

<p>1 Friday, 9 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 Again, we are going to hear evidence from someone</p> <p>6 who was in the tower on the night of the fire.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>9 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, we are, thank you, and good</p> <p>10 morning.</p> <p>11 We are now going to hear the evidence of Mr Marcio</p> <p>12 Gomes. Can I please call him.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.</p> <p>14 MARCIO GOMES (affirmed)</p> <p>15 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY</p> <p>16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Gomes.</p> <p>17 Would you like to sit down and make yourself</p> <p>18 comfortable.</p> <p>19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>21 MR MILLETT: Mr Gomes, good morning.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Morning.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Can I ask you to give the inquiry your full name,</p> <p>24 please.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Marcio Gomes.</b></p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>1 IWS00001078.</p> <p>2 There is the first page of it on the screen.</p> <p>3 It should also be in your little bundle on the table</p> <p>4 in front of you if you want to look at it in paper form.</p> <p>5 Many witnesses prefer to follow it on the monitor and</p> <p>6 that may be easier for you.</p> <p>7 Can I ask for you first to be shown the last page of</p> <p>8 that statement, page 48.</p> <p>9 There's a signature on that page, over the date of</p> <p>10 12 September 2018.</p> <p>11 Is that your signature?</p> <p>12 <b>A. It is, yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Have you had an opportunity to read this witness</p> <p>14 statement recently?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I've gone through it, yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true?</p> <p>17 <b>A. They are true, yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>19 There are two exhibits to it: MG/1, which is</p> <p>20 IWS00000623, which is a video taken by you inside the</p> <p>21 tower, and we'll be looking at that later; and,</p> <p>22 secondly, MG/2, which is IWS00000621, pages 2 to 12,</p> <p>23 which I think are 11 photographs taken by you of various</p> <p>24 things: the refurbishments inside the tower, the</p> <p>25 replaced windows and the installation of pipes in the</p> <p>Page 3</p>
<p>1 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>2 I want to begin by thanking you very much indeed for</p> <p>3 coming here and assisting the inquiry with its</p> <p>4 investigations. We are very grateful to you.</p> <p>5 I know that giving evidence and recalling the events</p> <p>6 of the night may very well be distressing to you, and so</p> <p>7 if you need a break at any time, all you have to do is</p> <p>8 say and we can take a break.</p> <p>9 I should say, I'm planning to take a break at about</p> <p>10 10.50 this morning, so this first session should run for</p> <p>11 about 50 minutes, but if you need a break during that</p> <p>12 time, we can do that.</p> <p>13 I should also say that at times it may be that my</p> <p>14 questions don't make sense to you or are muddled or</p> <p>15 something like that. If that happens, please just ask</p> <p>16 me to repeat the question or put the question in</p> <p>17 a different way and I'll do that.</p> <p>18 Also, I should say that sometimes when you're giving</p> <p>19 evidence, I may not be looking at you, I may be looking</p> <p>20 at my notes or the screen, following your evidence. But</p> <p>21 I am very much listening to what you're saying at the</p> <p>22 same time.</p> <p>23 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Can I start by asking you to look at your first witness</p> <p>25 statement that you've given to the inquiry, which is</p> <p>Page 2</p>	<p>1 communal area.</p> <p>2 <b>A. Okay, I don't think they were taken by me directly; they</b></p> <p>3 <b>were photos that I had from other residents and</b></p> <p>4 <b>neighbours.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Right. We'll look at that in due course.</p> <p>6 You've also provided a supplemental witness</p> <p>7 statement, I think, which is dated 5 November 2018,</p> <p>8 which is IWS00001184.</p> <p>9 Again, that's in the paper bundle in front of you</p> <p>10 at, I think, tab 2.</p> <p>11 Can we look at the last page of that statement, the</p> <p>12 second page.</p> <p>13 It's dated, as you can see, 11 November 2018 and</p> <p>14 there's a signature.</p> <p>15 Is that your signature?</p> <p>16 <b>A. It is, yes, it's 5 November.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Yes. Have you had an opportunity to read that statement</p> <p>18 recently?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No, I haven't, but it was only done last week.</b></p> <p>20 Q. It was.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You can probably remember it.</p> <p>22 <b>A. So I think I can remember that, yes.</b></p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: So not even more recently than you signed it.</p> <p>24 Are the contents of that statement true?</p> <p>25 <b>A. They are.</b></p> <p>Page 4</p>

<p>1 Q. The reason you made it, it's clear, is that you were 2 shown, I think, a 999 call that you hadn't addressed in 3 your first witness statement. 4 <b>A. Correct.</b> 5 Q. Right. 6 There's one exhibit, MG/1, which is IWS00001184, 7 which are various text messages sent and received with 8 your workplace manager during the night of the fire. 9 <b>A. Correct, yes.</b> 10 Q. Having got through that formal part, can I start by 11 asking you some background questions. 12 You lived at flat 183 on the 21st floor of 13 Grenfell Tower at the time of the fire. 14 <b>A. That's correct, yes.</b> 15 Q. I think you'd lived there for about ten years prior to 16 the fire. 17 <b>A. Just over ten years.</b> 18 Q. Together with you in the flat, living there at the time 19 of the fire, was you, your wife Andreia -- have 20 I pronounced it correctly? 21 <b>A. Andreia, yes.</b> 22 Q. And your two daughters. 23 <b>A. Correct.</b> 24 Q. And your dog, Lili. 25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 and they may well be considered as Phase 2 issues, so 2 I hope you don't mind if I don't look at those in 3 detail, but there are one or two questions I do want to 4 pick up on those before we come to the events of the 5 night of the fire itself. 6 First of all, the stairwell. 7 <b>A. Yes.</b> 8 Q. During the refurbishment, do you remember whether your 9 floor numbering changed? 10 <b>A. No, it was 18 still on the stairwell.</b> 11 Q. Right. So although the number of the floor itself 12 changed -- is this right? -- from 18 to 21 -- 13 <b>A. That's right.</b> 14 Q. -- the number written on the stairwell did not? 15 <b>A. Yes, it was still 18. It hadn't changed, yes. Or at 16 least for the -- I hadn't noticed the change for the 17 last few months leading to that night.</b> 18 Q. I was going to say, did you actually notice that it had 19 stayed the same? 20 <b>A. I used to use the stairs -- I used to run up the stairs 21 after football, so, yes, it hadn't changed. Some floors 22 had changed, they were stencilled in, but I assumed that 23 was done by residents or somebody else because they 24 weren't all the same. And there was one time where 25 I went onto the 18th floor, because I think the 18th</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 Q. Were you personally in good health at the time of the 2 fire? 3 <b>A. Yes.</b> 4 Q. Were you fit? 5 <b>A. Yes.</b> 6 Q. Was your family in good health at the time of the fire? 7 <b>A. Everybody was in good health.</b> 8 Q. Right. 9 <b>A. My youngest daughter is asthmatic, but she was in good 10 health.</b> 11 Q. Yes. And I think your wife, Andreia, was pregnant at 12 the time too? 13 <b>A. Yes, but in good health.</b> 14 Q. You rented your flat from the KCTMO. 15 <b>A. That's right.</b> 16 Q. But at the time of the fire you I think were looking to 17 buy it, weren't you? 18 <b>A. We had it evaluated twice by Kensington and Chelsea as 19 early as January that year because we were looking to 20 buy it, yes.</b> 21 Q. At the time of the fire, I think you had a number of 22 concerns about the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower that 23 you've set out in detail in your statement. I'm not 24 going to take you through all of those because you've 25 addressed them very comprehensively in your statement,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 <b>floor was changed by a stencil, and I went into the 2 wrong floor because it had changed.</b> 3 Q. Right. 4 So to get a sense of this, how often would you run 5 up the stairs? 6 <b>A. I play football every Monday, so it was happening at 7 least once a week --</b> 8 Q. Right. 9 <b>A. -- for a while, but then leading up until that day, 10 I probably hadn't done it for about two months.</b> 11 Q. Okay. Just so I understood your answer a minute ago, 12 some of the floors had numbers which reflected the 13 changed floor numbering -- 14 <b>A. Yes.</b> 15 Q. -- but some didn't? 16 <b>A. Correct.</b> 17 Q. Do you remember even roughly what the proportion of 18 those which didn't reflect the floor numbering was? 19 <b>A. Oh, very few. Maybe two had the right number, but that 20 was because somebody's sort of graffitied on it the 21 right number. It wasn't done professionally.</b> 22 Q. So very few had the right number; most had the wrong 23 number. Is that -- 24 <b>A. Yes, I would say 90 per cent had the wrong number.</b> 25 Q. You say in paragraph 30 of your statement, if you look</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 at it on page 6, in the last sentence:</p> <p>2 "This issue had been raised with the TMO by myself</p> <p>3 and other residents but they had failed to take any</p> <p>4 action to rectify this."</p> <p>5 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Do you remember when you raised that issue with the TMO?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Not date-specific, but it was towards the end of the</b></p> <p>8 <b>works, because I expected them, when they changed the</b></p> <p>9 <b>floor number to 21 towards the end, to then go into the</b></p> <p>10 <b>stairwell and change that. And for a number of weeks</b></p> <p>11 <b>after that, they hadn't changed it. So then I brought</b></p> <p>12 <b>it to their attention saying, you know, "You need to do</b></p> <p>13 <b>that."</b></p> <p>14 Q. Right.</p> <p>15 <b>A. But that was it. Nothing official, ie I didn't raise</b></p> <p>16 <b>a ticket with them or got a reference from them.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Yes, okay.</p> <p>18 Turning to the question of windows, on page 6 also</p> <p>19 of your statement, you cover that from halfway down the</p> <p>20 page, and you say in paragraph 31 on that page:</p> <p>21 "31. As a result of the refurbishment, the windows</p> <p>22 in our flat had been moved out from the original frame</p> <p>23 so that they were flush and in line with the new</p> <p>24 cladding that had been put on the outside of the Tower."</p> <p>25 Can I ask you, against that background you've given</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 where it sat in the window gap, if you like, in</p> <p>2 comparison with the old windows?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Well, you can see the old windows there. That frame in</b></p> <p>4 <b>front of it, so the one that hasn't -- you have the</b></p> <p>5 <b>white background at the top that still has the plastic</b></p> <p>6 <b>on it, that's the new window. The one in front, I guess</b></p> <p>7 <b>on the frame itself, on the wooden frame itself, is the</b></p> <p>8 <b>old window, which is still there.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Right.</p> <p>10 <b>A. In that picture obviously.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Okay.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So they left the original window in</p> <p>13 place is what you're saying, is it?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Correct. So they put the new windows in place via</b></p> <p>15 <b>scaffolding on the outside, the old window was still in</b></p> <p>16 <b>place, and then as part of the works they would then</b></p> <p>17 <b>arrange three/four days, or maybe two days, to come in</b></p> <p>18 <b>and remove the internal window, the original window, and</b></p> <p>19 <b>then finish off the new window.</b></p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right. So just so I understand</p> <p>21 this, is this photograph taken, as it were, part-way</p> <p>22 through that work?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, they hadn't really started apart from putting the</b></p> <p>24 <b>window on the outside.</b></p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So you've got the outside window,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 us, to look at a picture, which is IWS00000621, at</p> <p>2 page 6. This is one of your exhibits. It's taken from</p> <p>3 MG/2, which is the second exhibit to your first</p> <p>4 statement.</p> <p>5 <b>A. Oh, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Is that a photograph taken by you?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Is it of a window in your flat?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It is, yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. We might be able to guess, but do tell us, which window</p> <p>11 is that?</p> <p>12 <b>A. That's in the sitting room, the left-hand side of the</b></p> <p>13 <b>sitting room.</b></p> <p>14 Q. So the left-hand side of the sitting room, is that</p> <p>15 looking east?</p> <p>16 <b>A. South.</b></p> <p>17 Q. South. Looking south. Right.</p> <p>18 I see, so when you say left-hand side, the</p> <p>19 left-hand-most window in the sitting room?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yeah, well, the sitting room had four windows, if you</b></p> <p>21 <b>think of the two walls. So that was the most left-hand</b></p> <p>22 <b>side, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. When you say that it was flush and in line with the new</p> <p>24 cladding that had been put on the outside of the tower,</p> <p>25 just by reference to this window, could you explain</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 and then they dismantled the inside window?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Later on. So for a number of weeks we had two windows,</b></p> <p>3 <b>so to speak.</b></p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>5 MR MILLETT: Yes, I was going to say. So this is part of</p> <p>6 the way through the work?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, correct.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Referring to this photograph -- and it may be difficult</p> <p>9 because it is only part of the way through the work --</p> <p>10 do you remember where the workmen cut foam that you</p> <p>11 describe in your statement to fit into the gaps?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes. So they left the wooden frame in situ, but between</b></p> <p>13 <b>where they've taken the metal frame out and the new</b></p> <p>14 <b>window, there's a gap all around, and that's where they</b></p> <p>15 <b>cut the foam to fit into that.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Are you able to identify more precisely where in the</p> <p>17 frame they were doing that? You can get up and point if</p> <p>18 you like. We may be able to use a red dot.</p> <p>19 <b>A. It was just down here (Indicates).</b></p> <p>20 Q. The witness is pointing to the windowsill, where the</p> <p>21 sill joins the window frame.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes. So this bit is wood, and then behind it would've</b></p> <p>23 <b>been the outside of the wall, but they had to fill it</b></p> <p>24 <b>with that foam.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Yes, thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 Can I ask you to be shown paragraph 33 of your 2 statement. We can take that picture off the screen and 3 look at paragraph 33. 4 You say in the third line: 5 "These gaps were filled with mastic and some sort of 6 a foam-type substance." 7 You go on to say: 8 "The workmen were cutting the foam to try and fit it 9 into the gaps around the windows so as to fill them. 10 The foam seemed to have a fire proof coating which they 11 were cutting through, to shape the foam to fit gaps." 12 What made you think that the coating was fireproof? 13 <b>A. Well, it was my assumption. It had a silver covering</b> 14 <b>over it, and normally materials that have that silver</b> 15 <b>covering are normally for fireproofing.</b> 16 Q. Right. 17 <b>A. It's my understanding.</b> 18 Q. Okay. 19 At paragraph 34, in your statement, over the page on 20 page 7, you say: 21 "34. There were a lot of gaps. As they were using 22 hard foam, it was impossible to mould it perfectly into 23 the gaps which had been created by the fitting of the 24 new windows. The gaps under the window ledges were huge 25 but this was when the new windows were first put in.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 Q. They were on the inside of your flat? 2 <b>A. Yes.</b> 3 Q. So you were keeping a close eye on them, were you? 4 <b>A. Not like that, I had to work, but I saw what they were</b> 5 <b>doing, yes. I had to give them access to certain</b> 6 <b>things, that's why I had to stay home and work from</b> 7 <b>home.</b> 8 Q. No, I understand. 9 You say that the gaps under the windows ledges were 10 huge in the third line there. 11 <b>A. Yes.</b> 12 Q. Can you give us a sense of how big they were? 13 <b>A. Well, from where the frame of the old windows starts to</b> 14 <b>the new -- so maybe that (Indicates), what's that,</b> 15 <b>about --</b> 16 Q. The witness is -- 17 <b>A. 10 inches, sort of thing. 8 inches.</b> 18 Q. And where were those gaps? You say under the window 19 ledges; is that the new outer ledges or the old ledge? 20 <b>A. The new.</b> 21 Q. The new? 22 <b>A. The new part, because they left the wooden frame in</b> 23 <b>situ, but obviously on the outer bits, the new bit, they</b> 24 <b>had to fill it with something, and that's what they were</b> 25 <b>filling it with.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 The foam attempted to fill the gaps. The workmen then 2 placed the plastic/pvc edging around the window ledge to 3 cover the foam, which concealed the gaps which the foam 4 had not completely filled." 5 Just breaking that down a little bit, first of all, 6 you go on to say you were working from home at regular 7 times and you could therefore see the gaps. 8 <b>A. Yes.</b> 9 Q. How much did you see the workmen actually working on the 10 windows? 11 <b>A. Quite a lot, and I think I saw that through to the end.</b> 12 <b>I generally work from home, or at that time I worked</b> 13 <b>from home two days a week, which was Tuesdays and</b> 14 <b>Fridays. But for that piece of work, Andreia was</b> 15 <b>working, so I just worked from home while they were</b> 16 <b>fitting all the windows.</b> 17 Q. Where in the flat were you working? 18 <b>A. So that previous picture, to the right of it. So in the</b> 19 <b>sitting room.</b> 20 Q. Right. So you've got a direct view on the work that the 21 workmen were doing? 22 <b>A. Yes, I saw it very well.</b> 23 Q. They were on the outside and you were on the inside or 24 were they -- 25 <b>A. No, they were on the inside.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 Q. I've read this to you just a minute ago, but just going 2 back to it, just below halfway through 34 you say that 3 they covered the gaps with PVC. You say: 4 "... which concealed the gaps which the foam had not 5 completely filled." 6 When the workmen put the foam in, were there 7 remaining gaps? 8 <b>A. Yes.</b> 9 Q. How big were the remaining gaps, at their biggest? 10 <b>A. It's probably that (Indicates).</b> 11 Q. Inch and a half, inch? 12 <b>A. Inch, inch, at the biggest points. Because it was a big</b> 13 <b>square foam that you -- you know, solid foam. So it</b> 14 <b>wasn't like a liquid foam where you can put it in and it</b> 15 <b>will get into every gap. So when they were cutting</b> 16 <b>it -- let's say they cut a rectangle but then there was</b> 17 <b>a bit here, they'd cut a triangle, put it in there, and</b> 18 <b>then they needed another square bit, they'd cut another</b> 19 <b>square bit and put it in there. So obviously once they</b> 20 <b>filled those bits, the bigger bits, in between the</b> 21 <b>others, they wouldn't join and conceal; there would be</b> 22 <b>gaps.</b> 23 Q. Where, in terms of around the window -- you've got 24 a square window frame or a rectangular window frame -- 25 were the largest of those gaps, do you recall?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 <b>A. At the bottom bit.</b></p> <p>2 Q. At the bottom?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. If you lent out of the window, assuming there were no</p> <p>5 workmen in your way, where would you see these gaps?</p> <p>6 Would you look down?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, at the bottom.</b></p> <p>8 Q. At the bottom?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes. So just behind the wooden frame. The bottom. The</b></p> <p>10 <b>ledge.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You then go on in paragraph 34 to say in the last</p> <p>12 sentence:</p> <p>13 "After they covered the window ledge with PVC, there</p> <p>14 were no visible gaps, only small cracks which were</p> <p>15 letting through draughts of air from outside the</p> <p>16 building."</p> <p>17 First of all, were the small cracks visible at all</p> <p>18 to you?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Once they've laid it?</b></p> <p>20 Q. Yes.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Where were those small cracks that you saw?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Underneath the ledge.</b></p> <p>24 Q. On the inside or the outside?</p> <p>25 <b>A. On the inside.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 Q. When you say that you felt a lot of the breeze, how</p> <p>2 strong was the air coming in?</p> <p>3 <b>A. You can walk past it and you can feel the air.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Really?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yeah. And if you put your hand close to the -- so let's</b></p> <p>6 <b>say the edge was like this (Indicates), put your hand</b></p> <p>7 <b>there, you can feel the breeze coming through.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Your kitchen is on the west side. As you said before,</p> <p>9 the living room faces south because you're on the</p> <p>10 south-west corner. Did you --</p> <p>11 <b>A. South and west.</b></p> <p>12 Q. South and west?</p> <p>13 <b>A. It's in that corner.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Yes.</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did you feel any breeze coming in through the southerly</p> <p>17 windows, which would be the living room?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, you can, but because we had furniture in front of</b></p> <p>19 <b>those windows, you couldn't get close enough for it.</b></p> <p>20 <b>But if you put your hand there, you can feel it.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Mm.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Which is how I knew it was coming through.</b></p> <p>23 Q. During the winter that followed the summer of 2016 when</p> <p>24 the refurbishment finished, did the fact that you had</p> <p>25 breeze coming through your flat from those windows have</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 Q. Which windows in your flat do you remember suffered from</p> <p>2 that feature?</p> <p>3 <b>A. There was a few, but the main ones were the sitting room</b></p> <p>4 <b>ones where we felt the breeze. And especially the</b></p> <p>5 <b>kitchen. Because we had a rule with the girls never to</b></p> <p>6 <b>go to the windows, because obviously we were scared that</b></p> <p>7 <b>they would open it, hence why the old windows had the</b></p> <p>8 <b>security feature on which you can only open it that much</b></p> <p>9 <b>(Indicates).</b></p> <p>10 Q. Yes.</p> <p>11 <b>A. With the new windows, it was the same rule: you can't go</b></p> <p>12 <b>to the windows, you can't open them, and so on. So we</b></p> <p>13 <b>only really opened the one in the kitchen a bit more.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Yes.</p> <p>15 <b>A. And that's where we felt the breeze.</b></p> <p>16 Q. And the kitchen would be on the west side of the</p> <p>17 building?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Overlooking --</p> <p>20 <b>A. West side.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Towards Heathrow, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Which windows let in the most breeze?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I would say the west side windows let in -- we felt</b></p> <p>25 <b>a lot of the breeze from that side.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 any effect on how you heated the flat?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, I got them to fix it.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Right.</p> <p>4 <b>A. So --</b></p> <p>5 Q. What did they do to fix it?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Well, his name was Sunday. I went downstairs and spoke</b></p> <p>7 <b>to Lynda Prentice and I said there's breeze coming in.</b></p> <p>8 <b>Initially I didn't really notice it because it was</b></p> <p>9 <b>summer and you didn't really notice it. It's only when</b></p> <p>10 <b>it got a little bit colder and windy -- and obviously</b></p> <p>11 <b>being on the 21st floor, it's generally quite windy up</b></p> <p>12 <b>there -- that I started feeling the breeze. So I went</b></p> <p>13 <b>down and spoke to Lynda and said there's breeze coming</b></p> <p>14 <b>up and she sent the contractor, whose name was Sunday,</b></p> <p>15 <b>which is why I remember, and he came with -- what do you</b></p> <p>16 <b>call it? -- a sort of mastic gun and just sealed all</b></p> <p>17 <b>around the window.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Just pushing my question a little bit more with a bit</p> <p>19 more precision, in paragraph 35 you say:</p> <p>20 "... as it got colder we started to feel the breeze</p> <p>21 in the flat. It felt as if one of the windows in the</p> <p>22 flat was open."</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Before it was fixed in the way you've described, did the</p> <p>25 fact that you had breeze coming in during that colder</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 weather affect the way in which you heated the flat?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, because the flat was cold, so we had to turn the</b></p> <p>3 <b>heating on a lot more. So, yeah, it was much colder.</b></p> <p>4 Q. In paragraph 36, you describe how Sunday filled the gaps</p> <p>5 and cracks around the edges of the windows with mastic</p> <p>6 filler. You say at the end of that paragraph, "it was</p> <p>7 much better after this."</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did he eliminate the breezes completely or were there</p> <p>10 still breezes coming through?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No, I think he eliminated -- I went around the windows</b></p> <p>12 <b>with him, so I made sure he got every hole, basically.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Did he apply the mastic gun inside the flat or did he</p> <p>14 lean out into the cladding?</p> <p>15 <b>A. It was inside.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Okay. Right.</p> <p>17 So, so far as you know, Sunday never did any filling</p> <p>18 work --</p> <p>19 <b>A. On the outside?</b></p> <p>20 Q. -- on the outside?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No, the scaffolding wasn't there anymore, so unless he's</b></p> <p>22 <b>Spider-Man! But, no, he definitely didn't do it.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Some people have talents --</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: It sounds to me as though he</p> <p>25 effectively sealed all the edge of the window openings</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 distressing, although it doesn't show any fire in it.</p> <p>2 I'm doing that because I want to ask you some questions</p> <p>3 about the air ventilation system.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You say in your statement -- it's paragraph 68 on</p> <p>6 page 14 -- that you noticed that an air ventilation</p> <p>7 system was being installed as part of the refurbishment.</p> <p>8 Perhaps we should just go to that first before we</p> <p>9 look at the photographs.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Oh, yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You say in the fifth line down from the top of that</p> <p>12 paragraph:</p> <p>13 "The vents were in two places on opposite walls in</p> <p>14 the hallway/landing."</p> <p>15 So if I can ask you to be shown BLA00002513 and</p> <p>16 BLA00002514, we'll put those two up on the screen at the</p> <p>17 same time, Mr Gomes. They're taken on the 6th floor, so</p> <p>18 not your floor.</p> <p>19 Can you identify for us in those photographs the</p> <p>20 vents you're talking about?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, there's two at the top and two at the bottom.</b></p> <p>22 Q. The two at the top are on the north wall; is that right?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, that was the opposite side to me, yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Your wall is where they're on the bottom, the south</p> <p>25 side?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 all around, below the windowsill and so on, with what</p> <p>2 I am picturing as the sort of white plasticky sort of</p> <p>3 filler that painters often use?</p> <p>4 <b>A. That's exactly it. I think they call it "Painters Mate"</b></p> <p>5 <b>or something like that. So you put that and then you</b></p> <p>6 <b>pass your finger or a wipe or something to make it --</b></p> <p>7 <b>yeah, that's exactly what he used.</b></p> <p>8 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right.</b></p> <p>9 MR MILLETT: But just so I am absolutely clear, he worked</p> <p>10 inside.</p> <p>11 <b>A. Inside.</b></p> <p>12 Q. He didn't fill the gaps that you saw had been left in</p> <p>13 the exterior cladding with the rigid foam?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No, that's already been covered by the PVC top, so that</b></p> <p>15 <b>was never filled, no.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>17 <b>A. This is once the windows were completely finished that</b></p> <p>18 <b>I got him to fill around it.</b></p> <p>19 Q. So the only barrier between external air and your</p> <p>20 flat -- is this right? -- is the mastic seal that Sunday</p> <p>21 put in?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I am going to show you a photograph taken by the</p> <p>24 inquiry's experts of the interior of the tower after the</p> <p>25 fire. I just say that because people might find that</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Correct, yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Let's go back to your statement. You say, six lines</p> <p>3 down from the top of para 68 on page 14:</p> <p>4 "When the ventilation system went off (by that I</p> <p>5 mean when the vents sounded like they were working) it</p> <p>6 was like a loud Hoover sound, a high pitch sound. It</p> <p>7 sounded like there was wind going around the hallway.</p> <p>8 The noise could keep a light sleeper awake at night if</p> <p>9 the ventilation system was going off ie working."</p> <p>10 Just pausing there.</p> <p>11 How often do you recall the ventilation system going</p> <p>12 off before the fire?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Quite regular. It just kept going off randomly at</b></p> <p>14 <b>different times, sometimes over the weekend. I remember</b></p> <p>15 <b>one weekend when it was Saturday/Sunday, continuous</b></p> <p>16 <b>going off, and I phoned TMO and said, you know, that's</b></p> <p>17 <b>happening, and they couldn't send an engineer until</b></p> <p>18 <b>Monday, so we just had to live with it.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did they send an engineer?</p> <p>20 <b>A. It stopped, so I assumed they did.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Did you ever get any explanation from the TMO or</p> <p>22 an engineer why it was going off?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Was there anything you noticed that was happening</p> <p>25 elsewhere in the building which might trigger it?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p>

