital for  5 treatment?  6 <b>A. No.</b>  7 Q. You then go on to say that you were then moved to the  8 Christian Centre where people were going where they  9 couldn't find loved ones. Do you know why you were  10 moved there?  11 <b>A. I don't remember why, because I was confused, you know.</b>  12 <b>I lost my daughter at that point, so wherever they were</b>  13 <b>taking me, I was just going like -- you know.</b>  14 Q. Right.  15 <b>A. So ...</b>  16 Q. If you go to paragraph 56, you say:  17 "56. Whilst in the Christian Centre, Marcia Games'  18 sister or sister-in-law found me and told me that  19 [redacted] had been taken to a hospital."  20 Then in paragraph 57:  21 "57. I was told that my child was at King's College  22 Hospital."  23 Do you remember who told you she had been taken to  24 King's College Hospital?  25 <b>A. As I said, Marcio's sister or sister-in-law, I'm not</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 190</p>	<p>1 photo there were lots of tubes coming out of her and she  2 was in a hospital bed. It was approximately just before  3 6:00 pm when I saw the photo."  4 Just to be clear, was this at St Mary's, Paddington?  5 <b>A. Yes.</b>  6 Q. So your daughter was admitted to St Mary's, Paddington  7 without your knowledge; is that right?  8 <b>A. Yes.</b>  9 Q. Then you only discovered it because you had been  10 admitted whilst on the way to look for her at  11 a different hospital?  12 <b>A. Actually, she was in another hospital as well, and then</b>  13 <b>they took her from another hospital to St Mary's</b>  14 <b>Hospital.</b>  15 Q. Which other hospital was she in first?  16 <b>A. I'm not quite sure, but I know that they took her to</b>  17 <b>another hospital.</b>  18 MR MILLETT: Okay.  19 Ms Gebremeskel, you'll be glad to hear that I've  20 come to the end of my main questions.  21 Mr Chairman, would it be convenient now to have the  22 customary short break just to make sure that I've  23 covered everything I need to cover.  24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.  25 Ms Gebremeskel, although Mr Millett thinks he's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 192</p>

1 covered all the questions, he needs a moment just to  
 2 check that. So we're going to rise for 5 minutes to  
 3 give him a chance to do that.  
 4 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right?  
 6 Don't talk to anyone about your evidence while  
 7 you're out of the room, please, and if you would like to  
 8 go with the usher, we'll come back at 4.10.  
 9 Thank you very much.  
 10 4.10, then, please.  
 11 (4.05 pm)  
 12 (A short break)  
 13 (4.10 pm)  
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Now, Mr Millett has  
 15 a few more questions, so we'll see how we get on.  
 16 Yes, Mr Millett.  
 17 MR MILLETT: Ms Gebremeskel, thank you for coming back.  
 18 I do have one or two further questions.  
 19 Can I start by asking you to look at paragraph 46 of  
 20 your statement on page 9.  
 21 At paragraph 46, towards the bottom, you say:  
 22 "My daughter and one of Marcio's daughters were  
 23 discovered by firemen, unconscious, on the stairs and  
 24 they were carried down out of the Tower. I owe  
 25 everything to the brave fire fighter who risked his own

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1 life in that inferno to save my daughter. Words can  
 2 never express my gratitude."  
 3 Can I just ask you, when did you first discover that  
 4 a firefighter had saved your daughter?  
 5 **A. I've been told by someone, but I can't remember.**  
 6 Q. Right.  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. Do you know which firefighter it was?  
 9 **A. Yes, later on I did find out, but I forgot his name.**  
 10 Q. Right.  
 11 **A. But --**  
 12 Q. Okay. So you did know but --  
 13 **A. I'm not sure who told me, but someone told me. But as**  
 14 **I say, I can't remember.**  
 15 Q. Very well.  
 16 Finally, did you have a friend at the time of the  
 17 fire called Thomas Etienne?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. Do you remember speaking to him on the night of the  
 20 fire?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. Did you speak to him from the Gomes' flat?  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. Do you remember whether it was he to whom you were  
 25 speaking when the phone was passed to the firefighter