<p>1 <b>A. No. No.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Did you ever notice while it was going off whether it</p> <p>3 was having any effect, noise or air movement, in the</p> <p>4 main ground floor lobby of the building?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No, not on the ground floor. A lot of the times when</b></p> <p>6 <b>I noticed it was going off, I was working from home.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right.</p> <p>8 <b>A. That's why I noticed it. It was loud enough for my</b></p> <p>9 <b>colleagues, when I was in a conference call, to ask if</b></p> <p>10 <b>I had all the windows open and why was there so much</b></p> <p>11 <b>wind in my flat.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Inside the flat?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes. I used to have to put myself on mute so that they</b></p> <p>14 <b>can have a conversation.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You describe it as like a loud Hoover.</p> <p>16 <b>A. It was loud.</b></p> <p>17 Q. I mean, pretty loud Hoover.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes. At its max.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did it ever operate at a lower pitch or softer sound?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I don't remember it operating -- every time it operated</b></p> <p>21 <b>or was going off, it was loud.</b></p> <p>22 Q. When it did go off, did you notice whether it had any</p> <p>23 effect on the operation of the lifts?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No, I didn't notice.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you notice whether it had any effect on your hot</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 <b>they had flaps and I remember some of the flaps were</b></p> <p>2 <b>open.</b></p> <p>3 Q. When the ventilation system was going off in the way you</p> <p>4 describe and when you were in the lobby, could you</p> <p>5 describe for us which flaps were open and which were</p> <p>6 closed or whether they were both open?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I remember seeing both sides open.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Both sides open?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Do you remember, when the ventilation system was going</p> <p>11 off and you were in the lobby, which direction the air</p> <p>12 was moving in?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I couldn't tell you.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 <b>A. I can't remember.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did you ever try to open the stairwell door from either</p> <p>17 direction when the ventilation system was going off?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No, normally I was getting the lift to go somewhere.</b></p> <p>19 Q. But being a man who used the stairs --</p> <p>20 <b>A. Only going up.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Only going up. I am just trying to put one and one</p> <p>22 together. But did you ever use the stairs during the</p> <p>23 ventilation activation period and notice whether the</p> <p>24 stairwell door was more difficult to open?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I didn't notice.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 water?</p> <p>2 <b>A. It had no effect on my hot water.</b></p> <p>3 Q. That you noticed or --</p> <p>4 <b>A. That I noticed, yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You say -- I've just shown you this -- that when it did</p> <p>6 go off, it sounded like there was wind going around the</p> <p>7 hallway.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Was that like an extra sound, a sound of moving air, or</p> <p>10 was it the sound of the machinery?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I don't think it was the sound of the machinery, it was</b></p> <p>12 <b>just the sound of movement, air movement.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Did you notice any air movement?</p> <p>14 <b>A. When it was going off, you can feel the breeze, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Where --</p> <p>16 <b>A. In the hallway.</b></p> <p>17 Q. In the hallway?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Where in the hallway would you feel the breeze coming</p> <p>20 from when the ventilation system was going off?</p> <p>21 <b>A. From the vents.</b></p> <p>22 Q. From the vent?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Did you ever put your hand up to the vent and feel it?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I don't remember doing it, but I remember -- I think</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 Q. Right.</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, sorry.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Okay.</p> <p>4 Did you ever discuss this ventilation system going</p> <p>5 off with any other resident of the building?</p> <p>6 <b>A. It was mentioned in the compact group a number of times</b></p> <p>7 <b>and with other residents.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you know which floors other residents could hear it</p> <p>9 on when it was going off on this way?</p> <p>10 <b>A. It was various floors, I believe. I don't know specific</b></p> <p>11 <b>floors, but I know a lot of the residents were</b></p> <p>12 <b>complaining about it going off.</b></p> <p>13 Q. In paragraph 69, you say:</p> <p>14 "69. I think the ventilation system never really</p> <p>15 worked properly as almost every week after it was</p> <p>16 installed we could hear the suction sound from inside</p> <p>17 our flat ..."</p> <p>18 You've covered what you mean by that.</p> <p>19 Did anybody ever explain to you what this system was</p> <p>20 designed to do?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No, nobody ever explained that. But to be fair, I never</b></p> <p>22 <b>really asked as well; I just assumed it was a</b></p> <p>23 <b>ventilation system.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Right. That's very fair.</p> <p>25 You say at the bottom of paragraph 68 -- we're going</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p>

<p>1 to come to this in due course:</p> <p>2 "... I could not hear the ventilation system working</p> <p>3 when I opened the door of my flat onto the landing and</p> <p>4 just after 2 am [this is the night of the fire] and when</p> <p>5 I later left the flat with my family at around 3.25 am."</p> <p>6 We'll come to it in due course, but is that a clear</p> <p>7 recollection of yours, that you, despite going through</p> <p>8 many other things at the time, did not hear the</p> <p>9 ventilation system operating?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I don't remember it operating. As loud as it is,</b></p> <p>11 <b>I would've remembered, I'm sure. And I've got a video</b></p> <p>12 <b>of me opening the door, and you can't hear it as well.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Indeed.</p> <p>14 <b>A. And you would've heard it.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Indeed.</p> <p>16 My question was really -- perhaps we'll try it</p> <p>17 a different way -- at the time of your opening the door</p> <p>18 or escape from the flat on the night of the fire, did it</p> <p>19 strike you at the time that the ventilation system was</p> <p>20 not operating?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, I knew it wasn't operating, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>23 You also deal with the question of door-closers at</p> <p>24 paragraph 60 of your statement. If you could go,</p> <p>25 please, to page 12.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 Q. And you could remove it quite easily, could you?</p> <p>2 <b>A. It's not easy to remove and it swings back, but I've got</b></p> <p>3 <b>some DIY experience so I knew how to stop it from</b></p> <p>4 <b>springing back and hurting me when I removed it.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Do you know whether others in the tower did the same</p> <p>6 thing as you with their door-closers?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I believe they did, yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. But do you know?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Not 100 per cent.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Without naming names, do you have specific recollections</p> <p>11 of specific flats where people did that?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I know some flats weren't working, but I don't know the</b></p> <p>13 <b>reason behind it.</b></p> <p>14 Q. You tell us -- there's no need to go to it, but I'll</p> <p>15 give the reference, paragraph 79(b) of your statement on</p> <p>16 page 17 -- that you had a visit from the LFB about three</p> <p>17 months before the fire.</p> <p>18 Do you remember whether during that visit the LFB</p> <p>19 spotted the fact that your front door did not have</p> <p>20 an automatic closer?</p> <p>21 <b>A. They didn't say anything. If they did spot it, they</b></p> <p>22 <b>didn't say nothing.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Right.</p> <p>24 I want to turn to the night of the fire itself,</p> <p>25 Mr Gomes, if I can.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 You describe in para 59, as background, that you</p> <p>2 weren't happy with the automatic door-closing mechanism</p> <p>3 on the front door as the door would slam shut. You've</p> <p>4 explained that.</p> <p>5 You say in 60:</p> <p>6 "60. I reported my concerns regarding the new front</p> <p>7 door to the TMO and asked them to remove the automatic</p> <p>8 closing mechanism. The TMO refused to remove the</p> <p>9 mechanism."</p> <p>10 Then you tell the story in paragraph 60 about how it</p> <p>11 came to be removed.</p> <p>12 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>13 Q. And we have that. In the end, you removed it.</p> <p>14 <b>A. I did.</b></p> <p>15 Q. As you say at the end of para 60.</p> <p>16 How did you do that?</p> <p>17 <b>A. A screwdriver.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right.</p> <p>19 <b>A. It's just bolted in with screws.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Was the mechanism a chain mechanism that went inside of</p> <p>21 the leaf of the door or was it an external mechanism?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No, it went into the frame of the door.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Right.</p> <p>24 <b>A. The door itself, so it was bolted in, and into the</b></p> <p>25 <b>frame.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>2 Q. To start with late on in the night of 13 June, who was</p> <p>3 at home with you that night?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Andreia and my two daughters.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Picking it up at paragraph 76 of your statement on</p> <p>6 page 16, you say there:</p> <p>7 "76. At approximately 1:30 a.m. on Wednesday 14</p> <p>8 June 2017 both Andreia and I were awoken by a banging on</p> <p>9 our front door and the noise of commotion outside of the</p> <p>10 Tower ..."</p> <p>11 The noise of the commotion outside of the tower,</p> <p>12 what sort of noise was that?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Just loud noise, louder than normal. You couldn't</b></p> <p>14 <b>really hear because we're on the 21st floor, but you can</b></p> <p>15 <b>hear sounds, and obviously sound was travelling up the</b></p> <p>16 <b>and you can hear the commotion.</b></p> <p>17 Q. I don't think it's necessary to take time going to</p> <p>18 a plan, but just tell us, which was your bedroom in the</p> <p>19 flat?</p> <p>20 <b>A. As you --</b></p> <p>21 Q. Which direction did it face?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Did it face? South.</b></p> <p>23 Q. South. Was it the nearest to the front door?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, it's the one directly in front of the front door.</b></p> <p>25 Q. So you overlook pretty clearly the front lobby entrance?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p>



<p>1 <b>A. Correct, yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. When you woke up, you say you went to answer the door.</p> <p>3 At that stage, did you notice any signs of smoke in your</p> <p>4 flat?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Not in my flat, no.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Did you look out of the window at that stage?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No, I didn't.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Did you see anywhere any signs of fire at that stage?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You go on to say in the same paragraph that Helen</p> <p>11 Gebremeskel and her daughter were at the door with their</p> <p>12 dog. You say:</p> <p>13 "Helen was clearly very upset, she was breathing</p> <p>14 heavily, talking quickly and looked very worried. She</p> <p>15 told us that there was a fire in one of the flats in the</p> <p>16 Tower."</p> <p>17 You see you say that?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did she tell you which flat?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Not that I recall, no.</b></p> <p>21 Q. So she didn't tell you that her kitchen was on fire?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Not to me, no.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Looking ahead to paragraph 77, next on page 16 of your</p> <p>24 statement, you say:</p> <p>25 "77. Whilst we were at the front door speaking with</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 Q. Did you see anybody else at that stage?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, the only people I saw was Helen and [redacted]</b></p> <p>3 <b>because they were right there in front of my door.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Okay.</p> <p>5 I think at this stage I will show you the layout of</p> <p>6 the flat. Can I ask you, please, to be shown</p> <p>7 MET00012593.</p> <p>8 This is a cross-section of the building from the</p> <p>9 4th floor up, and you can see that the flats are</p> <p>10 sequentially numbered with flat 1 starting in the middle</p> <p>11 of the east elevation, working around in a clockwise</p> <p>12 direction to flat 6 on the north-east side. You are on</p> <p>13 the south-east corner, or your flat was on the</p> <p>14 south-east corner.</p> <p>15 <b>A. South-west.</b></p> <p>16 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: South-west, I think.</b></p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: South-west corner, flat 3.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. If you blow that up, you can see that your -- well, we</p> <p>20 haven't quite got it. Perhaps we'll stay with the</p> <p>21 unblown-up version for the moment. Yes.</p> <p>22 Your front door is there, and flat 182, as it would</p> <p>23 be, would be to your right as you look out.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Where were you standing when the front door was opened</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 Helen, I could hear my next door neighbour, Abdulla from</p> <p>2 flat 182, talking with people who then went into his</p> <p>3 flat."</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Is that Abdulla El-Wahabi?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Could you see him yourself?</p> <p>8 <b>A. No, I can hear him.</b></p> <p>9 Q. His front door is to your left?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Right.</b></p> <p>11 Q. It's to your right, sorry, as you look out of yours?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes, to my right.</b></p> <p>13 Q. To your right as you look out of yours and to the left</p> <p>14 as you're looking at it.</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did you see anybody else he was talking to?</p> <p>17 <b>A. No, I hadn't stepped out. Andreia was in front of me,</b></p> <p>18 <b>Andreia opened the door, and then Helen was there with</b></p> <p>19 <b>her, and I was behind in my flat in the corridor still.</b></p> <p>20 <b>I can hear the --</b></p> <p>21 Q. Could you -- I'm so sorry.</p> <p>22 <b>A. -- discussions going on, but I couldn't see. I hadn't</b></p> <p>23 <b>stepped out to see.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Could you see the people he was talking to?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 to Helen?</p> <p>2 <b>A. So if you're looking at that, where you see -- well, you</b></p> <p>3 <b>haven't got the front door, but let's pretend that</b></p> <p>4 <b>line --</b></p> <p>5 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, do.</b></p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: It's good to stand up.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Let's pretend that's the front door because it opened</b></p> <p>8 <b>that way. I was standing here (Indicates), inside the</b></p> <p>9 <b>flat.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You were standing --</p> <p>11 <b>A. Andreia was here, Helen was here and [redacted] was</b></p> <p>12 <b>here.</b></p> <p>13 Q. I see, okay.</p> <p>14 And the discussion that you heard Abdulla El-Wahabi</p> <p>15 having, was it -- is this right? -- around the</p> <p>16 right-hand corner and out of eyeshot?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Correct, yes. From my understanding and my hearing, it</b></p> <p>18 <b>was right in front of his door.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Your bedroom, just while we have it, is the easternmost</p> <p>20 on the south flank.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>22 Q. So pretty much opposite the front door once you go past</p> <p>23 the hall.</p> <p>24 <b>A. It's right opposite, yes. The entrance or my bedroom</b></p> <p>25 <b>door is right opposite the front door, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 Now, I know it's difficult, but how many people do</p> <p>3 you think at the time Abdulla was talking to?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I would imagine about three or four different people,</b></p> <p>5 <b>but I can't be certain because I didn't see myself,</b></p> <p>6 <b>I just heard voices.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Were they male voices or female voices or a mixture?</p> <p>8 <b>A. It was a mixture.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Could you hear what they were saying?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Not 100 per cent, no.</b></p> <p>11 Q. At paragraph 77 you say, five lines down:</p> <p>12 "Helen informed us that she and [redacted] had tried</p> <p>13 to go downstairs and were sent back up by a fire</p> <p>14 fighter."</p> <p>15 Is that what Helen said while you were standing at</p> <p>16 the front door?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Do you remember that clearly?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Did she tell you why she'd been sent back up by</p> <p>21 a firefighter?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No. It wasn't just her; it was the whole group that she</b></p> <p>23 <b>was with was sent up.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Did you see any other members of the group?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Well, my assumption was that the ones going into 182 was</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 get a good view of the front door of flat 6, but --</p> <p>2 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>3 Q. You can't, all right.</p> <p>4 <b>A. No. Even if I'm standing by the door, you can't see it.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Can I ask you, please, then, to go forward to page 19 at</p> <p>6 paragraph 82.</p> <p>7 You say:</p> <p>8 "82. When Helen, [redacted] and Simba came into our</p> <p>9 flat through our front door, I could see smoke on our</p> <p>10 landing. It was black smoke and it was quite close to</p> <p>11 the ceiling at that point you could see through it.</p> <p>12 This was around about 1:25/1:30 am."</p> <p>13 First of all, did you get an opportunity to smell</p> <p>14 the smoke?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No, I couldn't smell anything, or the least I don't</b></p> <p>16 <b>notice smelling anything at that moment in time.</b></p> <p>17 Q. This is when they come in through your front door, as</p> <p>18 you say.</p> <p>19 Did you have to open the front door in full to let</p> <p>20 them in?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Andreia opened the door in full, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. You or Andreia opened the front door in full, they came</p> <p>23 into your flat and you look and see what's on the</p> <p>24 landing.</p> <p>25 Could you see at that time where the smoke was</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 <b>part of that group.</b></p> <p>2 Q. I see.</p> <p>3 <b>A. Because they all came up together.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Do you know roughly how many were in that group? Did</p> <p>5 you get a sense of how many were in that group?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Well, I heard about three or four, but it could've been</b></p> <p>7 <b>more.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Okay.</p> <p>9 Now, from where you're standing -- and perhaps we</p> <p>10 need to go back to the map at MET00012593 if we can, the</p> <p>11 diagram -- at your front door, you can -- well, let me</p> <p>12 ask you: do you have a good view of the stairwell door,</p> <p>13 which would be looking to your right diagonally?</p> <p>14 <b>A. If I stepped out, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. If you stepped out?</p> <p>16 <b>A. It's diagonally right there. So I would have a good</b></p> <p>17 <b>view to it, yes. But at that moment, no, because I was</b></p> <p>18 <b>behind Andreia.</b></p> <p>19 Q. So you couldn't see whether the stairwell door was open</p> <p>20 or closed?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No, no. If I had opened the door, I could, because</b></p> <p>22 <b>I just need to open the door and I can see it diagonally</b></p> <p>23 <b>across me. But because Andreia opened it and I was</b></p> <p>24 <b>behind her, I couldn't see it.</b></p> <p>25 Q. From where you're standing, I'm not sure whether you can</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 coming from?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, I had no idea. Because at that time, when we opened</b></p> <p>3 <b>the door, Helen hadn't come in yet, she was just</b></p> <p>4 <b>standing on the frame of the door, pretty much, with</b></p> <p>5 <b>Andreia. So we just had a brief conversation because we</b></p> <p>6 <b>had just woken up, so I was still a little bit --</b></p> <p>7 Q. You say it was quite close to the ceiling. How far</p> <p>8 below the ceiling was the smoke layer at that point?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It was only a little bit (Indicates). I noticed it</b></p> <p>10 <b>because of the light. Right outside my front door</b></p> <p>11 <b>there's the communal light.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Yes.</p> <p>13 <b>A. So I noticed because it sort of sparkled, which caught</b></p> <p>14 <b>my attention, and that's when I looked up and saw that</b></p> <p>15 <b>smoke.</b></p> <p>16 Q. First of all, in the answer before last you say</p> <p>17 "a little bit" and you put your finger and thumb</p> <p>18 a distance apart. Just for the transcript, how thick</p> <p>19 was the smoke layer in terms of centimetres?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Well, 2 inches, so about --</b></p> <p>21 Q. 2 inches, okay. Then you say in the last answer that</p> <p>22 the smoke -- did you say it sparkled?</p> <p>23 <b>A. It's what caught my attention. I don't know if it's</b></p> <p>24 <b>because of the light, but because the light is right</b></p> <p>25 <b>there, something just sparkled and it just caught my</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 <b>attention. That's when I looked up.</b></p> <p>2 Q. When you looked up and you examined the smoke, or saw</p> <p>3 the smoke, could you see this sparkling phenomenon?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No, not really, it just looked like dull smoke. But,</b></p> <p>5 <b>you know, I didn't really examine it, to be honest.</b></p> <p>6 <b>Helen just finished telling me that there was a fire</b></p> <p>7 <b>somewhere in the building, and I saw a bit of smoke.</b></p> <p>8 <b>Yeah, the door didn't remain open for too long after</b></p> <p>9 <b>that.</b></p> <p>10 Q. So far as you could see, were all the lobby lights on</p> <p>11 and working at that point?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes. I can see clearly.</b></p> <p>13 Q. You say in the same paragraph, three lines down:</p> <p>14 "This was around about 1:25/1:30 am."</p> <p>15 How do you recall that that was the time?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I remember looking at my phone on the side, because it</b></p> <p>17 <b>was probably the first thing I did when I heard the</b></p> <p>18 <b>banging. My phone always charges on my bedside table,</b></p> <p>19 <b>and I remember looking at it and just recall it being</b></p> <p>20 <b>around that time.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Yes. And you didn't look again at the --</p> <p>22 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>23 Q. So --</p> <p>24 <b>A. No, I was -- I sleep in boxers, you know, so I'm not</b></p> <p>25 <b>accustomed to opening the door in that way. So Andrea</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, 11.10, then, please.</p> <p>3 (10.53 am)</p> <p>4 (A short break)</p> <p>5 (11.10 am)</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Gomes?</p> <p>7 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Happy to continue?</p> <p>9 THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>11 MR MILLETT: Mr Gomes, thank you for coming back to us.</p> <p>12 Before I move on, can I just go back to something</p> <p>13 that relates to what we were talking about before.</p> <p>14 When you used to open your front door, was there</p> <p>15 a light in the lobby near your front door or over it?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Right in right, pretty much.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Right in front?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Where was it, on the ceiling or on the walls?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Ceiling.</b></p> <p>21 Q. How close to the entrance to the door was the light?</p> <p>22 <b>A. It was about halfway between my front door and the riser</b></p> <p>23 <b>cupboard and in the ceiling. But a bit to the right.</b></p> <p>24 Q. A bit to the right?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 <b>went to open the door and I was getting changed, so</b></p> <p>2 <b>I didn't look again until much later.</b></p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: Mr Gomes, I'm going to ask the chairman now to</p> <p>4 take a break, if I may, if that's not inconvenient to</p> <p>5 you.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Well, we have been running for</p> <p>7 50 minutes. That may be a good point to have a short</p> <p>8 break.</p> <p>9 Before we do break, can I just say this:</p> <p>10 I understand that there is going to be a short</p> <p>11 remembrance service in the courtyard, Waterhouse Square,</p> <p>12 downstairs at 11 o'clock. I don't know how long it's</p> <p>13 going to last. Anyone who wishes to attend will be very</p> <p>14 welcome. In view of that, we'll take a slightly longer</p> <p>15 break and resume at 11.10. All right?</p> <p>16 Now, Mr Gomes, we're going to have a break, slightly</p> <p>17 longer than usual, but never mind.</p> <p>18 Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence</p> <p>19 while you're out of the room and we'll come back at</p> <p>20 11.10. All right?</p> <p>21 THE WITNESS: Okay.</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.</p> <p>23 THE WITNESS: Do I go?</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now you can go with the usher, yes,</p> <p>25 that's it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 <b>A. So enough that it would -- we had a door that had the --</b></p> <p>3 <b>Q. A fanlight?</b></p> <p>4 <b>A. Not -- is it called that? -- yes, a fanlight, yes,</b></p> <p>5 <b>I guess.</b></p> <p>6 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: The glass at the top.</b></p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, that's right, which would let the light through.</b></p> <p>8 <b>So it was a bit to the right, but not directly above.</b></p> <p>9 MR MILLETT: Okay.</p> <p>10 So on a normal night, could you clearly see light</p> <p>11 through -- I've called it a fanlight -- the fan-shaped</p> <p>12 glass in the door?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, I could see it, yeah.</b></p> <p>14 Q. When you opened the door, would the light in the ceiling</p> <p>15 in the lobby outside your door throw light onto your</p> <p>16 threshold?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. It would?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes. That was the only light in the ceiling that would</b></p> <p>20 <b>give light to that corner, so yeah.</b></p> <p>21 Q. When Helen arrived and knocked on your door, Andrea</p> <p>22 opened the door, as you have said, you could see her</p> <p>23 clearly illuminated, could you?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, yes, everything was normal, aside from the bit of</b></p> <p>25 <b>smoke obviously that I saw around the light.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 Q. Moving on, can I just ask you some questions about fire 2 safety advice. 3 You say in your statement -- you don't need to go to 4 it, we've touched on it earlier -- that you were paid 5 a visit at home by the LFB who checked your fire alarms. 6 Do you remember when that was? 7 <b>A. Not specifically.</b> 8 Q. Three months or so before the fire I think is what you 9 say? 10 <b>A. I did have it pointed in a calendar, but the calendar --</b> 11 Q. Did they give you any other fire safety advice at the 12 time? 13 <b>A. Such as? I mean, we discussed a couple of things when</b> 14 <b>they were testing the -- are you referring when they</b> 15 <b>came around to test the smoke alarms?</b> 16 Q. Yes. 17 <b>A. So we did discuss with who I believe was a senior person</b> 18 <b>or at least the fireman that was in charge around the</b> 19 <b>stay-put policy, but it was very brief, and it was just</b> 20 <b>he asked do I know the procedure and I said, "Yes, I'm</b> 21 <b>aware it's a stay put", and he said, "Yes, that's</b> 22 <b>right", and then he went on to say that, you know, each</b> 23 <b>apartment is designed to contain the fire if there was</b> 24 <b>one, so you'd have plenty of time, and that was it,</b> 25 <b>really.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 signs that you'd seen in the building? 2 <b>A. That would've influenced it as well, yeah, because</b> 3 <b>I remember reading the signs that was by the elevators.</b> 4 Q. Just to be clear, can the witness please be shown 5 INQ00000093. 6 Is that the sign you're referring to, Mr Gomes? 7 <b>A. Yes.</b> 8 Q. Am I right in thinking you studied it carefully and 9 understood it very clearly? 10 <b>A. Well, I think so, yes. I mean, I read it a number of</b> 11 <b>times because, if I remember correctly, it was on the</b> 12 <b>ground floor in between the lifts, and with such a big</b> 13 <b>tower, there was a lot of times where you have to wait</b> 14 <b>for a few minutes, and I'm the type of person that just</b> 15 <b>reads every sign to pass the time. So, yeah, I was</b> 16 <b>quite familiar with that.</b> 17 Q. It was on your floor as well, was it? 18 <b>A. It was, I think to the right of the lift on my floor.</b> 19 Q. To the right of the lifts, as you look at the lifts? 20 <b>A. So as I'm looking out, I think it was on the right-hand</b> 21 <b>side, so towards the north-facing.</b> 22 Q. Towards the north, as you look at the lifts, towards the 23 north? 24 <b>A. Yes, north-facing of the building, yes.</b> 25 Q. Can I ask you to be shown another sign, IWS00000500.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 Q. It looks from your statement -- I say don't go to it, 2 perhaps we should go to it. It's page 18, five lines up 3 from the bottom of that page, you say: 4 "He asked me, 'Do you know what the procedure is in 5 the case of a fire?' I replied, 'I am aware there is a 6 stay put policy and that means you stay in your flat if 7 the fire is elsewhere in the building unless it is in my 8 flat and then I would get out.'" 9 Who initiated that conversation? Who started it? 10 Did you ask him or did he ask you if you knew? 11 <b>A. No, he asked me.</b> 12 Q. Your knowledge that you have described there, that you 13 put in your answer to him, what was the source of that? 14 <b>A. Well, I remember talking to Janice Jones, she was the</b> 15 <b>TMO officer that dealt with our accommodation, and when</b> 16 <b>we first moved in, or at least when I signed the</b> 17 <b>contract, we had a conversation around the stay-put</b> 18 <b>policy.</b> 19 Q. You've covered that in detail in your statement at 20 paragraph 79(a) and I won't ask you about that. 21 <b>A. Yes.</b> 22 Q. Can I just ask you about signs in the building. 23 <b>A. Yes.</b> 24 Q. Did any of your information that you had about stay put 25 which you repeated back to the firefighter come from any</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 Do you remember ever seeing a sign like this in, at 2 or around Grenfell Tower? 3 <b>A. I don't remember, but I think that was when we first</b> 4 <b>moved in, it was at the back of the ground floor,</b> 5 <b>I think.</b> 6 Q. Right. 7 <b>A. But I couldn't tell you 100 per cent.</b> 8 Q. Do you remember whether that sign ever disappeared? 9 <b>A. I don't remember seeing it.</b> 10 Q. Okay. 11 <b>A. Soon after we moved in. So, yes, it did disappear.</b> 12 Q. It did disappear. And you say soon after you moved in 13 it disappeared; is that right? 14 <b>A. I think I remember seeing it in the back on the ground</b> 15 <b>floor. So as you go through the main doors, obviously</b> 16 <b>pre the work, it was in the sort of poster area in the</b> 17 <b>back, if I remember correctly, near the lifts, the</b> 18 <b>ground floor lifts. But it didn't stay there long, or</b> 19 <b>at least I don't remember reading it that often.</b> 20 Q. When did you first notice the new signs, the green and 21 red signs we saw a moment ago? 22 <b>A. I think it was just after the refurb, or just before</b> 23 <b>they finished.</b> 24 Q. Right. So about 2016? 25 <b>A. Yes, I think so.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 Can I ask you now to be shown something else, which</p> <p>3 is ART00002606.</p> <p>4 This is a newsletter published by the TMO and Rydon</p> <p>5 dated July 2014.</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. First of all, Mr Gomes, do you remember receiving</p> <p>8 newsletters such as this?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, we had numerous newsletters like that, yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Do you remember seeing this one in particular,</p> <p>11 July 2014?</p> <p>12 I mean, just to refresh your recollection, "What's</p> <p>13 been happening", and then you are told about the</p> <p>14 demolish of the ramp.</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes, I remember those photos.</b></p> <p>16 Q. You remember the photos?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right.</p> <p>19 Can I ask you to turn to the next page, and you can</p> <p>20 see in the last item at the bottom: "Emergency fire</p> <p>21 arrangements". If we could have those blown up, please:</p> <p>22 "Our longstanding 'stay put' policy stays in force</p> <p>23 until you are told otherwise. This means that (unless</p> <p>24 there is a fire in your flat or in the hallway outside</p> <p>25 your flat) you should stay inside your flat. This is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 flat, through any window?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Not straight away.</b></p> <p>3 Q. At what point after Helen arrived did you first look out</p> <p>4 of your windows?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I would say maybe 15/20 minutes after.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Because when they came in, the first thing I said to</b></p> <p>8 <b>[redacted], because she used to sleep at ours -- that's</b></p> <p>9 <b>Helen's daughter, she used to sleep at ours and the</b></p> <p>10 <b>girls used to sleep at hers, so she knew where their</b></p> <p>11 <b>bedroom was. So I said to her, because they were</b></p> <p>12 <b>sleeping at that time, "Go into the girls' room and wake</b></p> <p>13 <b>them up." Then Helen and Andreia and myself sort of</b></p> <p>14 <b>went towards the kitchen area, the living room area,</b></p> <p>15 <b>just to have a conversation around, you know, what we</b></p> <p>16 <b>have actually seen.</b></p> <p>17 <b>So amongst all of that going on, and then coming</b></p> <p>18 <b>back, making sure the girls were awake, and I just asked</b></p> <p>19 <b>them to make sure they're ready, tracksuit bottoms or</b></p> <p>20 <b>whatever it was. So it was about 15/20 minutes after</b></p> <p>21 <b>that I went to the window.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Picking it up, if I can, at paragraph 85 of your</p> <p>23 statement on page 19, you say:</p> <p>24 "85. I then started to look out of the window to see</p> <p>25 what was going on and I could see a couple of fire</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 because Grenfell was designed according to rigorous fire</p> <p>2 safety standards. Also, the new front doors for each</p> <p>3 flat can withstand a fire for up to 30 minutes, which</p> <p>4 gives plenty of time for the fire brigade to arrive."</p> <p>5 Do you remember reading that?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes, I do.</b></p> <p>7 Q. What impression did that information have on you at the</p> <p>8 time?</p> <p>9 <b>A. That it was safe to stay in the flat.</b></p> <p>10 Q. When Helen arrived and came into your flat with her</p> <p>11 daughter and her dog, did you discuss fire safety</p> <p>12 advice, stay put --</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. -- if you like, with them? You did?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. What about with Andreia, did you discuss it with</p> <p>17 Andreia?</p> <p>18 <b>A. It was both, they were together. I tried to reassure</b></p> <p>19 <b>them that it was a stay-put policy and everything will</b></p> <p>20 <b>be okay, and we went into the -- everything's going to</b></p> <p>21 <b>be okay in terms of it's not going to spread from the</b></p> <p>22 <b>flat. Let's wait until the firefighters deal with it</b></p> <p>23 <b>and then, you know, we'll just get told it's dealt with.</b></p> <p>24 Q. After Helen came in and you were all in the flat</p> <p>25 together, did you then look out of the windows of your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 engines ..."</p> <p>2 Et cetera.</p> <p>3 Is that the first time that you looked out of the</p> <p>4 window?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. As we know, your flat faces south and west. I call it</p> <p>7 the south-west corner. Which windows did you look out</p> <p>8 of at that point, do you remember?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It was the south.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 <b>A. The one right to the picture that you showed me earlier.</b></p> <p>12 Q. At that point, could you see any signs of fire or smoke?</p> <p>13 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 At paragraph 86 you say:</p> <p>16 "86. At this point my instincts just kicked in. I</p> <p>17 knew there was a real problem ..."</p> <p>18 Why did you at that point think there was a real</p> <p>19 problem?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Well, the amount of commotion, the amount of lights, and</b></p> <p>21 <b>I saw firefighters running into the building. I didn't</b></p> <p>22 <b>think it was just, you know, somebody burning toast,</b></p> <p>23 <b>basically. So I thought I'd better be safe rather than</b></p> <p>24 <b>not, or be prepared rather than not.</b></p> <p>25 Q. You go on to say:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

13 (Pages 49 to 52)