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1 who you then spoke to?  
 2 **A. No, it wasn't him.**  
 3 Q. It wasn't him?  
 4 **A. No.**  
 5 Q. Okay.  
 6 Did you also speak to Sawsan Choucair during that  
 7 night?  
 8 **A. Yes.**  
 9 Q. Do you remember anything of the conversations you had  
 10 with her?  
 11 **A. I was the one who called her to let her know there is**  
 12 **a fire in the building. At the time, she was not in the**  
 13 **building.**  
 14 Q. No, she wasn't.  
 15 **A. It was me who called her and tell her about the news.**  
 16 Q. Do you remember whether it was her who handed her phone  
 17 to the firefighter for you to speak to?  
 18 **A. No.**  
 19 Q. Right.  
 20 Ms Gebremeskel, I've come to the end of my  
 21 questions, except one.  
 22 My final question to you is this: apart from the two  
 23 written witness statements that you've given to the  
 24 inquiry, and apart from the evidence that you've given  
 25 to the chairman today, is there anything else about what

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1 you heard or saw or smelt or felt on the night of the  
 2 fire itself that you would wish the chairman to know?  
 3 **A. Can you repeat that, please?**  
 4 Q. Yes. Of course.  
 5 Apart from your written evidence, your two witness  
 6 statements, and apart from the evidence that you've  
 7 given to us today, is there anything else about what you  
 8 saw on the night, felt on the night, heard, smelt, your  
 9 experiences on the night of the fire, that you think  
 10 it's important for the chairman to know about?  
 11 **A. The only thing I can say is I hope it's not going to**  
 12 **happen again to anyone. I don't want anyone to go**  
 13 **through what we've been through. It's just -- I can't**  
 14 **explain it.**  
 15 **SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I understand. Yes.**  
 16 MR MILLETT: Well, Ms Gebremeskel, it just remains for me to  
 17 thank you very much for coming here and answering my  
 18 questions and assisting the inquiry with our  
 19 investigations. We're extremely grateful to you, so  
 20 thank you very much indeed.  
 21 THE WITNESS: But I have one issue that I want to raise, if  
 22 you don't mind.  
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.  
 24 THE WITNESS: I was reading a statement about a few days  
 25 ago, someone -- the person I know, she was saying that

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1 she was living with me, and that person, I know her  
 2 really well, but she was not living in my house at the  
 3 time of the fire. I know her two months before the  
 4 fire. But after that, she never lived in my house. She  
 5 was not in my house.  
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.  
 7 THE WITNESS: Yes.  
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you --  
 9 THE WITNESS: Just to let you know.  
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you for clarifying that.  
 11 Well, I'd like to thank you very much for coming to  
 12 give your evidence. It's obviously a terrible ordeal  
 13 and difficult for you to come and talk about it, and  
 14 I think we all understand how much courage it's taken  
 15 for you to be here to tell us what you experienced.  
 16 Your evidence will be very useful to us, and we're  
 17 very grateful to you for coming. So thank you very  
 18 much.  
 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.  
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right?  
 21 Well, now you're free to go. If you'd like to go  
 22 with the usher, she'll look after you.  
 23 (The witness withdrew)  
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.  
 25 MR MILLETT: Well, Mr Chairman, keen though I am to use