<p>1 "... I started to fill the bathtub up with 2 water ..." 3 <b>A. Yes.</b> 4 Q. Just at that point, did you notice any problems with the 5 water pressure? 6 <b>A. Not straight away, no.</b> 7 Q. Did that come later? 8 <b>A. Yes.</b> 9 Q. What point do you remember that came? 10 <b>A. The problems?</b> 11 Q. With the water pressure. 12 <b>A. There was no water.</b> 13 Q. Yes, but at what point in time? 14 <b>A. It was just shortly after I took the video. So I think</b> 15 <b>probably just after 2.30 in the morning.</b> 16 Q. Okay. 17 At the time you started to fill the bathtub, did you 18 notice smoke coming into the flat at all? 19 <b>A. Yes.</b> 20 Q. Where was it coming in from? 21 <b>A. The door. The main door.</b> 22 Q. The main door? 23 <b>A. The front door.</b> 24 Q. From whereabouts around the front door was the smoke 25 coming at that time?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 you say in the last two sentences: 2 "The smoke smelled toxic. Anytime I breathed it in, 3 it made me gag." 4 When you say it smelt toxic, can you just explain 5 why you say that? 6 <b>A. Because it made me gag. I smelt smoke before in</b> 7 <b>barbecues and it never makes me gag, but this was</b> 8 <b>an overpowering smell. So as soon as you try and take</b> 9 <b>a breath in, it was just making me sort of want to puke</b> 10 <b>up straight away. I had the gagging sensation</b> 11 <b>basically --</b> 12 Q. Right, I see. 13 <b>A. -- with it.</b> 14 Q. Did you notice any particular odour about the smoke? 15 <b>A. Well, I felt it was a chemically-infused smell, but</b> 16 <b>nothing I had really smelt before. The only thing that</b> 17 <b>sort of comes to mind is back in school when I used to</b> 18 <b>do chemistry in the science lab with the Bunsen burners.</b> 19 <b>It was that type of smell, when you are burning some</b> 20 <b>chemicals, and it was there, but it was just more --</b> 21 <b>higher dosages, I guess.</b> 22 Q. Then you say in paragraph 90, page 20 of your statement: 23 "90. I had opened my front door a few times after 24 Helen and [redacted] came into our flat to check the 25 state of the smoke in the hallway. Each time I opened</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 <b>A. The side and the bottom.</b> 2 Q. Okay. You think that's about 20 minutes after Helen 3 came in? 4 <b>A. The smoke?</b> 5 Q. Yes. 6 <b>A. Yes.</b> 7 Q. Well, I'm working from responding to seeing the 8 commotion outside, filling the bathtub, sensing the 9 smoke. 10 <b>A. Yeah, maybe about 25/30 minutes after, yes, give or</b> 11 <b>take. But it changed rapidly from when I first opened</b> 12 <b>the door to Helen to the second time I opened the door.</b> 13 <b>It was pitch black.</b> 14 Q. We'll come to that. 15 Just at this point, when you are aware there's 16 a problem and you start filling the bathtub. 17 <b>A. Yes.</b> 18 Q. Just to be clear, it's at that point you notice smoke 19 starting to come into the flat? 20 <b>A. It was shortly after that, yes, because then I took</b> 21 <b>a towel out and put it at the bottom of the door.</b> 22 Q. The smoke that was coming in, could you describe it for 23 us? 24 <b>A. It was grey, a bit dark -- dark grey smoke coming in.</b> 25 Q. At paragraph 87 of your statement, moving through this,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 the front door, I could see the smoke was getting 2 thicker and thicker until it was eventually pitch black 3 outside." 4 How many times did you open the front door before 5 you filled the bath and put towels down? 6 <b>A. I don't think I did. I'd done that already.</b> 7 Q. Right. So opening the front door starts after the smoke 8 starts coming in and you're trying to block it with the 9 towels? 10 <b>A. Yes, I just want to see what was behind that door.</b> 11 Q. How many times do you think you opened the door? 12 <b>A. Well, I estimated seven or eight times.</b> 13 Q. Now -- 14 <b>A. But I wasn't keeping count, sorry.</b> 15 Q. Did you notice each time whether the lights in the lobby 16 were on and working or not? 17 <b>A. I remember opening it and it was a really dark, so</b> 18 <b>I don't think the lights were on, but I'm not</b> 19 <b>100 per cent on that.</b> 20 Q. Was there a time during this process of opening the door 21 that the smoke was thin enough that you could see where 22 the light was and that it was not shining? 23 <b>A. Well, I can see the light through the door panel, so</b> 24 <b>I didn't have to open it to see the light.</b> 25 Q. During that, then, did you notice the light fading or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 did you notice the light was suddenly not on anymore?</p> <p>2 <b>A. When I came back, it just wasn't on.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Right. So it went from being on --</p> <p>4 <b>A. To being off.</b></p> <p>5 Q. -- to being off?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Because I wasn't always at the front door.</b></p> <p>9 Q. We're going to come to the first of your 999 calls,</p> <p>10 which we have timed at 02.21.04.</p> <p>11 Before we get to it, can I just ask you some</p> <p>12 questions about the conditions in your flat at that</p> <p>13 time, 02.21.</p> <p>14 By that point, Helen and her daughter had been in</p> <p>15 your flat for a little under an hour or so.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Mm-hm.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Why did you not call LFB before that, do you remember?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I don't remember specifically, but I did get some phone</b></p> <p>19 <b>calls from other residents from the tower.</b></p> <p>20 Q. I think you explain --</p> <p>21 <b>A. They were telling me to get out, that I needed to get</b></p> <p>22 <b>out, but I think at the time I said I couldn't, you</b></p> <p>23 <b>know, it's dark. Then I decided to phone 999. I think</b></p> <p>24 <b>it was one of my friends that said phone 999 and see</b></p> <p>25 <b>what they say.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 <b>a building if it's not safe?</b></p> <p>2 Q. Did you have any specific thoughts about whether it was</p> <p>3 safe to go down the stairwell, assuming you could get</p> <p>4 across the communal lobby?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Well, my assumption was that if the hallway was covered</b></p> <p>6 <b>in smoke then the stairwell was going to be covered in</b></p> <p>7 <b>smoke. But obviously I had no way of confirming that.</b></p> <p>8 Q. We can go to your first 999 call, which is LFB00000348.</p> <p>9 We can see the time of this call from the strapline</p> <p>10 of blue numbers across the top of the page, and the time</p> <p>11 is the group of numbers second from the right, "022104".</p> <p>12 You can see from the first page of that that you're</p> <p>13 reporting a fire -- I'm not going to read it all to</p> <p>14 you -- and you're told by the operator that they're on</p> <p>15 scene and dealing with it now. You tell her you're</p> <p>16 still on the 21st floor.</p> <p>17 Halfway down the page, she says:</p> <p>18 "OPERATOR: Sir, I can't hear you. Can you --</p> <p>19 "CALLER: -- and I can't get out. I said I'm still</p> <p>20 on the 21st floor --"</p> <p>21 At this point, had you made any attempt to leave?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes, I believe so.</b></p> <p>23 Q. How long before this call had you made an attempt to</p> <p>24 leave?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Not long, because I would've called them pretty much</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 Q. Before you phoned 999, what were your expectations?</p> <p>2 <b>A. That the Fire Brigade would deal with the situation and</b></p> <p>3 <b>somebody would be knocking on the door saying,</b></p> <p>4 <b>"Everything's resolved, go back to bed", sort of thing.</b></p> <p>5 Q. When you saw the smoke getting thicker and thicker and</p> <p>6 the light going off, did you notice -- well, let me just</p> <p>7 ask it this way, first of all.</p> <p>8 Did you notice the light going off before or after</p> <p>9 you made your first 999 call?</p> <p>10 <b>A. It was off already when I made that call.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Did there come a point when you saw the smoke getting</p> <p>12 thicker and thicker and you'd noticed the light was off</p> <p>13 in the hallway, that you thought to yourself, "We must</p> <p>14 leave before it gets worse"?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes, I wanted to leave, but it was just difficult to</b></p> <p>16 <b>navigate and I didn't know what we were going to go</b></p> <p>17 <b>through at that point.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did the fact that Helen had told you that she had been</p> <p>19 told to go upstairs by a firefighter have any influence</p> <p>20 on your thinking at that time?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, absolutely.</b></p> <p>22 Q. It did?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, because if you're getting told to go into a flat</b></p> <p>24 <b>and wait, that tells me that they're dealing with it and</b></p> <p>25 <b>it's quite safe. Why would you keep somebody in</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 <b>straight after. So maybe a couple of minutes, max.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Was it that inability to leave that motivated you to</p> <p>3 call the LFB at that point?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Now --</p> <p>6 <b>A. I knew the LFB were there because we could see from the</b></p> <p>7 <b>window and they were being dealt with, and obviously</b></p> <p>8 <b>I've spoken to other residents that were outside, but</b></p> <p>9 <b>when we tried to get out, it was just too difficult.</b></p> <p>10 Q. When you say you tried to leave, does that mean that</p> <p>11 you'd got the family together with towels on and got</p> <p>12 ready to go out?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes. So I filled the bathtub with water and threw</b></p> <p>14 <b>sheets, you know, big bathrobes and tea towels and</b></p> <p>15 <b>everything that I can sort of grab, and I sat everybody</b></p> <p>16 <b>down together and I said, "When we try to escape, when</b></p> <p>17 <b>we try to leave, this is the order that we're going to</b></p> <p>18 <b>do it in." So I put Helen, as the adult, at the front,</b></p> <p>19 <b>and I said she needs to lead the way, followed by</b></p> <p>20 <b>Andreia and my daughter, my youngest daughter, behind</b></p> <p>21 <b>her. Then Helen's daughter and my daughter behind them,</b></p> <p>22 <b>and the plan was I was going to be the last one so that</b></p> <p>23 <b>I can try and motivate and push them down and keep going</b></p> <p>24 <b>sort of thing. So we discussed that, to the point where</b></p> <p>25 <b>I said, "As soon as you open the front door" --</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 Q. Take it slowly.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, just take your time.</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: Whenever you're ready.</p> <p>4 <b>A. So I said, "As soon as you open the front door, you know</b></p> <p>5 <b>where the stairwell door is, which is basically go</b></p> <p>6 <b>diagonally. You're going to hit the door, the door will</b></p> <p>7 <b>swing open, so don't worry about it, just go straight</b></p> <p>8 <b>through. As soon as you go through that, grab the rail,</b></p> <p>9 <b>the middle rail, and just don't let go of the rail and</b></p> <p>10 <b>just follow it down, because that's your quickest route</b></p> <p>11 <b>down."</b></p> <p>12 <b>So we all knew what we had to do at that point.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Just to be clear, this is at the point before this first</p> <p>14 999 call?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes, I believe, yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. So you already --</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes, we had that conversation beforehand.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right, so there was a clear plan.</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. A family plan.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes. Everybody was to have a tea towel around their</b></p> <p>22 <b>face and a bed sheet or a big towel over them, because</b></p> <p>23 <b>we didn't know what to expect in the stairwell.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Going to page 3 of the transcript, in the middle of the</p> <p>25 page you're told by the operator:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 Q. Did that have any influence on what you then did next?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Well, I waited by the door. So, yeah, I told the girls</b></p> <p>3 <b>to make sure that they had ready, had their trainers on,</b></p> <p>4 <b>that they were ready to go. So I kept encouraging them</b></p> <p>5 <b>to be ready, basically.</b></p> <p>6 <b>They were in the sitting room, sitting on the sofa</b></p> <p>7 <b>at that time. Helen and Andreia was by the kitchen</b></p> <p>8 <b>window for the majority of the time, so I was just</b></p> <p>9 <b>making sure that they were ready to go. What I was</b></p> <p>10 <b>expecting was a big bang on the door and I would open it</b></p> <p>11 <b>and we would all go.</b></p> <p>12 Q. At the point that the call finishes, was there any smoke</p> <p>13 coming into your flat?</p> <p>14 <b>A. There was smoke coming in, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Was it coming through the front door as before?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Anywhere else?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I'm not sure about anywhere else. The majority of the</b></p> <p>19 <b>time I was in the corridor inside my flat, so I don't</b></p> <p>20 <b>know about anywhere else. We had the windows open.</b></p> <p>21 Q. You had the windows open?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: I'm going to take you next to the video of your</p> <p>24 front door opening, timed at 02.32, so 12 minutes or so</p> <p>25 after your first 999 call.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 "OPERATOR: It's all right, because what we're doing</p> <p>2 is we're telling our command units that are on the scene</p> <p>3 and they're going round the flats. So, I just need to</p> <p>4 confirm you're flat 183, 21st floor --"</p> <p>5 Then you go on to say who's in the flat.</p> <p>6 At page 4, you say at the top of the page:</p> <p>7 "CALLER: Yes, she's seven months pregnant.</p> <p>8 "OPERATOR: Seven months? Okay. I'm going to tell</p> <p>9 them that, and they'll come and take you out."</p> <p>10 Then she goes on halfway down the page to say:</p> <p>11 "OPERATOR: Okay, then. That's fine. Well, I'm</p> <p>12 going to -- as soon as I put the phone down to you I'm</p> <p>13 going to go and tell our command unit that's on the</p> <p>14 scene, and they're --</p> <p>15 "CALLER: Okay.</p> <p>16 "OPERATOR: -- going round people at the moment,</p> <p>17 okay?"</p> <p>18 And the call basically finishes.</p> <p>19 After that conversation, what did you believe would</p> <p>20 happen next?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Somebody was coming to rescue us.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Did you have any thoughts or beliefs about how long that</p> <p>23 might take?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, I thought maybe 10/15 minutes, because you have to</b></p> <p>25 <b>come up the stairs, was my assumption.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 I should just give a trigger warning about this,</p> <p>2 Mr Chairman. This has been seen before.</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Those who have looked at the evidence of Helen</p> <p>5 Gebremeskel will remember that I showed it to her.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: It does contain content which some people might</p> <p>8 find distressing.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: So I am going to pause for 20 seconds or so to</p> <p>11 allow people to take the necessary measures to protect</p> <p>12 themselves from it.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think that's right.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: It shows nothing of the exterior of the</p> <p>15 building on fire, but it is a picture of moving smoke.</p> <p>16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: It may bring back some very</p> <p>17 uncomfortable memories.</p> <p>18 MR MILLETT: It may, it may.</p> <p>19 If we can tee it up before we play it, it's</p> <p>20 IWS00000623.</p> <p>21 (Pause)</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, no one seems to want to leave</p> <p>23 this room, and I think there's been enough time for</p> <p>24 people to leave other places where they can view this,</p> <p>25 so go on.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 64</p>



<p>1 MR MILLETT: Let's proceed. Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>2 If we can just have that video shown. I'm going to</p> <p>3 play it once or twice to see how we go.</p> <p>4 (Video Played)</p> <p>5 First of all, to confirm, you say that the time of</p> <p>6 that video is 02.32.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Where do you get that time mark from?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It's the time stamp on the video itself.</b></p> <p>10 Q. And you took it yourself, did you?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. So your phone, was it in your left hand and you opened</p> <p>13 the door with your right?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I think so, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. I might be getting my left and right mixed up, but --</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes, because I tested the heat on the door with my right</b></p> <p>17 <b>hand, yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. I just want to ask you to look at one or two things.</p> <p>19 First of all, can I ask it be played and then paused</p> <p>20 after 4 seconds, if we can do that</p> <p>21 (Video Played)</p> <p>22 Now, we saw in that clip -- we don't need to see it</p> <p>23 again -- smoke coming up the left-hand side of the door.</p> <p>24 Was it coming from anywhere else around the door?</p> <p>25 <b>A. At the bottom.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 Stopping there.</p> <p>2 So the object hanging on the door hook, what is</p> <p>3 that?</p> <p>4 <b>A. That's another towel.</b></p> <p>5 Q. That's another towel?</p> <p>6 <b>A. One of the bigger towels I had, yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Okay.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Because it was coming in through the side as well,</b></p> <p>9 <b>I tried to put a towel there to try and stop it as much</b></p> <p>10 <b>as possible.</b></p> <p>11 Q. If we can just play on and then stop it at 18 seconds.</p> <p>12 (Video Played)</p> <p>13 There.</p> <p>14 At this point, the door is partially open, as we can</p> <p>15 see, and we can see what's outside -- well, we can't see</p> <p>16 what's outside.</p> <p>17 Was that blackness that we can see blacker than on</p> <p>18 previous occasions that you'd opened the door?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. How much blacker, if it's possible to describe it?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Well, you couldn't see your hand in front of your face</b></p> <p>22 <b>there.</b></p> <p>23 Q. No.</p> <p>24 <b>A. It was that dark. Because just prior to that video</b></p> <p>25 <b>I tried to go my neighbour's.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 Q. Let's play it from the start and see if you can just</p> <p>2 identify, as it's being played, where the smoke was</p> <p>3 coming through the bottom of the door.</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Before it's played, can I ask, is it</p> <p>5 possible to freeze it so we can get a still shot rather</p> <p>6 than just cutting the transmission generally?</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Yes, it is, because one can stop.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Can I just say that there is towels there -- there is</b></p> <p>9 <b>a towel at the bottom and I managed to put a towel on</b></p> <p>10 <b>a hook on the -- well, you can see on the video.</b></p> <p>11 MR MILLETT: Yes, I was going to ask you about the towels.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>13 MR MILLETT: Okay. Let's see if we can capture the smoke</p> <p>14 coming through the bottom of the door.</p> <p>15 (Video Played)</p> <p>16 Stop now.</p> <p>17 Can you point out where the smoke is coming in, or</p> <p>18 can you identify the smoke itself?</p> <p>19 <b>A. It would be down here, and you can see the -- that's</b></p> <p>20 <b>a white towel, by the way, so you can see it's already</b></p> <p>21 <b>darkened.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Those grey blodges, is that smoke?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, I believe so.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Just playing it on a second or two more.</p> <p>25 (Video Played)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 Q. Right. So you tried to go into it?</p> <p>2 <b>A. To the door.</b></p> <p>3 Q. How far did you get? No.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Not past that door.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Okay. Let's just take a second.</p> <p>6 I'm going to ask for this to be played on a little</p> <p>7 bit more to the end. Is that okay?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Okay, if we can just play it to the end.</p> <p>10 (Video Played)</p> <p>11 The smoke that you saw at that point, when you</p> <p>12 opened the door, could you smell it or did it have</p> <p>13 a physical effect on you?</p> <p>14 <b>A. It made me gag or cough on that one. But it was just</b></p> <p>15 <b>difficult to breathe. And I remember my eyes stinging</b></p> <p>16 <b>as well with that.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Your eyes stinging, okay.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Does the video that we've seen, to the best of your</p> <p>20 recollection, accurately reflect the thickness and</p> <p>21 colour of the smoke outside your flat at that time?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes. Yes, it does.</b></p> <p>23 Q. It does it justice, does it?</p> <p>24 <b>A. It does, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 <b>A. There's a white wall right in front of that door which</b>  2 <b>you clearly can't see, which is probably about a metre</b>  3 <b>away. So it just tells you the thickness of that, the</b>  4 <b>smoke there.</b>  5 Q. We know from the video, we can hear it -- I'm not going  6 to play it back to you -- that we can hear a shower  7 running in the background.  8 <b>A. Yes.</b>  9 Q. I think you say in your statement at paragraph 88 --  10 again, there's no need to look at it -- that you turned  11 it on because the air was dry because of the smoke --  12 <b>A. Yes.</b>  13 Q. -- and you wanted to get wet particles into the air to  14 try to make it easier to breathe.  15 Did it help?  16 <b>A. I'm not sure if it did, but my thinking was because it</b>  17 <b>was so dry, if I can try and get at least some wet</b>  18 <b>particles in the air, it makes it easier.</b>  19 <b>I think it probably did. But I can't say</b>  20 <b>100 per cent.</b>  21 <b>It stopped soon after that.</b>  22 Q. I was going to ask you, how long after it do you think  23 it stopped?  24 <b>A. Maybe 5/10 minutes after that, it stopped. But luckily</b>  25 <b>I had filled the bathtub already.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 Do you remember how many conversations you heard him  2 have?  3 <b>A. I think two that I heard him have. Yes, at least two.</b>  4 Q. If you go to paragraph 102 of your statement, which is  5 on page 22, at the very bottom of the page you say,  6 three lines up:  7 "I could hear the advice he was given by a member of  8 staff from the emergency services, which was to 'hang  9 tight' and that someone will come up for us."  10 What did you understand by "hang tight"?  11 <b>A. Wait.</b>  12 Q. How late into the night do you remember that advice?  13 What sort of time was the "hang tight" advice that you  14 heard via Miguel?  15 <b>A. That would have been before my first 999 call.</b>  16 Q. Okay.  17 <b>A. Because that's when I spoke to Miguel. And Miguel then,</b>  18 <b>he gave the information to -- I don't know if it was</b>  19 <b>a firefighter or a policeman, but I think it might have</b>  20 <b>been a firefighter, where he said, you know, "My</b>  21 <b>friend's on the 21st floor and, you know, he's got two</b>  22 <b>daughters and a pregnant wife."</b>  23 Q. How long, do you think, before your first 999 call did  24 you hear that advice via Miguel's phone?  25 <b>A. I don't think it was too long. Maybe 15/20 minutes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 Q. Did it stop suddenly or just gradually come to a halt?  2 <b>A. I can't remember. I just remember walking back and it</b>  3 <b>had stopped.</b>  4 Q. Right.  5 <b>A. So where I opened the front door, the bathroom is the</b>  6 <b>wall on the left.</b>  7 Q. Okay. This may not help very much, but do you remember  8 whether it was hot water or cold water or a mixture of  9 both?  10 <b>A. I think it was cold water.</b>  11 Q. Right.  12 <b>A. But I can't be -- I might have turned both of them on.</b>  13 Q. Do you recall it ever starting up again, the water?  14 <b>A. No. I left the tap open and it never did.</b>  15 Q. At the time you were in the flat, around about this  16 time, you say in your statement that you received calls  17 from friends outside, so Miguel Alves and Ivan Costa  18 Suarez. Did they give you any advice on what to do?  19 <b>A. Miguel told me to get out.</b>  20 Q. While you were on the phone to Miguel, you say in  21 paragraph 102 of your statement that you heard him  22 receiving advice from emergency services --  23 <b>A. Yes.</b>  24 Q. -- and from a firefighter, or a policeman, I think you  25 say.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 <b>before I made a 999 call.</b>  2 Q. You make a second 999 call at 02.46.58. We can have  3 this transcript up, please, it's LFB00000672.  4 You can see the time from the numbers across the  5 top, the second from the right of which say, "024658".  6 I think this is the transcript that you hadn't seen  7 when you did your first statement, but, having seen it,  8 you made your second statement; is that right?  9 <b>A. Yes.</b>  10 Q. Okay.  11 <b>A. I believe so.</b>  12 Q. In your second statement at paragraph 7, if I can just  13 show you that, you say that:  14 "7. My family and I along with Helen and her  15 daughter [redacted] attempted to escape from our flat on  16 two occasions in between my first and second calls to  17 the emergency services.  18 "8. It appears from the time of my second 999 call  19 at 2:46 am that I made this call soon after our second  20 failed attempt to escape."  21 The attempts to escape -- you describe the first  22 one. Does that mean that there was a second group  23 attempt between these two calls?  24 <b>A. There was, yes.</b>  25 Q. Was that after or before the video you took, do you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 remember?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I think it would've been after the video.</b></p> <p>3 Q. So we have attempt 1, first 999 call, video, attempt 2,</p> <p>4 second 999 call?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I think so, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay, just so I have it roughly at least in my head.</p> <p>7 Then you make the call. What was it that prompted</p> <p>8 this call?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Well, we couldn't get out.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 <b>A. At that time, if I remember correctly, what I could see,</b></p> <p>12 <b>bright light by the window. So I knew that the fire was</b></p> <p>13 <b>high up.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Going to the transcript, if you can, please, look at</p> <p>15 page 1. You say, the second line:</p> <p>16 "CALLER: I am still waiting at flat 183, and the</p> <p>17 fire's already reached us.</p> <p>18 "OPERATOR: Okay, so where is the fire, is it in your</p> <p>19 flat?</p> <p>20 "CALLER: No, it's the flat next door, and it's</p> <p>21 already coming through the windows."</p> <p>22 That's what you say.</p> <p>23 Which window in your flat could you see what you're</p> <p>24 describing there out of?</p> <p>25 <b>A. My bedroom window.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 The operator says halfway down page 1:</p> <p>2 "OPERATOR: Okay, right, okay, in that case, erm, if</p> <p>3 you feel it's not safe to be in the flat any more, okay,</p> <p>4 you, you may have to leave the flat.</p> <p>5 "CALLER: There's no way we can leave the flat,</p> <p>6 there's too much smoke outside."</p> <p>7 Then she gives you the advice about wet blankets and</p> <p>8 going out.</p> <p>9 Then at the bottom, you say:</p> <p>10 "CALLER: Right, is them gonna come and meet us on</p> <p>11 the stairs or ...?</p> <p>12 "OPERATOR: We, we've got firefighters who are making</p> <p>13 their way up, but it's very slow progress at the moment,</p> <p>14 okay, if you feel, if you feel that, that fire -</p> <p>15 "CALLER: Well, the fire's next door we can't.</p> <p>16 "OPERATOR: The fire is next door.</p> <p>17 "CALLER: Yeah.</p> <p>18 "OPERATOR: Then you need to, you need to go, you</p> <p>19 need to go, go to the nearest stairwell, it'll be dark</p> <p>20 out there, all right, but cover your faces, wet towels,</p> <p>21 all right, and that'll stop you inhaling the smoke,</p> <p>22 okay?"</p> <p>23 Then the call ends.</p> <p>24 I've read that all to you because it's short, but</p> <p>25 from her responses, did you understand that the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 Q. Your bedroom window?</p> <p>2 <b>A. My bedroom window.</b></p> <p>3 Q. So the one opposite the hall door?</p> <p>4 <b>A. The entrance door.</b></p> <p>5 Q. The entrance door into the lobby, right.</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. What could you see through that window at that time?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Just a bright light. Obviously it's in the middle of</b></p> <p>9 <b>the night, but there was this yellow and reddish</b></p> <p>10 <b>flames -- well, not flames, but a bright light.</b></p> <p>11 Q. A glow?</p> <p>12 <b>A. A glow, yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Do you remember whether the glow was -- when you look at</p> <p>14 the window, to your --</p> <p>15 <b>A. Left.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Which side? You just indicated to your left.</p> <p>17 <b>A. My left.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Your left.</p> <p>19 <b>A. It was coming from flat 182.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So the east.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. At what level was the glow? Did you get a sense of</p> <p>23 whether it was below you, at your level, or above you?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I thought it was at my level.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 firefighters were still able to reach your floor?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes. It was a slow process, but she said they were</b></p> <p>3 <b>making their way up. So, you know, as far as I'm</b></p> <p>4 <b>concerned, I've got three children with me and a heavily</b></p> <p>5 <b>pregnant wife, so, you know, I can't carry them all.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You've seen the advice that you're given, going to the</p> <p>7 nearest stairwell with towels.</p> <p>8 Did you have a clear impression in your mind at that</p> <p>9 point what her advice was?</p> <p>10 <b>A. In terms of going to the stairwell?</b></p> <p>11 Q. Well, let me put it to you this way: when the call ends,</p> <p>12 what impression did you have in your mind about what you</p> <p>13 should do?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I thought that they was still coming up to get us, and</b></p> <p>15 <b>wait and -- I thought at the time that she was telling</b></p> <p>16 <b>me: wait as long as you can and then get out if you</b></p> <p>17 <b>can't wait any longer.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay.</p> <p>19 <b>A. But I still had the assumption that they were coming.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Right. So when she says to you:</p> <p>21 "... you need to you need to go, go to the nearest</p> <p>22 stairwell ..."</p> <p>23 How important did you think that advice was?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I'm not sure, to be honest. I probably didn't even pay</b></p> <p>25 <b>attention to that, in all fairness. Because I know</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 <b>where the stairwell is. It's right there in front of</b>  2 <b>me. There's only one stairwell.</b>  3 Q. Let me ask it in a different way.  4 Did you get the impression from the advice you were  5 being given that you had to leave at all costs or did  6 you still feel there was a choice in the matter?  7 <b>A. No, I still felt there was a choice in the matter, yes.</b>  8 Q. After this call, did you try to leave?  9 <b>A. No, I don't think so.</b>  10 Q. We then have a third call at 02.55.38, and that's  11 LFB00000392.  12 We can tell the time of that from, again, the second  13 group of numbers from the right, "025538". This is  14 about 9 minutes or so after the second call, which we've  15 just looked at.  16 First of all, what prompted that call, do you  17 remember?  18 <b>A. I don't know. You'll need to show me the transcript</b>  19 <b>first.</b>  20 Q. Okay. Page 2:  21 "OPERATOR: Fire Brigade.  22 "CALLER: Hello. I'm calling from 183, we can't get  23 out.  24 "OPERATOR: Hello, Fire Brigade.  25 "CALLER: Hello? I'm calling from 183 Grenfell</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 <b>When we start, we need to go. You can't keep stopping."</b>  2 <b>That was the second attempt, and we stopped before</b>  3 <b>stepping out of the door. But -- yes.</b>  4 Q. Going to the transcript, you explain you've tried  5 a number of times on that page.  6 If you go to page 3 of the transcript, you tell her,  7 just below the top of the page:  8 "OPERATOR: Have you got a side to your flat where  9 it's got any fresh air?  10 "CALLER: Yeah."  11 In the middle of the page, you're asked again what  12 your flat is:  13 "CALLER: 21st floor, flat 183.  14 "OPERATOR: 183. Okay. I'll let the firemen know,  15 okay, to come up to you.  16 "CALLER: Yeah. Three, three kids and three adults  17 and one heavily pregnant wife.  18 "OPERATOR: Three - so six of you and a pregnant  19 lady. Okay. I'll let them know."  20 After the call was finished, what impression did you  21 form of the advice you'd been given? What did you think  22 it was?  23 <b>A. Well, that they're coming to get us.</b>  24 Q. Did you think that you still had to get out of the flat  25 at that point?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 Tower. We can't get out."  2 That's how the call starts.  3 Do you remember what prompted the call?  4 <b>A. I think we must have tried then. I might have the</b>  5 <b>timings of when we tried to get out wrong, or between</b>  6 <b>the calls, but, yes, I think that ... yeah, that</b>  7 <b>would've been the second attempt, I believe.</b>  8 <b>I think my tone on that call would've changed, if</b>  9 <b>I remember correctly, listening to the call, and that's</b>  10 <b>because I was upset with Andreia at the time. Because</b>  11 <b>that was, if memory serves me correctly, the time when</b>  12 <b>Andreia stopped by the door. We managed to get out, or</b>  13 <b>Helen managed to get out, and Andreia was behind, but</b>  14 <b>she stopped and started crying, and then we retreated</b>  15 <b>back into the flat.</b>  16 Q. Is it fair, then, to take from that that the result of  17 the second call was that although you thought you had  18 a choice, as you told us, your choice was to try to make  19 an exit?  20 <b>A. Yes. I think -- yes, that's right.</b>  21 Q. Then that fails for the reasons you've described, you  22 come back into the flat, and then make this call?  23 <b>A. Yes, correct.</b>  24 Q. Okay.  25 <b>A. I had a go at Andreia saying, "You can't stop halfway.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Well, I wanted to get out of the flat, that's why we</b>  2 <b>attempted it in the first place, but at that point we</b>  3 <b>were still safe, or as safe as can be in the flat.</b>  4 Q. Right.  5 <b>A. So I felt we had a bit of time to still wait, and</b>  6 <b>especially if they're coming up.</b>  7 MR MILLETT: Then you make a fourth call at 03.09.52.  8 Mr Chairman, we've been going for almost an hour,  9 but I think if I can cover this call, which will be  10 about 5 minutes or so, maybe it will be an appropriate  11 moment.  12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Are you okay to do another  13 5 minutes?  14 THE WITNESS: Yes, that's fine, thank you.  15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.  16 MR MILLETT: You make this call. It's LFB00000412.  17 We can see the time again, second group of numbers  18 from the right, "030952".  19 "CALLER: Floor 21.  20 "OPERATOR: Fire brigade. Fire brigade.  21 "CALLER: Floor 21.  22 "OPERATOR: You're on floor 21? Are you still in  23 your flat?  24 "CALLER: Yes, we can't get out."  25 Do you remember what prompted that call? This is at</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 80</p>

<p>1 03.09. Your third one is at 02.55, and so this is 2 14 minutes or so later. 3 <b>A. I don't know.</b> 4 Q. Did you try to make another attempt to escape between 5 the third call and this fourth call, do you remember, or 6 not? 7 <b>A. Not in my mind, but maybe.</b> 8 Q. You're asked towards the bottom of the page: 9 "OPERATOR: -- any fire in your flat? 10 "CALLER: Not at the moment, but there is next-door. 11 "OPERATOR: Okay. Right, there is next-door?" 12 Just pausing there, what could you see which led you 13 to tell her that there was fire in the flat next door? 14 <b>A. I was referring to the glow that was there.</b> 15 Q. Had there been any change in that glow between the call 16 when you -- 17 <b>A. Well, it got stronger, but that's all I can see.</b> 18 Q. Okay. Then she says at the foot of page 2: 19 "OPERATOR: Okay. Right, there is next-door? Okay. 20 Well, listen, the advice we're giving now -- you need 21 to -- 22 "CALLER: Yeah? 23 "OPERATOR: -- leave, and you need to make your 24 way -- 25 "CALLER: I can't.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 "OPERATOR: Yeah? I mean, the situation at the 2 moment is there -- there's going to be some time before 3 they get to you and the best advice we can give you is 4 to make another attempt to leave if you can and get into 5 the stairwell and down." 6 Then she repeats that advice at the bottom of the 7 page, page 6. 8 I should pick this up two-thirds of the way down. 9 She says: 10 "OPERATOR: Well, we are -- well, the -- people are 11 going up and down. We are sending people down the 12 stairs from floors above you. So, people are making 13 their way out of the building." 14 Then she goes on to say in the next part: 15 "OPERATOR: ... it is your decision. Obviously, I 16 can't make you do anything. But our advice to you is to 17 try and do that, okay?" 18 Now, just at that point in the conversation, did it 19 seem to you that actually you not only should get out 20 but might be able to because the stairway was being used 21 by other people to escape? 22 <b>A. I don't remember that conversation, to be honest.</b> 23 Q. Right. 24 <b>A. So I can't recall what I thought at that moment.</b> 25 Q. Okay, all right.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 "OPERATOR: -- down the stairwell. 2 "CALLER: We can't leave. There's too much smoke 3 (Overspeaking)" 4 You go on tell her that the smoke is coming in and 5 it's overpowering. 6 At the bottom of page 3, she asks: 7 "OPERATOR: And you literally can't walk out into it?" 8 "CALLER: No. 9 "OPERATOR: Okay." 10 Then she says at the bottom of page 4, after 11 establishing your floor, 21st floor: 12 "OPERATOR: I can let the crews know that you're not 13 leaving the flat -- 14 "CALLER: Yeah. 15 "OPERATOR: -- but our advice is to try and leave and 16 make your way -- 17 "CALLER: We have tried. 18 "OPERATOR: -- down the stairs. Okay, and what -- 19 "CALLER: We have tried. 20 "OPERATOR: -- is it, you just cannot breathe as soon 21 as you open the door? 22 CALLER: As soon as you open the door, black smoke 23 just comes in, and you can't breathe -- 24 "OPERATOR: You just can't breathe?" 25 She says at the top of the next page, page 6:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 I'll just try a couple more passages with you. 2 She says at page 7 of the transcript at the top that 3 she'd let the crews know that you're still in the flat. 4 Towards the bottom, three-quarters of the way down, 5 she says: 6 "OPERATOR: ... they are doing everything they can to 7 get to you, but it is going to be some time ..." 8 Then she says it's your decision. 9 At the bottom of page 8, she says: 10 "OPERATOR: It's just the situation. We're trying 11 with everything we've got. We've got hundreds of 12 firefighters there trying to get to you, but it's just 13 the situation, and --" 14 And over the top of page 9: 15 "OPERATOR: -- that is the advice that we're giving 16 at the moment. I'm going to tell the crews that you're 17 still there in the flat -- 18 "CALLER: Yeah. 19 "OPERATOR: -- and we'll make it a priority to get to 20 you, but -- 21 "CALLER: Okay. 22 "OPERATOR: -- if you can, if you can just give it 23 one more try to get out, that is the best advice we're 24 giving --" 25 Do you remember anything of this call?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 <b>A. I remember them telling us we were going to be</b>  2 <b>a priority.</b>  3 Q. Okay. What did that mean to you?  4 <b>A. It means somebody is coming up to get you.</b>  5 Q. Did that influence your decision as to whether you  6 should now do anything you could to escape or to stay?  7 <b>A. No, it made me stay longer because I thought they were</b>  8 <b>coming up, so --</b>  9 Q. Right.  10 <b>A. -- I felt that we had still a little bit more time to</b>  11 <b>wait for them.</b>  12 Q. We can clearly see her in this call telling you that  13 their best advice is for you to escape. What part did  14 that play in your decision-making?  15 <b>A. Well, we tried before. You know, I'd prefer being</b>  16 <b>outside the building than being inside the building,</b>  17 <b>quite clearly. But, you know, if we try and we can't</b>  18 <b>make it to the stairwell door, it's quite difficult to</b>  19 <b>get out, at that time.</b>  20 Q. If you had been told that the crews weren't able to  21 access the 21st floor at that stage, what would you have  22 done?  23 <b>A. I'd have been much more forceful with everybody. At</b>  24 <b>that time, I still thought we had hope of being rescued.</b>  25 <b>And having a heavily pregnant wife and three kids,</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.  2 Do you want to ask another question to finish?  3 MR MILLETT: Yes, there were two more questions before we  4 actually get to that last call, but they are based on  5 the timing of that call.  6 I'm not going to ask for the transcript to go up at  7 the moment, but the call is 03.25.45, which is the last  8 call you make and it's the long call we're going to be  9 examining after the break.  10 My questions are: before you made that call, what  11 were the conditions like in the flat?  12 <b>A. It was smoky. It was getting worse. I had the girls at</b>  13 <b>that time sitting on the floor in the sitting room,</b>  14 <b>because the smoke had already reached a certain level</b>  15 <b>that you couldn't be standing comfortably.</b>  16 Q. Where was the smoke coming from?  17 <b>A. As far as I'm aware, still the main door.</b>  18 Q. Anywhere else?  19 <b>A. Probably through the windows, but I didn't spend enough</b>  20 <b>time at the windows to confirm.</b>  21 Q. You say you couldn't stand, so that means the smoke  22 would've come down to roughly an adult's head height; is  23 that right?  24 <b>A. My head height, yes.</b>  25 MR MILLETT: On that note, Mr Chairman --</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 <b>I didn't know where to direct them. You know, it was</b>  2 <b>the unknown at that moment. I knew my flat was still</b>  3 <b>safe, as we can breathe and there was no fire in it.</b>  4 <b>I didn't know what the stairwell was like or what we</b>  5 <b>were getting into. So it's very difficult to then try</b>  6 <b>and take a family of seven through the unknown, not</b>  7 <b>knowing what you're going to go through.</b>  8 Q. Yes. Yes.  9 Now, after this call -- and you may not have a clear  10 recollection of it -- do you remember where you were all  11 waiting in the flat?  12 <b>A. Yes. Roughly, I guess.</b>  13 Q. Where?  14 <b>A. So the majority of my time was in the corridor. I was</b>  15 <b>keeping an eye on the smoke coming through the door, and</b>  16 <b>because I was still waiting for the firefighters to come</b>  17 <b>banging on the door, I wanted to make sure that I opened</b>  18 <b>that door straight away.</b>  19 <b>Everybody else was in the kitchen, sort of sitting</b>  20 <b>room area, because that was the area where it had the</b>  21 <b>clearest air.</b>  22 Q. Now, Mr Gomes --  23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I wonder whether we should have  24 a break.  25 MR MILLETT: I was just about to suggest that.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll have a break, Mr Gomes.  2 <b>A. Yes, but can I just say that obviously being told --</b>  3 <b>I preferred being told that nobody -- I've now obviously</b>  4 <b>recognised that the firefighters couldn't make it above</b>  5 <b>a certain floor, and if they would've told me that</b>  6 <b>nobody's coming, then obviously that would've changed my</b>  7 <b>decision or my approach.</b>  8 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</b>  9 <b>A. Just to be clear.</b>  10 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mm.</b>  11 MR MILLETT: Now --  12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, thank you. We will have  13 a break now, so we'll come back at 12.20.  14 Don't talk to anyone about your evidence during the  15 break, please. If you go with the usher --  16 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, before we do, I'm happy that the  17 witness should leave with the usher, but I need to give  18 a very clear warning about what is coming next.  19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Shall we allow Mr Gomes to go?  20 MR MILLETT: Yes, we'll do that.  21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Off you go, you go with the usher.  22 Mr Millett, you might think it sensible to give this  23 warning when we come back in case anyone who is not in  24 the room at the moment is here and would not have heard  25 it if you give it now.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 MR MILLETT: I'm going to give it both sides of the break.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Oh, all right, yes. Why not?</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: So people can, if they don't want to come back,</p> <p>4 stay out. And those who haven't heard it --</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I do agree, go on then.</p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: What I am going to do next is to put into the</p> <p>7 record the full transcript of Mr Gomes's fifth call to</p> <p>8 999. It lasts 33 minutes. I will be not only showing</p> <p>9 it on the screen, but also playing large parts of the</p> <p>10 audio.</p> <p>11 The reason for playing it is so as to enable us to</p> <p>12 ask particular questions of him which do not immediately</p> <p>13 appear evident on the transcript.</p> <p>14 In parts, it is an extremely distressing thing to</p> <p>15 listen to, so those who don't think they are able to</p> <p>16 listen to it -- and it is distressing in parts -- should</p> <p>17 take the opportunity not to listen to it or to come back</p> <p>18 into the room or observe the live stream.</p> <p>19 Once the questions are finished then those who have</p> <p>20 left the room or got away from the live stream will be</p> <p>21 invited to come back and join us.</p> <p>22 I'll repeat that when we come back.</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you very much.</p> <p>24 Right, 12.20, please.</p> <p>25 (12.15 pm)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 a longer morning before the lunch break, because I think</p> <p>2 it is essential, if we can do it, that we take this in</p> <p>3 one go.</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think we should make every effort</p> <p>5 to do so.</p> <p>6 Does anybody wish to leave at this point?</p> <p>7 Not from this room, Mr Millett. I assume those who</p> <p>8 have heard it elsewhere will take any appropriate</p> <p>9 action.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: I want to make it clear to the witness and for</p> <p>11 everybody watching that the call is a call which is the</p> <p>12 audio record of your journey from your flat on the 21st</p> <p>13 floor, across the lobby, and down the stairs to the</p> <p>14 ground floor.</p> <p>15 The reason I want to play the call is because the</p> <p>16 inquiry wants to get a sense of the physical conditions</p> <p>17 at various points in that part of the building over this</p> <p>18 period.</p> <p>19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Before you do, can I just say,</p> <p>20 Mr Gomes, I think you may find this quite difficult at</p> <p>21 times, and if you do, just make it clear that you want</p> <p>22 a short break and we'll be guided by you.</p> <p>23 THE WITNESS: I will do.</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Take your time over things. All</p> <p>25 right?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 (A short break)</p> <p>2 (12.20 pm)</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Gomes?</p> <p>4 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ready to carry on?</p> <p>6 Mr Millett, you want to say something before we</p> <p>7 start.</p> <p>8 MR MILLETT: Thank you for coming back to us. I'm going to</p> <p>9 repeat, perhaps not verbatim, what I said before we</p> <p>10 broke, which is I'm about to show you your last</p> <p>11 telephone call at 03.25 or so, and play the audio, or</p> <p>12 much of it, to you at the same time as showing you the</p> <p>13 transcript.</p> <p>14 The reason for my doing so is to enable us to ask</p> <p>15 you further questions about it. It's distressing --</p> <p>16 very distressing in parts -- and I should just repeat</p> <p>17 for everybody's benefit that if there are people in the</p> <p>18 room or watching on the live stream who may find this</p> <p>19 distressing, the best advice is for them either to leave</p> <p>20 the room or, if they're watching remotely, turn the live</p> <p>21 stream off or look away.</p> <p>22 The call itself lasts for 33 minutes but, as we're</p> <p>23 going to play much of the call, the questions and the</p> <p>24 process will take a little longer.</p> <p>25 Mr Chairman, it may be necessary for us to take</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: What I am going to ask is for the transcript to</p> <p>4 come up onto the screen, LFB00000427.</p> <p>5 I am going to ask the documents director to turn</p> <p>6 through the pages as we go through the call, stopping</p> <p>7 where we need to.</p> <p>8 If we can then start the audio of the call with</p> <p>9 page 2 of the transcript and the audio of the call,</p> <p>10 please.</p> <p>11 (Audio Played)</p> <p>12 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>13 OPERATOR: Fire brigade. Hello?</p> <p>14 CALLER: Hello, we're phoning from Grenfell Tower</p> <p>15 again.</p> <p>16 OPERATOR: Yeah, okay. What flat are you in?</p> <p>17 CALLER: 183.</p> <p>18 OPERATOR: 183.</p> <p>19 CALLER: We tried to get out again but we can't.</p> <p>20 OPERATOR: What floor are you on? What floor?</p> <p>21 CALLER: Floor 21.</p> <p>22 OPERATOR: Floor 21. Right, how many people in</p> <p>23 there?</p> <p>24 CALLER: Six people; three kids, three adults.</p> <p>25 OPERATOR: So it's three adults and three children.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 92</p>

<p>1 How old are the children?</p> <p>2 CALLER: 10, 11 and 12.</p> <p>3 OPERATOR: Three children; 10, 11 and 12. And</p> <p>4 there's no —</p> <p>5 CALLER: Yeah, and my wife is — no, we can't get out.</p> <p>6 We tried —</p> <p>7 OPERATOR: Is your wife pregnant as well? CALLER: --</p> <p>8 the second time we tried and we can't. She's pregnant,</p> <p>9 yeah, and she's asthmatic.</p> <p>10 OPERATOR: Pregnant and asthmatic.</p> <p>11 CALLER: Yeah, she can't deal with the smoke.</p> <p>12 OPERATOR: Right, okay. Yeah. There's no way you</p> <p>13 can't get out on floor 21?</p> <p>14 CALLER: There's no way. There's no way, we've tried</p> <p>15 three times already.</p> <p>16 OPERATOR: You've — they've tried three times?</p> <p>17 They've tried three times, yeah, to get out.</p> <p>18 CALLER: There's no way we can get out.</p> <p>19 OPERATOR: Right, okay. What I'm doing is we — I</p> <p>20 know you've phoned a few times, I think I've spoken to</p> <p>21 you before. Our command unit is down there and we're</p> <p>22 going to put as — try and get you as a priority, okay,</p> <p>23 cos you've tried to get out three times.</p> <p>24 CALLER: We've tried to get out three times and we</p> <p>25 can't get out and the smoke is in the house now.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 smoke and because I could see that there was the glow --</p> <p>2 it was the same window that I was referring to about the</p> <p>3 glow coming from my neighbour's flat, and I can see that</p> <p>4 it was just getting a lot brighter and I thought I'm</p> <p>5 going to close it because I've got curtains on that</p> <p>6 window. So I closed it and walked back to the corridor.</p> <p>7 So at that precise moment in time I was standing</p> <p>8 between -- or just in front of my bedroom door, looking</p> <p>9 at the window, and I remember looking at it, and</p> <p>10 thinking: I've just closed that window, how is the fire</p> <p>11 in my bedroom? And it wasn't through the window because</p> <p>12 the window was still locked, shut. The glass hadn't</p> <p>13 cracked, it was still intact. But where it was burning,</p> <p>14 it was around the frame of the window.</p> <p>15 Q. I know you may not remember precisely, but do you recall</p> <p>16 where around the frame the fire was coming in?</p> <p>17 A. It was all around it, but more so towards the bottom,</p> <p>18 just underneath the frame.</p> <p>19 Q. Did you notice any heat change in the flat at that</p> <p>20 point?</p> <p>21 A. No.</p> <p>22 Q. Right.</p> <p>23 A. It was already hot, so I didn't really notice the</p> <p>24 change.</p> <p>25 Q. The last time you looked at that window, before you left</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1 OPERATOR: You just can't get out and plus also you've</p> <p>2 got the children.</p> <p>3 CALLER: Yes.</p> <p>4 OPERATOR: They've tried three times to get out.</p> <p>5 CALLER: Oh shit, the fire's here, the fire's here.</p> <p>6 OPERATOR: Right, is the fire engine there?</p> <p>7 CALLER: The fire's here, the fire is the house.</p> <p>8 OPERATOR: The fire's in the house now. Right ...</p> <p>9 MR MILLETT: Stop there.</p> <p>10 Just pausing there, Mr Gomes, first of all, did you</p> <p>11 hear or get the impression that the control room</p> <p>12 operator was talking to somebody else in the control</p> <p>13 room at the same time as you?</p> <p>14 A. I think she was, yeah.</p> <p>15 Q. You say "Oh shit, the fire's here, the fire's here."</p> <p>16 Then go on, "The fire's here, the fire's in the house."</p> <p>17 What were you seeing at that point?</p> <p>18 A. The fire ... at that moment in time was coming through</p> <p>19 my bedroom window.</p> <p>20 Q. Just take this a little bit slowly now.</p> <p>21 Did you have a good view of the fire coming through</p> <p>22 your bedroom window?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Where was it coming through?</p> <p>25 A. I'd just finished closing that window because of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 the flat, how far into the flat was the fire?</p> <p>2 A. It started burning the curtains, which was around the</p> <p>3 window. The Moses basket.</p> <p>4 Q. So is the first time you saw the fire coming in through</p> <p>5 that window while you were on this call, at this point?</p> <p>6 A. Yes, correct. And then it caught light at the top, you</p> <p>7 know, on the ceiling and then it was just coming towards</p> <p>8 me, at that point.</p> <p>9 Q. At that point, could you see what was burning around the</p> <p>10 window?</p> <p>11 A. It was the curtains, the Moses basket, which is just</p> <p>12 before my bed, and then some items that we had around,</p> <p>13 ornaments and that kind of stuff, but then the ceiling</p> <p>14 was what stood out quite a lot for me because it just</p> <p>15 was spreading through the ceiling rapidly.</p> <p>16 Q. Did you notice anything on the ceiling near the window</p> <p>17 on fire in particular?</p> <p>18 A. That whole bit of the ceiling was on fire.</p> <p>19 Q. Right.</p> <p>20 A. You know, it was spreading quicker on the ceiling than</p> <p>21 it was through my furniture.</p> <p>22 Q. Yes, okay. Thank you.</p> <p>23 We'll continue with the call.</p> <p>24 (Audio Played)</p> <p>25 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>