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1 12 minutes --  
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.  
 3 MR MILLETT: -- equally I am not keen to rush the reading of  
 4 any of these statements. But I would like to do what  
 5 I can with the remaining time of the day, given not  
 6 least that these statements have been published in  
 7 advance as due to be read today.  
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, let's see how we get on, shall  
 9 we?  
 10 MR MILLETT: Shall we do that?  
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.  
 12 NINA MASROH (evidence read into the record)  
 13 MR MILLETT: The next statement I would read into the record  
 14 is the statement of Nina Masroh, dated 5 June 2018, and  
 15 that is reference IWS00000792.  
 16 She is the first of a number of residents of  
 17 Testerton Walk, a walkway connected with Grenfell Tower,  
 18 which was evacuate on the night or morning of  
 19 14 June 2017.  
 20 As I say, I start with Nina Masroh's statement,  
 21 IWS00000792, dated 5 June 2018, which comes with  
 22 a statement of truth over a signature at page 13.  
 23 In summary, Mrs Masroh lived at Testerton Walk since  
 24 1992, having moved to her current property in 1996.  
 25 At the time of the fire, she occupied that property

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1 with her four children. They were all at home on the  
 2 night of the fire.  
 3 She describes her experiences on the night of the  
 4 fire at paragraph 7 onwards.  
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.  
 6 MR MILLETT: And describes how she was woken up by the  
 7 sounds of screams and shouts from paragraph 8 onwards.  
 8 At paragraph 10, she says:  
 9 "10. My daughter pointed out blue flames at the top  
 10 of the Tower. I saw them too but at first I did not  
 11 understand the significance. Then my daughter explained  
 12 it, 'mum there's blue flames. That means there's gas'.  
 13 The blue flames were moving and rippling like a  
 14 waterfall but they were contained near the top of the  
 15 building and were not moving further down.  
 16 "11. While we were standing there I also saw orange  
 17 flames suddenly shoot up vertically along the Tower.  
 18 The flames moved so fast it was as though petrol had  
 19 been poured down the side of the building. I had never  
 20 seen anything like it before. It was like something out  
 21 of a film. When the flame suddenly shot up I heard a  
 22 collective scream of horror. There was a sudden roar of  
 23 screaming from the people watching.  
 24 "12. There were massive black burning clumps of  
 25 insulation falling from the building and floating down.

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1 Parts of the cladding was bloating and falling off the  
 2 building. Other sections of the cladding was melting  
 3 down the side of the building. My daughter said it  
 4 looked like there was molten lava on the building. The  
 5 air was thick with the debris. I could see very dark  
 6 grey black smoke. The smoke was strange. I don't quite  
 7 know how to describe it. It was like the smoke was  
 8 magnetised to the building. The smoke was swirling  
 9 within and very close around the building. It was not  
 10 billowing out from the building or rising up as you  
 11 would expect."  
 12 Then she goes on at paragraph 19 to say:  
 13 "19. I could feel the heat from where I was  
 14 standing on Grenfell Walk. I could not imagine how hot  
 15 it must have felt closer to the Tower or inside the  
 16 Tower. Eventually I realised that the helicopters were  
 17 not there to pour water on the building. That slow  
 18 realisation was heart-breaking. I cannot imagine the  
 19 agony of that realisation for the people inside the  
 20 building who were trying to signal for rescue."  
 21 Then she describes in paragraph 20 observing a man  
 22 climbing out of the window on the 12th or 13th floor  
 23 with a small child on his back, and you've heard  
 24 evidence about that.  
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.