<p>1 OPERATOR: ... right so if the fire is in the house</p> <p>2 you need to get out of the house, don't stay in the</p> <p>3 house. Hello?</p> <p>4 CALLER: The fire is in the house, we to get —</p> <p>5 OPERATOR: Right, listen, if the fire's in the house</p> <p>6 you've got to get some wet towels around you and some</p> <p>7 wet clothing.</p> <p>8 CALLER: Yeah, just get the wet towels, get the wet</p> <p>9 towels.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: When you are saying "get the wet towels, get</p> <p>11 the wet towels", who are you talking to?</p> <p>12 <b>A. All of them.</b></p> <p>13 Q. All of them, what the family?</p> <p>14 <b>A. The family, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. I'm sorry, we started a bit too quickly, did you want</p> <p>16 to --</p> <p>17 <b>A. I was getting the wet towel and throwing it over them,</b></p> <p>18 <b>so as in, "Get the wet towels, make sure you've got</b></p> <p>19 <b>one", basically.</b></p> <p>20 Q. We'll continue.</p> <p>21 (Audio Played)</p> <p>22 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>23 OPERATOR: Right, if it's (inaudible) inside you need</p> <p>24 to get your family outside.</p> <p>25 CALLER: Yeah, we're doing it now. Get the towels --</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>2 CALLER: Yeah.</p> <p>3 OPERATOR: Right, you've just got to go. Stay with</p> <p>4 me on the phone, okay.</p> <p>5 CALLER: Right, hold on hands. Hold hands and go.</p> <p>6 OPERATOR: Right.</p> <p>7 CALLER: Right, let's go, girls.</p> <p>8 OPERATOR: Right, Debbie, Deb.</p> <p>9 CALLER: Yeah. We have to go. We have to go. Go.</p> <p>10 Go, go, go.</p> <p>11 OPERATOR: You've got to go.</p> <p>12 CALLER: Hold hands, go straight. Hold hands go</p> <p>13 straight to the stairs. Get to the stairs now! Go!</p> <p>14 OPERATOR: Deb ...</p> <p>15 MR MILLETT: Right, just pausing there, when you say "Get to</p> <p>16 the stairs now! Go", at that point where were you, can</p> <p>17 you remember?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, I think, taking a step back, I don't think we were</b></p> <p>19 <b>out earlier. I think that we probably opened the door,</b></p> <p>20 <b>because Helen was at the front, and I think it was the</b></p> <p>21 <b>intake of the smoke coming in, because it doesn't make</b></p> <p>22 <b>sense in my head, what I've just listened to. I think</b></p> <p>23 <b>when I said "Go, go, go", it means that's the point</b></p> <p>24 <b>we're going through the door.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Going through the door at that point?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 OPERATOR: Okay, just keep the phone with you and I'm</p> <p>2 going to stay on the line, okay.</p> <p>3 CALLER: Okay, okay. OPERATOR: Okay, all hold hands,</p> <p>4 okay, and get as much wet clothes on you as possible.</p> <p>5 CALLER: All hold hands girls. Hold hands girls,</p> <p>6 everybody hold hands. Just (inaudible) your towels.</p> <p>7 OPERATOR: Okay, put some wet clothes or wet — and</p> <p>8 put it against your mouth. Put them over your mouth.</p> <p>9 CALLER: Yeah, yeah, we've got it. Everybody got it?</p> <p>10 OPERATOR: Right, are you all together?</p> <p>11 CALLER: Yeah, we have to go, we have to go, the fire</p> <p>12 —</p> <p>13 OPERATOR: You're all together, you've got to go.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Just pausing there, we just heard a moment or</p> <p>15 two ago some coughing. I think it was you coughing.</p> <p>16 Was that because of the smoke inside the flat or had you</p> <p>17 opened the door at that stage?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I think we'd opened the door at that stage already.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Okay.</p> <p>20 <b>A. And you heard me gag there as well.</b></p> <p>21 Q. I did. And that --</p> <p>22 <b>A. I was trying to speak and then just gagged.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Right. Yes, okay.</p> <p>24 We'll continue.</p> <p>25 (Audio Played)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 <b>A. My front door.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Okay, let's continue.</p> <p>3 (Audio Played)</p> <p>4 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>5 OPERATOR: ... they're on the corridor now, they're</p> <p>6 trying to get to the stairs, they're all holding hands.</p> <p>7 Yeah, I'm still on the phone to him, yeah. I've told</p> <p>8 them. Yeah, they know. Right, hello? Yeah, the</p> <p>9 firemen know. I know — don't talk to me, just listen to</p> <p>10 me, the firemen know that you're on that floor know,</p> <p>11 okay?</p> <p>12 CALLER: Keep going. Keep going.</p> <p>13 MR MILLETT: You can hear yourself saying "Keep going. Keep</p> <p>14 going" and we ended with a cough and some other sounds.</p> <p>15 Where were you at this point, do you think?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I think we've probably just gone through the stairwell</b></p> <p>17 <b>door.</b></p> <p>18 Q. The stairwell door, you think?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes, I think.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So how long do you think it took you to cross the lobby?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Oh, it doesn't take long at all, five steps.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Right.</p> <p>23 <b>A. It's not a huge distance.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Who was leading at this stage?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Helen.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 100</p>

<p>1 Q. Did you cross the lobby at normal walking speed or did 2 you have to feel your way and walk slowly?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Not normal walking speed, but hurried speed, but</b> 4 <b>I didn't have to feel my way, no, because I knew where</b> 5 <b>it was. Because where they built the new riser</b> 6 <b>cupboards, they took away hallway space, there was</b> 7 <b>a wall. So I knew if you go diagonally, you're going to</b> 8 <b>hit that wall first. If you don't hit the door, you're</b> 9 <b>going to hit that wall, and then you're going to hit the</b> 10 <b>door, so I was confident that they would just hit it and</b> 11 <b>go straight through.</b></p> <p>12 <b>So we hurried, but we weren't running, or at least</b> 13 <b>I don't think we were running because I told them not to</b> 14 <b>run, because the stairwell – you wouldn't be able to</b> 15 <b>see anything and I didn't want anybody to break an ankle</b> 16 <b>or fall or anything like that.</b></p> <p>17 <b>So I told them to go as quickly as possible – this</b> 18 <b>is obviously before, when we had the initial</b> 19 <b>discussions – to go at speed, but not running.</b></p> <p>20 Q. In terms of the procession, the order, Helen at the 21 front.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. And then Andreia behind her?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Then it would've been Andreia.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Then the girls?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 OPERATOR: Keep going. I've got them on the phone.</p> <p>2 CALLER: Keep going.</p> <p>3 OPERATOR: Don't — listen, don't talk to me. Just 4 hold hands, okay. Don't talk to me. I'm just going to 5 stay on the phone.</p> <p>6 CALLER: Keep going down the stairs.</p> <p>7 OPERATOR: Okay.</p> <p>8 MR MILLETT: Just pause. Are you on the stairs at this 9 point?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes, I believe so.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Audio Played)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>12 OPERATOR: ... Just all stay together and keep the 13 children, make sure you keep hold of the children as 14 well. Don't talk to me, just talk to them.</p> <p>15 CALLER: Keep going, girls. Keep going.</p> <p>16 OPERATOR: Just listen to what I'm saying. Don't 17 talk to me, just talk to the children (overspeaking) —</p> <p>18 CALLER: Keep going, girls.</p> <p>19 OPERATOR: Okay, and the firemen are you on their way 20 up to you. Okay, keep —</p> <p>21 CALLER: Keep going, they're on their way up.</p> <p>22 MR MILLETT: At that point, you're in the stairs, I think, 23 because we've gone into the stairs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Then my youngest, and then Helen's daughter and my</b> 2 <b>daughter behind them, and me last.</b></p> <p>3 Q. You were all holding hands across the lobby, so you knew 4 where each other was?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Initially, but that soon stopped.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay.</p> <p>7 When you got to the stairwell door, were you still 8 holding a hand?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No, no, because I -- I don't know why, but ... for some</b> 10 <b>reason I went for my keys, which was in a bowl there,</b> 11 <b>but my thinking was if we had to try and come back,</b> 12 <b>which obviously I know that was never going to happen,</b> 13 <b>but I sort of stopped myself and was reaching for the</b> 14 <b>keys. I didn't grab it, I just tipped the bowl, so</b> 15 <b>I wasted a few seconds there, and I didn't grab it and</b> 16 <b>I just went. So at that moment I wasn't holding anyone.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Okay.</p> <p>18 At the end of that section we've just played, we 19 heard a coughing. I'm not going to play it again, not 20 only for technical reasons, and it sounded like 21 a retching; was that you?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I'm sure it would have been me, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Let's continue.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Audio Played)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Could you see the others, the rest of the family?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No, you couldn't see anything.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Did you have a sense of how far ahead of you they were?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I had no idea. I assumed they were just right in front,</b> 6 <b>but I couldn't tell you.</b></p> <p>7 Q. At this point, you're in the stairwell, did you get 8 a sense of the smoke density and conditions in the 9 stairs as compared with the lobby that you just come 10 through?</p> <p>11 <b>A. It was probably worse but not by much.</b></p> <p>12 Q. In the stairs?</p> <p>13 <b>A. In the stairs, yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Did you get a sense of the temperature?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No. It was hot.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Was it hotter than to the lobby in the stairs?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I think there was a slight change but not a huge change.</b></p> <p>18 Q. How hot?</p> <p>19 Well, compare it -- we have been using comparators 20 like an English summer's day or a sauna. The sauna is 21 the most recent comparison, try that.</p> <p>22 Was it hotter or the same as or cooler than a sauna?</p> <p>23 <b>A. It was like a sauna. It was closer to a sauna than</b> 24 <b>anything else.</b></p> <p>25 Q. We'll continue.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 (Audio Played)</p> <p>2 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>3 OPERATOR: (inaudible) way up, all right. Don't talk</p> <p>4 to me, just keep hold of the girls, okay, and your wife.</p> <p>5 CALLER: Keep going.</p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: Did the fact that the operator was telling you</p> <p>7 that the firemen are on their way up to you encourage</p> <p>8 you in any way?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yeah, to keep going.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right. We'll continue.</p> <p>11 (Audio Played)</p> <p>12 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>13 OPERATOR: They're going along the corridor. He's</p> <p>14 got the three kids with him. His wife's pregnant and</p> <p>15 asthmatic.</p> <p>16 CALLER: Keep going girls.</p> <p>17 OPERATOR: Right, just keep going. Is your wife,</p> <p>18 okay?</p> <p>19 CALLER: Keep going. Keep going, go on.</p> <p>20 OPERATOR: All right, just say keep going, all right,</p> <p>21 keep going. Don't talk to me, I'm staying with you, I'm</p> <p>22 not going anywhere, all right?</p> <p>23 CALLER: Keep going, keep going.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Just at that point, you've been saying "Keep</p> <p>25 going, keep going". How was your breathing at that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 Q. Mm.</p> <p>2 <b>A. Almost like it was burning the back of my throat.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Right. We'll continue.</p> <p>4 (Audio Played)</p> <p>5 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>6 OPERATOR: Just keep the girls together. Well done,</p> <p>7 you're doing really, really well. You're doing really,</p> <p>8 really well. (inaudible).</p> <p>9 CALLER: Keep going girls.</p> <p>10 OPERATOR: Just keep going, mate, you're a top bloke.</p> <p>11 Keep going, this is really important, just keep going,</p> <p>12 all right, you're a top man. Don't (inaudible) to me,</p> <p>13 all right, I'm just going to guide you down there. The</p> <p>14 firemen are on their way up to get you, okay?</p> <p>15 CALLER: Girls, keep going. Keep going, girls.</p> <p>16 OPERATOR: Well done, mate, keep going.</p> <p>17 CALLER: Girls —</p> <p>18 OPERATOR: Okay, we've got you down as a priority,</p> <p>19 okay, and they are on their way up to you.</p> <p>20 CALLER: I can't (inaudible).</p> <p>21 OPERATOR: Don't talk to me. Don't talk to me.</p> <p>22 MR MILLETT: Just stop there.</p> <p>23 We've heard a little bit more.</p> <p>24 During this discussion you're shouting and you say</p> <p>25 "I can't [something]". Could you describe the air, your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 stage?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Difficult.</b></p> <p>3 Q. You were able to shout "Keep going, keep going". What</p> <p>4 does that tell us about how you were able to take air</p> <p>5 into your lungs and then expel them with force to shout?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Well, you can hear after I shout, "Keep going", it's</b></p> <p>7 <b>difficult to then breathe again. But you had to try.</b></p> <p>8 <b>I did have the cloth and towel in front as much as</b></p> <p>9 <b>I could, but obviously to speak I had to move it out of</b></p> <p>10 <b>my face.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Did you get into your lungs unmediated smoke, in other</p> <p>12 words smoke that had not come through the towel but</p> <p>13 was --</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. What did that feel like at this stage?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Horrible. It was just as if it was filled with</b></p> <p>17 <b>something but not air.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right.</p> <p>19 <b>A. It just felt like my lungs were just that tight. It was</b></p> <p>20 <b>just very difficult to breathe.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Did you feel any other physical sensation from the smoke</p> <p>22 at this point?</p> <p>23 <b>A. My eyes were stinging, the back of my throat was dry and</b></p> <p>24 <b>stinging, and it was just hot smoke that you were sort</b></p> <p>25 <b>of inhaling.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 ability to take in air at this point?</p> <p>2 <b>A. It was very difficult at that point, and I think that's</b></p> <p>3 <b>what I was referring to, as I can't breathe, because</b></p> <p>4 <b>I was trying to shout and breathe at the same time and</b></p> <p>5 <b>it just wasn't quite working.</b></p> <p>6 Q. I don't want to put an idea into your head, but it</p> <p>7 sounds as though your throat is involuntarily closing</p> <p>8 when you're trying to draw air at this stage.</p> <p>9 <b>A. There's a lot of gagging. I don't think is quite clear</b></p> <p>10 <b>on the call, but there was a lot of gagging reflexes</b></p> <p>11 <b>happening as well.</b></p> <p>12 Q. During this period of this call, are you on the move</p> <p>13 constantly?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. How fast do you think you're moving down?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I am trying to concentrate on giving them -- encouraging</b></p> <p>17 <b>them to keep going and keeping myself tight to the rail,</b></p> <p>18 <b>maybe -- a steady pace, but not -- a little bit faster</b></p> <p>19 <b>than walking. But not at jogging speed.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Was your phone in your left hand?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Right.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Phone in your right hand. Were you using your left hand</p> <p>23 for anything?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, to hold the towel and the rail, I was sort of</b></p> <p>25 <b>doing -- yeah, it's a bit weird. Because I had the</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 <b>phone here (Indicates), I was using my elbow on the</b></p> <p>2 <b>rail --</b></p> <p>3 Q. I see.</p> <p>4 <b>A. -- to follow it down, and when I had to move things out</b></p> <p>5 <b>the way, then I'd use my left hand to grab the rail and</b></p> <p>6 <b>swing me round because the rail was in the middle.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Because the rail is on your right as you descend.</p> <p>8 <b>A. It's on my right, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. So phone in the right hand, right elbow being used to</p> <p>10 navigate, touching the stairwell and the towel on the</p> <p>11 left?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes, because I was trying to keep as low as possible,</b></p> <p>13 <b>because there was steps and I wanted to make sure that</b></p> <p>14 <b>we weren't missing the steps as we were going down.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Let's continue on the way down.</p> <p>16 (Audio Played)</p> <p>17 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>18 OPERATOR: ... Right, are you going (overspeaking) —</p> <p>19 CALLER: Keep going, keep going.</p> <p>20 OPERATOR: -- the stairs yet? Just say yes or no?</p> <p>21 CALLER: Keep going, keep going.</p> <p>22 OPERATOR: Have you got to the stairs?</p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: Just pause there.</p> <p>24 All right, that's coughing we can hear. Is there</p> <p>25 anything else we can hear there?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 <b>keep going. I didn't want them to stop.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Yes. We'll continue.</p> <p>3 (Audio Played)</p> <p>4 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>5 OPERATOR: Listen to what I'm saying to you. Just</p> <p>6 take deep breaths, okay, (inaudible) for a minute and</p> <p>7 just in deep breaths because you're coughing, okay,</p> <p>8 you're coughing and you're going to —</p> <p>9 CALLER: Keep going girls. Keep going, keep going.</p> <p>10 OPERATOR: All right. Are they on their way up to</p> <p>11 them?</p> <p>12 CALLER: Keep going girls. Keep going, keep going.</p> <p>13 OPERATOR: Are you on the stairwell yet?</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Just pausing there, we could hear in the</p> <p>15 background some higher pitched voices. Do you know what</p> <p>16 that is?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I don't recall.</b></p> <p>18 Q. It does sound as if you are panting during that and able</p> <p>19 to aspirate reasonably freely. Is that right or not?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Well, I was trying to breathe as much as I could. It</b></p> <p>21 <b>was still very difficult.</b></p> <p>22 Q. It sounds as if you were able to breathe in and breathe</p> <p>23 out quite freely at that point.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Well, all the way through I was able to breathe in and</b></p> <p>25 <b>out, but it was just the intake of the smoke was the</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Just coughing, I think.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Right.</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. All right, let's continue.</p> <p>5 (Audio Played)</p> <p>6 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>7 OPERATOR: ... Just take in deep breaths.</p> <p>8 CALLER: Keep going girls. Keep going girls.</p> <p>9 MR MILLETT: Sorry, I'm going to stop. That last point,</p> <p>10 there was another noise. What was that?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I think that was the gagging, mixed with coughing.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay.</p> <p>13 Now, at this stage -- again, it's difficult to be</p> <p>14 exact -- how many flights do you think you'd gone down?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I've got no idea. Anything I say would be a guess.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>17 Did you get a sense that the smoke was getting</p> <p>18 lighter or thicker or was it staying the same?</p> <p>19 <b>A. It was the same. Yeah, it was the same.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Where did you think the girls were at this stage?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I was hoping they were just in front, not too far away.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Could you hear them?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No. I was getting no responses at that moment.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Right.</p> <p>25 <b>A. I didn't want to hear a response. I wanted them to just</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 <b>case. It wasn't clearer.</b></p> <p>2 Q. I see.</p> <p>3 <b>A. And it wasn't easier to breathe, it was just you had to</b></p> <p>4 <b>try -- I think at that point I actually sat down at the</b></p> <p>5 <b>bottom of the step.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay.</p> <p>7 <b>A. There was a slight pause that I just heard there, and</b></p> <p>8 <b>I remember just sitting down and then thinking: you've</b></p> <p>9 <b>got to keep going, and then I got back up and went.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Okay, let's continue. We'll continue.</p> <p>11 (Audio Played)</p> <p>12 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>13 OPERATOR: ... Just yes or no to me please.</p> <p>14 CALLER: (inaudible) Straight down.</p> <p>15 OPERATOR: Have you got to the stairwell?</p> <p>16 CALLER: Girls, keep going. Keep going, girls.</p> <p>17 OPERATOR: Hello?</p> <p>18 CALLER: Keep going.</p> <p>19 OPERATOR: Can you just say to me yes or no? Have</p> <p>20 you got to the stairwell?</p> <p>21 CALLER: Girls! Keep going girls.</p> <p>22 MR MILLETT: Just pause there.</p> <p>23 We could hear a whistling in the background there.</p> <p>24 Is that something you heard or is that something that</p> <p>25 you --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 <b>A. No, I didn't hear that.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Okay, let's continue.</p> <p>3 (Audio Played)</p> <p>4 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>5 CALLER: ... keep going, girls, keep going. Keep</p> <p>6 going.</p> <p>7 OPERATOR: They're still keep going. He's just more</p> <p>8 — he's trying to keep his girls calm. He can hardly</p> <p>9 breathe, he's coughing and spluttering. Are they near</p> <p>10 him?</p> <p>11 CALLER: Keep going, girls. Keep going.</p> <p>12 OPERATOR: Yeah, you're doing really, really well, Be</p> <p>13 proud of yourself, okay.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: We just heard some noises from you. What were</p> <p>15 those, do you think?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Coughs and gagging and --</b></p> <p>17 Q. Gagging.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, that kind of motion.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Okay. Keep going.</p> <p>20 (Audio Played)</p> <p>21 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>22 OPERATOR: ... I tell you, we're all proud —</p> <p>23 CALLER: Keep going!</p> <p>24 OPERATOR: -- and that, you're doing ever so well.</p> <p>25 Don't talk to me, just keep guiding your children, all</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 <b>A. It didn't get worse, it was just the same all the way</b></p> <p>2 <b>through.</b></p> <p>3 Q. How long do you think you've been in the stairwell at</p> <p>4 this point for?</p> <p>5 <b>A. In terms of time?</b></p> <p>6 Q. Yes.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Maybe 8 minutes or so.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Right.</p> <p>9 <b>A. I think I was probably getting to about halfway at that</b></p> <p>10 <b>point.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Okay.</p> <p>12 <b>A. But I've got nothing to base it on.</b></p> <p>13 Q. I think we'll skip the next part and pick it up at 8.40</p> <p>14 if we can.</p> <p>15 (Audio Played)</p> <p>16 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>17 OPERATOR: Where's the firemen? Are they? They're</p> <p>18 in the stairwell. They're in the stairwell.</p> <p>19 CALLER: Girls! Girls, come on.</p> <p>20 OPERATOR: But I think he's lost — he's — the girls</p> <p>21 are still there.</p> <p>22 CALLER: Come on, girls.</p> <p>23 OPERATOR: Right, the firemen should be — you should</p> <p>24 be able to see them very shortly.</p> <p>25 CALLER: Girls, come on! Follow my voice.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 right, and your wife. Keep guiding and the firemen are</p> <p>2 going up the stairs towards you, they know you're there</p> <p>3 and we are treating you as a priority, okay?</p> <p>4 CALLER: Keep going.</p> <p>5 MR MILLETT: Just pause there.</p> <p>6 Could you hear what the operator was saying to you?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No idea at that moment what she was saying.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Just carry on.</p> <p>9 (Audio Played)</p> <p>10 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>11 OPERATOR: Okay, don't forget to take a few deep</p> <p>12 breaths yourself cos you've got to be strong, okay,</p> <p>13 you've got to be strong.</p> <p>14 CALLER: Girls, come on. Come on.</p> <p>15 OPERATOR: Don't give up now, don't give up.</p> <p>16 CALLER: Come on. Where's the fire brigade? Jesus!</p> <p>17 OPERATOR: They should be there.</p> <p>18 CALLER: Come on, girls.</p> <p>19 OPERATOR: Okay, you're struggling to breathe. We've</p> <p>20 got them ...</p> <p>21 MR MILLETT: Just pause there.</p> <p>22 So we've heard quite a lot at this point, your</p> <p>23 breathing and the gagging and the coughing.</p> <p>24 Had it changed at all or had it got worse in any way</p> <p>25 at this point?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 OPERATOR: Yeah, look, just stop talking to me. Just</p> <p>2 calm yourself ...</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: Right. You heard that last thing "Girls, come</p> <p>4 on! Follow my voice", which is pretty loud.</p> <p>5 Were you able to shout and get enough oxygen into</p> <p>6 your lungs at this point to be able to shout easily?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It was the same, it wasn't easy, no.</b></p> <p>8 Q. So we're about 8 minutes into the call here, 8.5 minutes</p> <p>9 into the call.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Do you remember at that stage roughly how far you'd gone</p> <p>12 or is it possible?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I think that was --</b></p> <p>14 Q. Impossible to know.</p> <p>15 (Pause)</p> <p>16 Take a moment. There's no rush.</p> <p>17 (Pause)</p> <p>18 <b>A. That would've been the time I realised my daughter was</b></p> <p>19 <b>behind me.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Right. What made you realise that?</p> <p>21 <b>A. She said, "I can't, dad."</b></p> <p>22 Q. How close to her were you when she said that, do you</p> <p>23 think?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Sorry?</b></p> <p>25 Q. We can take a pause. Let's take a pause.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 116</p>

<p>1 <b>A. I didn't hear the last question, sorry.</b></p> <p>2 Q. I'll repeat it: how close to her physically were you</p> <p>3 when you heard her say that, do you think?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I think that she was about maybe a floor above me.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Above you.</p> <p>6 <b>A. I think.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Okay.</p> <p>8 <b>A. I still couldn't see anything. It's pitch black.</b></p> <p>9 Q. What is it about what you're saying here, "Follow my</p> <p>10 voice", that makes you think you're in front by this</p> <p>11 stage?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Because I'm saying "Follow my voice", that means they're</b></p> <p>13 <b>behind me. And I've listened to the call and I know</b></p> <p>14 <b>what follows as well, so, yeah.</b></p> <p>15 Q. If it's okay, we'll continue.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Okay; let's continue and we'll hear a little bit more.</p> <p>18 (Audio Played)</p> <p>19 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>20 OPERATOR: ... and take some deep breaths, okay, cos</p> <p>21 you've got to be strong, you've got to try and regain a</p> <p>22 bit of energy, all right?</p> <p>23 CALLER: Come on. Keep coming, keep coming.</p> <p>24 OPERATOR: Just take a few deep breaths for a minute.</p> <p>25 CALLER: Come on girls, keep going, keep going.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>2 Q. You're standing, are you?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I stopped for a bit and told them to follow me, follow</b></p> <p>4 <b>my voice.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Right.</p> <p>6 <b>A. Then I started making my way up.</b></p> <p>7 Q. You were on the way up at this point, were you?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. When you shout, "Keep going, keep coming, come on, keep</p> <p>10 coming", you're on your way up to meet them, are you?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. I follow.</p> <p>13 Okay, let's continue.</p> <p>14 (Audio Played)</p> <p>15 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>16 OPERATOR: ... stay strong and take some deep</p> <p>17 breaths.</p> <p>18 CALLER: A bit more girls, come on.</p> <p>19 OPERATOR: Keep going.</p> <p>20 CALLER: Come on. Girls! Girls? Come on. Come on.</p> <p>21 MR MILLETT: Right, could you see them at that point?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I couldn't see nothing.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Could you hear them?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 MR MILLETT: Pause there.</p> <p>2 Did you take a few deep breaths, were you able to</p> <p>3 take a few deep breaths?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Is that what she asked me to do? I don't think I was</b></p> <p>5 <b>even listening to what she was saying.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay. Keep going.</p> <p>7 (Audio Played)</p> <p>8 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>9 CALLER: ... Keep a hold of rail.</p> <p>10 OPERATOR: You're going down aren't you, you're not</p> <p>11 going up?</p> <p>12 CALLER: Keep going. Keep coming.</p> <p>13 OPERATOR: They're in the stairwell going down.</p> <p>14 CALLER: Girls, come on. Keep coming.</p> <p>15 OPERATOR: They're on the 10th floor but they're</p> <p>16 waiting — I don't know where the wife is.</p> <p>17 CALLER: Keep coming, keep pushing. Keep pushing.</p> <p>18 OPERATOR: Go on, keep going, mate, you're doing</p> <p>19 really, really well. You're doing ever so well.</p> <p>20 CALLER: Girls, I can see (inaudible), come on. Come</p> <p>21 on (overspeaking) —</p> <p>22 OPERATOR: Okay, stay strong ...</p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: Pause.</p> <p>24 So at this point you've realised they're behind.</p> <p>25 Are you continuing to go down?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I'm not sure if it's exactly that point but I heard my</b></p> <p>2 <b>daughter.</b></p> <p>3 Q. How fast were you going back up, do you think?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I was holding the rail and taking a few steps. I didn't</b></p> <p>5 <b>know where they were or if I was going to go past them</b></p> <p>6 <b>or not because at some point they stopped — she stopped</b></p> <p>7 <b>talking.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Okay, let's continue.</p> <p>9 (Audio Played)</p> <p>10 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>11 OPERATOR: They're just — they're being so brave.</p> <p>12 So, so brave.</p> <p>13 CALLER: Girls, come on, it's better down here, it's</p> <p>14 better down here, come on.</p> <p>15 OPERATOR: There's no air?</p> <p>16 CALLER: Keep following ...</p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: Okay. We've heard again another burp, sounds</p> <p>18 like a gag, but we also hear screaming in there, or what</p> <p>19 sounds like screaming. Do you know what that is?</p> <p>20 <b>A. No, I don't recall that.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Did you get any impression at this point how far they</p> <p>22 were from you, above you?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Well, I went about one flight of stairs up. I thought</b></p> <p>24 <b>they were just above me, was my impression, when I lost</b></p> <p>25 <b>contact with them.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 120</p>

<p>1 Q. Okay. Let's continue.  2 (Audio Played)  3 TRANSCRIPT:  4 CALLER: ... the rail, keep following the rail,  5 girls.  6 OPERATOR: They've got the rail?  7 CALLER: Keep coming.  8 OPERATOR: You're doing so, so well. So well, so  9 well.  10 MR MILLETT: You could hear some sounds in that from you,  11 I think. Is that gagging again or is that belching?  12 <b>A. It's both. Gagging, belching, and coughing, I think.</b>  13 Q. I should have asked you when you said just a little bit  14 above the page in the transcript "Girls, come on, it's  15 better down here". Was it better air below or were you  16 just saying that to encourage them?  17 <b>A. It was the same.</b>  18 Q. It was the same.  19 <b>A. I just wanted to try and keep them going.</b>  20 Q. Absolutely.  21 Okay, continue.  22 (Audio Played)  23 TRANSCRIPT:  24 CALLER: Girls! Come on, girls, keep holding the  25 rail, come on, push, push through.</p> <p>Page 121</p>	<p>1 on, girls.  2 MR MILLETT: Now, a number of things.  3 First of all, when you say again, "It's better down  4 here", is that again --  5 <b>A. Encouragement.</b>  6 Q. -- encouragement.  7 Were you moving at this point or were you standing  8 waiting for them to come down?  9 <b>A. I was trying to make my way up.</b>  10 Q. We can hear you panting and breathing. Were you  11 breathing reasonably freely at this point or was this  12 through the cloth, the towel?  13 <b>A. No, it would've been through the cloth, I'm sure. It</b>  14 <b>wasn't freely and, obviously, going up wastes more</b>  15 <b>energy and you have to breathe deeper. So I think I was</b>  16 <b>just struggling to get up quick enough.</b>  17 Q. So coming to the end of this part here, would this be  18 fair: actually, you identified no change in the  19 breathability of the air at any point in the stairs?  20 <b>A. Further down was better, not at that point.</b>  21 Q. Not at this point?  22 <b>A. Not at that point.</b>  23 Q. Okay.  24 Right. We can, I think, pick it up, then, at 11.40.  25 (Audio Played)</p> <p>Page 123</p>
<p>1 OPERATOR: He's got three kids and his wife, are  2 they --  3 CALLER: Three kids and a heavily pregnant and I've  4 lost --  5 OPERATOR: His wife's heavily pregnant. He's just  6 lost her.  7 CALLER: Girls, come on, keep walking down, keep  8 walking down, girls. Girls, keep walking down!  9 MR MILLETT: At that point we just heard an echo. I think  10 maybe for the first time in this call there's an echoing  11 sound. Do you remember the sound of your voice changing  12 in the stairwell at any point?  13 <b>A. No, I don't.</b>  14 Q. Okay. Keep going.  15 (Audio Played)  16 TRANSCRIPT:  17 CALLER: ... Girls!  18 OPERATOR: Okay, have you got all your girls?  19 CALLER: Oh (inaudible) sake. Girls, come on, follow  20 my voice. Come on. [redacted] and (inaudible) come on.  21 Keep going, keep going.  22 OPERATOR: Keep going. What's --  23 CALLER: It's better down here.  24 OPERATOR: Is there more air down there?  25 CALLER: There's nobody here still. Come on! Come</p> <p>Page 122</p>	<p>1 TRANSCRIPT:  2 CALLER: Girls. Girls, listen to my voice, come on.  3 Even if you have to crawl down, crawl down.  4 OPERATOR: Right, I've just told them it's a priority  5 again, okay?  6 CALLER: Hold to the rails, hold the rails, girls.  7 Hold the rails. Keep coming, [redacted].  8 OPERATOR: Coming down from the 10th --  9 CALLER: [redacted], [redacted], come on!  10 MR MILLETT: Just pausing there.  11 Could you see them to be able to tell them to hold  12 the rails or was this just --  13 <b>A. No, still couldn't see them.</b>  14 Q. -- more instruction?  15 <b>A. I had no clue where they were, and you still couldn't</b>  16 <b>see.</b>  17 Q. We can hear in the background voices or calling voices.  18 Do you know what that was?  19 <b>A. I think that might have been them.</b>  20 Q. Did you hear them at the time, do you think? Do you  21 remember being able to hear them at the time?  22 <b>A. Yes, I remember there was some noises being made.</b>  23 Q. Okay.  24 <b>A. Which is why I knew they were still making their way</b>  25 <b>down.</b></p> <p>Page 124</p>

<p>1 Q. Okay. Right, if we continue.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Sorry, Mr Millett, I think it would</p> <p>3 be helpful to everyone if you could get the transcript</p> <p>4 up before we start playing the audio, because sometimes</p> <p>5 we're not actually able to follow it.</p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: It's gone off. If we could have page 17,</p> <p>7 please.</p> <p>8 Yes, Mr Chairman, I will do that. Thank you.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Okay.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: So let's continue.</p> <p>11 (Audio Played)</p> <p>12 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>13 CALLER: ... (Inaudible) keep coming.</p> <p>14 OPERATOR: Coming down from the 10th floor.</p> <p>15 CALLER: Don't stop. Girls!</p> <p>16 OPERATOR: Down from the 10th floor. He's got his</p> <p>17 girls but his wife is asthmatic and seven months</p> <p>18 pregnant. They're coming down —</p> <p>19 CALLER: Girls! Come on, girls. Girls! Girls!</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: Just stop there.</p> <p>21 You've heard a long note of voice at that point.</p> <p>22 Again, can you help us with what that is?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I don't know. It might have been somebody in the</b></p> <p>24 <b>stairwell. I don't know.</b></p> <p>25 MR MILLETT: Okay, let's continue --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 Q. If we can just pick this up at about 13.50, I'd like to</p> <p>2 pick it up, if I can, at page 19 in the transcript,</p> <p>3 first of all, where you say "Girls, come on. Push,</p> <p>4 girls. Girls?" About 13.45.</p> <p>5 (Audio Played)</p> <p>6 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>7 CALLER: Girls, come on. Push, girls. Girls?</p> <p>8 Girls. Oh fuck. Girls.</p> <p>9 OPERATOR: Where you are at the moment is there as</p> <p>10 much smoke?</p> <p>11 CALLER: My daughters upstairs. [redacted] and</p> <p>12 [redacted]. My daughters is upstairs. 183, but they're</p> <p>13 on the stairs.</p> <p>14 OPERATOR: 183.</p> <p>15 MR MILLETT: Just pausing there, who were you talking to?</p> <p>16 <b>A. A firefighter.</b></p> <p>17 Q. At this point, where were you, do you think?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I think maybe 8th, 7th, I'm not sure.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Okay.</p> <p>20 <b>A. But that was the time where I went up about a flight of</b></p> <p>21 <b>stairs, I couldn't see anything, and as you could see,</b></p> <p>22 <b>I was struggling to breathe as well. So I looked down</b></p> <p>23 <b>and I saw a light coming up through the rails, and so</b></p> <p>24 <b>I ran down and it was a firefighter.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Just taking this a little bit more slowly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p>
<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, it's perfectly</p> <p>2 understandable that Mr Gomes should not be able to help</p> <p>3 in detail with some of this material. So --</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Yes, it's becoming apparent, so we may move on</p> <p>5 a little bit.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, maybe, yes.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Just continue for a moment.</p> <p>8 (Audio Played)</p> <p>9 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>10 CALLER: ... Come on, girls, keep coming, keep</p> <p>11 following my voice. Keep coming, come on. Push, push.</p> <p>12 OPERATOR: Are you girls all still with you?</p> <p>13 CALLER: Push, girls. They're right behind me but</p> <p>14 they're not moving.</p> <p>15 OPERATOR: Right, okay ...</p> <p>16 MR MILLETT: Stop there.</p> <p>17 When you said, "They're right behind me but they're</p> <p>18 not moving", why did you say that?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I stopped hearing them, I think, at that moment.</b></p> <p>20 Q. What sense did you get about how far behind you they</p> <p>21 were?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I thought they were right behind me, maybe like half</b></p> <p>23 <b>a floor.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Right.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Maybe a floor.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 How long before you say what we see and hear you say</p> <p>2 here did you first see the firefighters?</p> <p>3 <b>A. So which bit?</b></p> <p>4 Q. Well, we've just played you, you've just said:</p> <p>5 "My daughter is upstairs. 183, but they're on the</p> <p>6 stairs."</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. You're obviously talking to a firefighter. How long</p> <p>9 before you said those things do you think you saw the</p> <p>10 firefighter?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Well, he was on the floor below, so it wouldn't have</b></p> <p>12 <b>been long. I don't think I would've taken that long to</b></p> <p>13 <b>get to him.</b></p> <p>14 Q. At this point you'd come down again, so you stopped</p> <p>15 going up --</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. -- and you started to come down.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. How long before this point do you think you had been</p> <p>20 coming down?</p> <p>21 <b>A. It wasn't -- sorry, in total or to see the firefighter?</b></p> <p>22 Q. Since you went up a little bit.</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. After that point, how long do you think it took before</p> <p>25 you --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p>



<p>1 <b>A. It was only --</b>  2 Q. -- saw the firefighter?  3 <b>A. It was only one floor.</b>  4 Q. Just one floor?  5 <b>A. Yes, so two sets of stairs.</b>  6 Q. Was this the first time that you'd seen a firefighter?  7 <b>A. It was the first time I saw anybody in the stairwell.</b>  8 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Can I just ask you, you look as  9 though you're responding to a question, because you say  10 "183". "My daughters are upstairs" and so on. So did  11 the firefighter say something to you as far as you  12 recall?  13 <b>A. Yes. Yes, he asked me the questions. But I can't</b>  14 <b>remember.</b>  15 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> No, all right.  16 <b>A. I think he asked me, "Where are you coming from?" and</b>  17 <b>that kind of information.</b>  18 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> You say he was on the floor below.  19 <b>A. Below.</b>  20 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Could you see him or just hear him?  21 <b>A. At that moment in time, I could see him. He had the</b>  22 <b>light in front of his face, and that's what I saw when</b>  23 <b>I looked down, I saw a bit of light, and then obviously</b>  24 <b>when I got close, I could see him.</b>  25 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Okay, thank you very much.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 they're coming up towards you, you're a priority at the  2 moment and I've told them, I've told the crew manager  3 here and that and he's aware of the situation, okay, so  4 they are going to get you.  5 CALLER: Okay, thank you, thank you.  6 OPERATOR: They are coming to get you, okay ...  7 MR MILLETT: I've just paused it there for two reasons.  8 First of all, we can clearly hear you shouting.  9 Does that tell us anything about how easily at this  10 point you were able to breathe?  11 <b>A. It was better.</b>  12 Q. It was better?  13 <b>A. Yes.</b>  14 Q. So you were just beyond about halfway down, you think?  15 <b>A. Yes. Well, I estimated I think around the 8th floor.</b>  16 Q. Yes.  17 <b>A. 8th or 9th floor, but it was when it started to get</b>  18 <b>a little bit thinner.</b>  19 Q. A little bit thinner, okay.  20 <b>A. Yes. It's pretty much where I met the firefighters.</b>  21 Q. Could you see any light, any stairwell light, at that  22 point?  23 <b>A. No.</b>  24 Q. Then we can hear shouting in the background, we may be  25 able to back up a second or two and hear that again, if</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p>
<p>1 MR MILLETT: Can I just ask you then to go back a page in  2 the transcript to page 18. We don't need to play this  3 because we can read it off the transcript.  4 Halfway down the page, you say:  5 "CALLER: We're about half way through I think."  6 Are you telling the operator that at this point?  7 <b>A. Yes, I must be. Did she ask me that?</b>  8 Q. She does.  9 <b>A. "What floor do you think you're on?" I think I'm</b>  10 <b>responding to her.</b>  11 Q. Why did you think you were about halfway through? How  12 did you come to that?  13 <b>A. It was just the timings and the amount of spins I've had</b>  14 <b>to do. It was a guess, but --</b>  15 Q. So let's pick this up, then, where we were on page 19,  16 after the question and answer "My daughters are on the  17 stairs, they're on the stairs". Pick it up at "183.  18 Who are you talking to?"  19 (Audio Played)  20 TRANSCRIPT:  21 OPERATOR: ... who are you talking to?  22 CALLER: Girls? Follow my voice, girls, keep coming  23 down. Girls, keep coming down, girls. For fuck's sake.  24 Girls? Oh fuck, my wife, my wife.  25 OPERATOR: We know, we know that you're there and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p>	<p>1 you want to. Perhaps we should.  2 (Audio Played)  3 TRANSCRIPT:  4 OPERATOR ... he's aware of the situation, okay, so  5 they are going to get you.  6 CALLER: Okay, thank you, thank you.  7 OPERATOR: They are coming to get you, okay ...  8 MR MILLETT: Just pausing there, what was that in the  9 background we can hear, do you think?  10 <b>A. I think that was the firefighters. The "thank you,</b>  11 <b>thank you" wasn't -- I had no idea what she was saying</b>  12 <b>to me at that time. That was the fire -- well, I only</b>  13 <b>saw one firefighter at that moment in time and I spoke</b>  14 <b>to him and told him flat 183 and so on, the girls are</b>  15 <b>upstairs, and then as he was going up, I was following</b>  16 <b>him, then another firefighter grabbed me from behind,</b>  17 <b>and I think that's when he said to me, "You have to keep</b>  18 <b>going down, we'll get them."</b>  19 Q. Okay.  20 <b>A. "You can't go up" or something like that.</b>  21 Q. We'll come to that.  22 At this point, the firefighter shouting, was he  23 still below you?  24 <b>A. The first firefighter?</b>  25 Q. At this point you hear the shouting. You said it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p>