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<p>1 MR MILLETT: That's Olive and Rosemary.                  2 Then she describes a rescue from the 4th floor of                  3 the tower, and you've heard about that as well.                  4 Then at paragraph 25, she says:                  5 "25. You could see that this fire was completely                  6 different to the fires which had been in Grenfell Tower                  7 before. When I first went out on Grenfell Walk I had                  8 heard firefighters telling people to remain in their                  9 flats and that they were going to go in and get them.                  10 Within a few minutes, there was a firefighter at the                  11 base of the Tower with a megaphone. He was telling the                  12 people in the Tower, 'if you can leave safely, then get                  13 out now, leave now'. I cannot forget the look of sheer                  14 horror, despair and hopelessness on the faces of the                  15 firefighters who were watching the fire unfold. It was                  16 shocking. After I saw their faces, it was instinctual;                  17 I knew I had to go and get my kids out. I didn't even                  18 know if Grenfell Tower was going to continue to stand up                  19 for much longer. I was worried about my children's                  20 safety.                  21 "26. I ran back into our home. It was now about                  22 2am. [The children] were dressed but still half asleep.                  23 [Redacted] had stayed asleep through it all so I woke                  24 him up and got him dressed. I told the kids that there                  25 was a fire and that it was really bad. I grabbed our</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 201</p>	<p>1 smashing of windows from the fire.                  2 She says, picking it up on page 3 of IWS00000634:                  3 "16. I could hear smashing of windows from the                  4 fire. I heard people still screaming for help.                  5 Everyone downstairs was quiet. The noise was coming                  6 from the Tower. People outside were shocked and didn't                  7 know what to do. I was standing in the same position at                  8 the front of the Tower. I then came back in to check on                  9 my kids. The front door of our Walkway was about 10                  10 feet from the entrance of the Tower so it was very                  11 close."                  12 Then at 21 in particular, Mr Chairman, she describes                  13 in detail how the fire has moved.                  14 She says:                  15 "21. At around 02:00 the fire had travelled around                  16 the back of the Tower and came to the left of me; it was                  17 now on the side of Latimer Road underground station and                  18 the school next to the Tower. I remember looking up at                  19 the Tower and I could see a shadow in the window and                  20 flames. I saw and could smell smoke. I could hear                  21 cracking and windows from the Tower smashing. I could                  22 see the cladding falling off. Fire flames were falling                  23 down. I was still standing at the front of the Tower.                  24 When it got all the way around I got really panicky.                  25 Where I stood was the last bit to catch fire."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 203</p>
<p>1 passports and I grabbed my wallet with all my cards in.                  2 As we were leaving, the police came thundering through                  3 our block. They were banging on doors and shouting that                  4 we needed to evacuate."                  5 Then she describes in paragraph 27 onwards her                  6 evacuation.                  7 I think that's all I need to read from the                  8 statement.                  9 Like all statements that I'm reading into the                  10 record, Mr Chairman, it will stand in its entirety as                  11 evidence before the inquiry and be taken into account                  12 accordingly.                  13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.                  14 BEINAZIR LASHARIE (evidence read into the record)                  15 MR MILLETT: The next statement is from Beinazir Lasharie,                  16 another walkway resident, also Testerton Walk. That's                  17 IWS00000634.                  18 This is a statement dated 1 June from                  19 Beinazir Lasharie with a statement of truth at page 8.                  20 In summary, she has lived with her family in                  21 Testerton Walk since 1983.                  22 On the night of the fire, she was at home with her                  23 two children, her partner, Damon, her parents, her                  24 brother and her sister-in-law.                  25 She explains at paragraph 16 how she heard the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 202</p>	<p>1 She explains also in some detail about the aftermath                  2 of the fire and her friends and friends of her family                  3 who were in the tower from paragraphs 29 onwards.                  4 Like all statements, Ms Lasharie's statements will                  5 stand as evidence in the record in its entirety and be                  6 taken into account in full.                  7 MUSHTAQ LASHARIE (evidence read into the record)                  8 MR MILLETT: Finally, Mr Chairman, I come to the statement                  9 of Mushtaq Lasharie, who is Beinazir Lasharie's father.                  10 That is IWS00000603.                  11 It's dated 5 June 2018, and it stands with                  12 a statement of truth on page 7 over a signature on that                  13 page.                  14 He was, as he describes at paragraph 6, a gentleman                  15 extremely well known in the local community. He was                  16 a Labour Party councillor for 18 years between 1992 and                  17 2010, was involved in the Lancaster West Residents'                  18 Association and the Estate Management Board. He was                  19 deputy mayor in 2003 to 2004 and was part of the KCTMO                  20 from 1994 to the 2000s, and was very well known to                  21 people in the area.                  22 I just want to read a couple of paragraphs in the                  23 middle of the part of the statement where he deals with                  24 the night of 14 June, which starts at paragraph 7 on                  25 page 2.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 204</p>

<p>1 This is paragraph 14 on page 4. He says:                  2 "14. I could see after 01:30 to 02:00 that the fire                  3 was really bad. I remember thinking 'will anyone get                  4 out of this Tower alive?' The families of residents                  5 inside the Tower were gathered outside. There was                  6 nothing to speak about. We said three to four words to                  7 one another like 'oh my God' and 'what is happening?'                  8 I felt very disturbed by what I could see and unhappy.                  9 I was just standing there watching. I could see and                  10 hear people from the Tower shouting 'help!' and I could                  11 see people in the windows waving their hands to get                  12 attention. I saw these people's faces. They had opened                  13 their windows and were waving clothes. I saw a young                  14 black man in his 30s tie a bed sheet to a window and try                  15 to come down the Tower. I didn't see what happened to                  16 him after that.                  17 "15. I saw a Tower resident I know called Mouna.                  18 She rushed into Testerton Walk around 02:00 with her                  19 family. She lived in the Tower with her husband and                  20 three children. Her mother and brothers lived opposite                  21 us. Her children were very distraught. Mouna is a very                  22 close friend to my daughter and my wife and her children                  23 play with my grandchildren.                  24 "16. The Tower by this time was alight and it                  25 looked like a fire bomb. I was fearful of the building</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 205</p>	<p>1 that, you'll have Mr Rawat for the morning and maybe me                  2 in the afternoon.                  3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right.                  4 Well, thank you very much. We'll break there and                  5 resume at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, please.                  6 Thank you.                  7 (4.30 pm)                  8 (The hearing adjourned until Wednesday, 7 November, 2018                  9 at 10.00 am)                  10                  11                  12                  13                  14                  15                  16                  17                  18                  19                  20                  21                  22                  23                  24                  25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 207</p>
<p>1 collapsing. I was worried about our safety and what                  2 would happen to our flat if this happened."                  3 He goes on to describe debris falling down and being                  4 moved between 2.30 and 3.00 by the emergency services.                  5 That's paragraph 18.                  6 The aftermath part starts at paragraph 20 and runs                  7 to paragraph 23.                  8 He also describes the impact of the fire on him and                  9 the community, and friends of his in the tower who died.                  10 Like all these statements, Mr Chairman,                  11 Mr Lasharie's will also stand as evidence to the inquiry                  12 and be taken into account in its entirety.                  13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you.                  14 Well, as in all other cases, we're very grateful to                  15 those who made these statements for taking the time and                  16 trouble to do so. As you say, they will go into the                  17 inquiry record and form part of the evidence that the                  18 inquiry takes into account. Thank you very much.                  19 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, that takes us neatly to exactly                  20 4.30.                  21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, well done, and without any                  22 rush at all, if I may say so.                  23 MR MILLETT: I hope not.                  24 Mr Chairman, I'm grateful.                  25 So we continue tomorrow with more evidence. For</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 206</p>	<p>1                  2 I N D E X                  3 NICHOLAS BURTON (sworn) .....1                  Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY .....1                  4                  5 MUSTAFA ABDU (evidence read into the .....93                  record)                  6 SAMIRA HAMDAN (evidence read into .....97                  the record)                  7                  8 EL ALAMI HAMDAN (evidence read into .....104                  the record)                  9 AMBROSE MENDY (evidence read into .....104                  the record)                  10                  11 MOUNA EL-OGBANI (evidence read into .....106                  the record)                  12 YOUSSEF KHALLOUD (evidence read into .....111                  the record)                  13                  14 HELEN GEBREMESKEL (sworn) .....122                  Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY .....122                  15 NINA MASROH (evidence read into the .....198                  record)                  16                  17 BEINAZIR LASHARIE (evidence read .....202                  into the record)                  18 MUSHTAQ LASHARIE (evidence read into .....204                  the record)                  19                  20                  21                  22                  23                  24                  25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 208</p>

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