<p>1 coming from a firefighter. Was the shouting firefighter 2 above you or below you at this stage? 3 <b>A. I think he was just on my level.</b> 4 Q. Right. Okay. 5 <b>A. Yes.</b> 6 Q. Were you continuing to move down at this point? 7 <b>A. Very gingerly, yes.</b> 8 Q. Okay. Let's continue. 9 (Audio Played) 10 TRANSCRIPT: 11 OPERATOR: ... and they're going to go and get your 12 wife. 13 CALLER: Girls, come on, girls. 14 OPERATOR: I tell you, you've done so well, it may 15 not seem like — 16 CALLER: Oh, shit. 17 OPERATOR: -- be proud of yourself, be so proud. 18 CALLER: Girls! Come on, girls, please. Please. 19 OPERATOR: I tell you, anyone would like a dad like you, 20 anybody. 21 CALLER: Girls? Oh, fuck, I can't even hear them 22 now. 23 MR MILLETT: Pause there. 24 You say you can't even hear them now. Could you 25 hear them before?</p> <p>Page 133</p>	<p>1 <b>know. I don't remember hearing that at the time.</b> 2 Q. Okay. Just continue. 3 (Audio Played) 4 TRANSCRIPT: 5 CALLER: My daughters, they're upstairs, my daughter 6 and my wife. My wife is upstairs, she's pregnant. 183, 7 but she's on the stairs. 21st, yeah, but she's about 8 halfway down. 9 MR MILLETT: Pause. 10 Sounds from that as if that's a dialogue between you 11 and the firefighter. 12 <b>A. Yes.</b> 13 Q. He's asking you questions, which flat, which floor; is 14 that right? 15 <b>A. Yes.</b> 16 Q. Where was the firefighter in comparison with you? Was 17 he above you or -- by this point, do you remember? 18 <b>A. Probably below me.</b> 19 Q. Below you? 20 <b>A. Yes.</b> 21 Q. You think, so he hasn't got to your level yet, is 22 that -- 23 <b>A. I don't think so, no. That would explain why there was</b> 24 <b>four firefighters and I can only remember two.</b> 25 Q. At this point, you have this dialogue with the</p> <p>Page 135</p>
<p>1 <b>A. There was some dialogue before, yes.</b> 2 Q. We can hear you breathing. Again, does that indicate 3 that it's easier to breathe at this point? 4 <b>A. It would've been easier there, yes.</b> 5 Q. All right. 6 Continue, if we can. 7 (Audio Played) 8 TRANSCRIPT: 9 OPERATOR: (inaudible). Are the girls still with? 10 CALLER: Girls! 11 OPERATOR: Have you got them? 12 MR MILLETT: Just stop there. 13 At that point, what were you doing, do you think? 14 <b>A. Probably standing, waiting.</b> 15 Q. Right. 16 <b>A. I don't know. I don't think I was doing much.</b> 17 Q. Okay. Continue. 18 (Audio Played) 19 TRANSCRIPT: 20 OPERATOR: ... Have you got your girls? 21 CALLER: Fuck, oh fuck. Oh, shit. 22 OPERATOR: What's the matter? 23 MR MILLETT: Just pause there. 24 What was the matter? 25 <b>A. I think that might have been a firefighter. I don't</b></p> <p>Page 134</p>	<p>1 firefighter. Do you remember how many others were with 2 him or her? 3 <b>A. No, I don't. I think I might have blocked this one out</b> 4 <b>of my head for some reason.</b> 5 Q. Right. 6 <b>A. Because at the time I couldn't -- I thought I just</b> 7 <b>didn't see them go up the stairs, because there was</b> 8 <b>obviously four firefighters that carried my daughter and</b> 9 <b>Helen's daughter down. So I couldn't understand how</b> 10 <b>there was four, and I thought maybe they come out of</b> 11 <b>a landing somewhere and helped. But obviously looking</b> 12 <b>at this, I spoke to firefighters twice.</b> 13 Q. Did you feel safer once you'd been able to contact the 14 firefighters? 15 <b>A. Yes, absolutely.</b> 16 Q. Okay, let's continue. 17 (Audio Played) 18 TRANSCRIPT: 19 OPERATOR: Okay, stay with me, stay with me. 20 CALLER: Oh fuck. 21 OPERATOR: Have you got — how many girls have you got 22 with you? 23 CALLER: Oh, fuck. No, no, no! 24 OPERATOR: Are they there? Where are the brigade? 25 They're there. Can you see the fireman?</p> <p>Page 136</p>

<p>1 CALLER: Oh my wife, my wife! My wife. My daughters 2 and my wife. 3 OPERATOR: Where are you now? 4 MR MILLETT: Just pause there for a moment. 5 We've heard what we've just heard. Do you remember 6 where you were at this point? Were you continuing down 7 or were you standing still? 8 <b>A. I think I was standing still but I was towards the</b> 9 <b>bottom of the stairs at that moment.</b> 10 Q. So you'd gone below the 8th floor, you think? 11 <b>A. Yes. Definitely below the 8th floor at that moment.</b> 12 Q. Right. Let's continue. 13 (Audio Played) 14 TRANSCRIPT: 15 OPERATOR: ... Look, listen to me, take a couple of 16 deep breaths, okay, and then I'm going to ask you some 17 questions and I need you to answer me, okay? Just get 18 your breath back, okay, just get your energy back and 19 your breaths back and then I need to ask you a couple of 20 questions. 21 CALLER: I need my wife. 22 OPERATOR: Right. So where are you now? 23 MR MILLETT: Just pause there. 24 You're told to get your breath back and then we can 25 hear you breathing.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 OPERATOR: Is that your girls now? 2 CALLER: Come on, come on. 3 OPERATOR: Is that your girls now? 4 CALLER: Come on (inaudible), come on. 5 OPERATOR: Can you hear them? 6 MR MILLETT: It's not on the transcript but we can hear you 7 say "Well done." 8 Could you see them at this point? 9 <b>A. I don't remember saying that, but I don't know where</b> 10 <b>that is in the transcript. But if I did say that, it</b> 11 <b>was because I was seeing them being carried out, I'm</b> 12 <b>assuming.</b> 13 Q. I am going to jump ahead and pick it up at 22.19 on 14 page 25. 15 (Audio Played) 16 TRANSCRIPT: 17 OPERATOR: Right, listen to me. Right, listen to me, 18 okay, you need to be brave and you need to do what you 19 think is best. 20 CALLER: I need to go upstairs, I need to go up. 21 OPERATOR: You need to go and find — 22 CALLER: I need to find them. 23 OPERATOR: -- and you need to go backstairs and get 24 your girls. 25 CALLER: I need to go and find them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 139</p>
<p>1 Were you able to breathe at this point? 2 <b>A. Better, yes.</b> 3 Q. So whereabouts were you at this point, do you think? 4 <b>A. I think I was below the 4th floor.</b> 5 Q. Had you seen any further firefighters at that point? 6 <b>A. No.</b> 7 Q. What was the smoke like at that point? 8 <b>A. Breathable.</b> 9 Q. Could you see through it at that stage? 10 <b>A. Yes, I could see where I was putting my feet.</b> 11 Q. Were there lights on in the stairwell? 12 <b>A. I can't remember -- there was some light coming through</b> 13 <b>but I can't remember if it's from the stair light or</b> 14 <b>somewhere else.</b> 15 Q. Okay. 16 <b>A. But I could see the steps at that time, and there was</b> 17 <b>a lot of water gushing.</b> 18 Q. We'll pick it up, if we can, at 19.52, which is on 19 page 23 of the transcript, if we can just have that up 20 first. 21 (Audio Played) 22 TRANSCRIPT: 23 CALLER: ... No, no, come on, come on girls, please, 24 please. Please, oh please. Oh fuck me. Come on girls, 25 can you hear me?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 OPERATOR: Right. Stay on the phone. You need to go 2 back and get them as a dad, okay? And I'm sure your 3 wife will be with them as well. 4 CALLER: I need to go and find them. 5 OPERATOR: Okay ... 6 MR MILLETT: Just pause there. 7 We're on page 26 of the transcript. 8 You decided you need to go back upstairs. Where 9 were you when you made that decision, do you remember? 10 <b>A. At the bottom of the stairs.</b> 11 Q. On the ground floor or by the lifts? 12 <b>A. No, not by the lifts, but in the mezzanine type area.</b> 13 Q. At this stage, I presume you could see all the 14 firefighters, could you, in the -- 15 <b>A. I could look down and see the firefighters congregating</b> 16 <b>on the ground floor. Well, if that's correct, yes.</b> 17 Q. Did you talk to any firefighter at that stage about 18 going back up -- 19 <b>A. No.</b> 20 Q. -- with them? 21 Is there a reason why you didn't grab a firefighter 22 and take one up with you or try to? 23 <b>A. They were still all the way downstairs.</b> 24 Q. Let's continue. 25 (Audio Played)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 140</p>

<p>1 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>2 OPERATOR: ... gather your thoughts, okay, take a few</p> <p>3 deep breaths, okay, and then make your way slowly up</p> <p>4 towards your girls. Is there anybody else there that</p> <p>5 can help you? Is there anybody else in the stairwell</p> <p>6 that can help you?</p> <p>7 CALLER: Come on, girls!</p> <p>8 OPERATOR: Are you going back up the stairs?</p> <p>9 MR MILLETT: Pause there.</p> <p>10 Were you climbing by that stage?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I don't know.</b></p> <p>12 Q. We can hear you panting and I just wondered why that</p> <p>13 was, given that the air was clearer where you were?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I may have been panicking. I think I was probably</b></p> <p>15 <b>panicking at that time.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p>17 Then you go on to say -- we don't need this:</p> <p>18 "CALLER: Why is there no more firemen. There's only</p> <p>19 a few here."</p> <p>20 Why did you say "There's only a few here"?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Because I only saw a few, I guess.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Where did you see the few?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I'm thinking that was the ones I saw at the bottom of</b></p> <p>24 <b>the tower, in the entrance.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Pick this up at 23.55, page 27. We're quite close to</p> <p>Page 141</p>	<p>1 <b>If I remember correctly, that was a couple of</b></p> <p>2 <b>firefighters carrying somebody out.</b></p> <p>3 Q. I see, okay.</p> <p>4 <b>A. So I said there's more, and "Where are you going?" or</b></p> <p>5 <b>something like that.</b></p> <p>6 Q. I see. So these firefighters we can hear here are</p> <p>7 carrying a casualty down, is that --</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Right, I see, okay.</p> <p>10 Then she goes on to say -- we don't need to hear the</p> <p>11 audio, but she says:</p> <p>12 "OPERATOR: Have you got anything that you can put --</p> <p>13 can you move your jumper or your T-shirt up over your</p> <p>14 mouth for a little while?"</p> <p>15 Do you remember doing that? Did you do that?</p> <p>16 <b>A. At this moment in time, I don't remember nothing that</b></p> <p>17 <b>she said. I don't think I was even listening, but just</b></p> <p>18 <b>to put that into context --</b></p> <p>19 Q. Yes.</p> <p>20 <b>A. -- if I'm correct in my timing, then my daughter and</b></p> <p>21 <b>Helen's daughter are already out at that point. I've</b></p> <p>22 <b>already see them be carried out.</b></p> <p>23 <b>I was panicking at that point because on the way</b></p> <p>24 <b>down on the stairwell, we had to go over bodies.</b></p> <p>25 <b>I stepped on some. I tripped up on some, and somebody</b></p> <p>Page 143</p>
<p>1 the end. Top of page 27 and it's 23.55 in the audio.</p> <p>2 (Audio Played)</p> <p>3 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>4 OPERATOR: Yeah, go, go up now. Go up slowly. Just</p> <p>5 take your time and go up slowly. Right, you need to</p> <p>6 stay low to the floor, try and crawl up the stairs</p> <p>7 slowly, don't go too high, don't stand upright. Stay --</p> <p>8 get you some energy. Okay, just get some energy and</p> <p>9 have a rest, all right, gather your breath and do the</p> <p>10 next bit, do a bit at a time, don't do it all at once</p> <p>11 because you won't get there. Do a little bit at a time.</p> <p>12 CALLER: Nobody could survive the smoke. Oh come on.</p> <p>13 MR MILLETT: Were you climbing at this point back up the</p> <p>14 stairs, do you think?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I think I tried, yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. How far up do you think you got?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Not very far.</b></p> <p>18 Q. When you say nobody could survive the smoke, did you</p> <p>19 think the smoke at that level you were then on or higher</p> <p>20 up the building?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Higher up the building.</b></p> <p>22 Q. We can hear shouting in the background. What was that?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I think that was the firefighters below.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Who were in the stairwell?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I think I said to them there's more girls at the top.</b></p> <p>Page 142</p>	<p>1 <b>grabbed my cuff.</b></p> <p>2 <b>At that time, I couldn't comprehend how the girls</b></p> <p>3 <b>were behind me when I was the last person, so I started</b></p> <p>4 <b>thinking that -- that the bodies that I stepped on,</b></p> <p>5 <b>I stepped over, was my wife and my daughter. So that's</b></p> <p>6 <b>why I kept shouting for my wife and wanted to go back up</b></p> <p>7 <b>the stairs and find them. I didn't know where they</b></p> <p>8 <b>were.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Take a moment.</p> <p>10 Mr Gomes, we're quite near the end of this. Are you</p> <p>11 all right to continue to the end?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Yes?</p> <p>14 (Pause)</p> <p>15 Let's pick it up at the bottom of page 27, at</p> <p>16 25 minutes and 46 seconds into the call.</p> <p>17 This is, just so you know, the last section we're</p> <p>18 going to play.</p> <p>19 (Audio Played)</p> <p>20 TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>21 CALLER: Oh fuck, oh come on girls. I can't</p> <p>22 (inaudible). I can't breathe(?), I can't (inaudible).</p> <p>23 There's more girls up there. No, where are you going?</p> <p>24 There's more. Oh fucking hell. Where's my wife? My</p> <p>25 wife is upstairs. Oh fuck. (inaudible) (crying). Oh</p> <p>Page 144</p>

<p>1       fucking hell. Oh please, there's no more firemen. I</p> <p>2       need to go upstairs.</p> <p>3       MR MILLETT: Just pause there.</p> <p>4       At the beginning of that we can see and hear you say</p> <p>5       "I can't breathe". It's a very muffled sound.</p> <p>6       Had you gone up again into the smoke?</p> <p>7       <b>A. I don't think so. I think I was just having a panic</b></p> <p>8       <b>attack.</b></p> <p>9       Q. I see, okay.</p> <p>10      <b>A. I think.</b></p> <p>11      Q. You say, "No, where are you going? There's more." Who</p> <p>12      were you talking to?</p> <p>13      <b>A. Probably a firefighter.</b></p> <p>14      Q. You don't remember?</p> <p>15      <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>16      Q. Do you remember how many firefighters there were when</p> <p>17      you were telling them "Where are you doing?"</p> <p>18      <b>A. I don't. I remember there was two coming down with</b></p> <p>19      <b>somebody, but I don't remember any more than that.</b></p> <p>20      Q. And then we can hear shouting in the last part of that.</p> <p>21      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>22      Q. Where you're saying what you say at the top of page 28</p> <p>23      of the transcript.</p> <p>24      What was that shouting? Who was shouting?</p> <p>25      <b>A. In the background?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1       <b>A. No, my oldest daughter and Helen's daughter had already</b></p> <p>2       <b>gone out. That was just in reference to my wife and my</b></p> <p>3       <b>other daughter.</b></p> <p>4       Q. Yes, okay.</p> <p>5       <b>A. It was just shouting for the sake of shouting. I have</b></p> <p>6       <b>no idea where they were. I just wanted to see them walk</b></p> <p>7       <b>down or walk through somewhere or carried out or</b></p> <p>8       <b>something, I just wanted something to happen.</b></p> <p>9       Q. We can hear you say, "Come on my wife was upstairs".</p> <p>10      Who were you talking to?</p> <p>11      <b>A. I think I shouted over the barrier to the firemen.</b></p> <p>12      Q. I see, okay.</p> <p>13      I am going to skip over the next page and pick it up</p> <p>14      at the beginning of 29, at 28 minutes and 28 seconds.</p> <p>15      (Audio Played)</p> <p>16      TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>17      CALLER: My boy as well. Oh no. My wife, she's</p> <p>18      pregnant. They haven't, they haven't. All right, okay,</p> <p>19      I need to go up, I need to go up. I need to get them.</p> <p>20      I need to — no, there's only a few of you. I need to go</p> <p>21      and get my wife. I don't know, she's on the stairs,</p> <p>22      she's pregnant, she seven months pregnant. I don't</p> <p>23      know, she's on the stairs. I need to go, I need to go</p> <p>24      upstairs. (several inaudible words). I'm fine, I'm</p> <p>25      fine. I'm fine. I'm fine, I just need my wife —</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>
<p>1       Q. Yes.</p> <p>2       <b>A. That was the firefighters on the ground floor.</b></p> <p>3       Q. On the ground floor?</p> <p>4       <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5       Q. Right. Not in the stairwell?</p> <p>6       <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>7       Q. Okay.</p> <p>8       <b>A. So I would've been at the bottom of the stairwell in the</b></p> <p>9       <b>mezzanine floor. I probably looked down to the ground.</b></p> <p>10      Q. I see.</p> <p>11      <b>A. At that moment.</b></p> <p>12      Q. Okay.</p> <p>13      Then we just have a couple more pages to go in the</p> <p>14      transcript. Page 28, a quarter of the way down, if we</p> <p>15      can just re-start.</p> <p>16      (Audio Played)</p> <p>17      TRANSCRIPT:</p> <p>18      OPERATOR: Right, so where are you now?</p> <p>19      CALLER: I can't ... This is a fucking worst</p> <p>20      nightmare. Come on girls, come on. Oh fucking</p> <p>21      (inaudible). Come on my wife is upstairs, she's</p> <p>22      pregnant.</p> <p>23      MR MILLETT: Just pause there.</p> <p>24      You are saying, "Come on girls, come on." Did you</p> <p>25      have a sense of how close they were at that point?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>	<p>1       OPERATOR: Hello? Hello, who are you talking to?</p> <p>2       MR MILLETT: Stop there.</p> <p>3       So, at that stage it sounds as if you're talking to</p> <p>4       somebody. Do you remember who you were talking to?</p> <p>5       <b>A. I think that was a firefighter -- well, I think she was</b></p> <p>6       <b>a firefighter -- that was taking me out of the building.</b></p> <p>7       Q. So during the process of what we've just heard, were you</p> <p>8       being escorted out or were you standing still in the</p> <p>9       building?</p> <p>10      <b>A. Escorted out.</b></p> <p>11      Q. Right.</p> <p>12      <b>A. Or dragged out.</b></p> <p>13      Q. We can hear coughing.</p> <p>14      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15      Q. What was that? Were you still coughing because -- well,</p> <p>16      what was the smoke like at that stage?</p> <p>17      <b>A. Well, I couldn't really see too much smoke, I guess, but</b></p> <p>18      <b>it was still in your lungs. So the coughing, it's just</b></p> <p>19      <b>the reaction.</b></p> <p>20      MR MILLETT: Mr Gomes, you'll be pleased to know that that</p> <p>21      is all I propose to play to you from the call. The</p> <p>22      entire transcript stands in the record, Mr Chairman, and</p> <p>23      I'm grateful to you, Mr Gomes, and to you, Mr Chairman,</p> <p>24      for allowing me to go on well beyond our normal time,</p> <p>25      but I thought it was right that we took that in one go.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I am sure it was very important to</p> <p>2 do that, yes.</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: I have no further questions that I want to put</p> <p>4 to the witness or need. To be fair to the witness,</p> <p>5 I think it would probably be not a particularly</p> <p>6 efficient use of his time, so I'm going to say at this</p> <p>7 point that I've come to the end of my questions.</p> <p>8 We normally have the traditional break at this point</p> <p>9 for any further questions.</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We do, but in some cases I have felt</p> <p>11 that it was unnecessary to ask the witness to go out of</p> <p>12 the room while other counsel have a word with you.</p> <p>13 So can I just invite an indication at this stage</p> <p>14 whether anyone has points they wish to put to</p> <p>15 Mr Millett?</p> <p>16 You shouldn't feel inhibited because I'm doing it</p> <p>17 this way because Mr Gomes and I will ignore you while</p> <p>18 you speak to Mr Millett if you need to, but if you don't</p> <p>19 need to, so much the better.</p> <p>20 (Pause)</p> <p>21 Right. Do you mind, Mr Gomes, we'll just ignore</p> <p>22 them and see whether there are any more questions. I am</p> <p>23 sure you would like to finish before we rise.</p> <p>24 THE WITNESS: Yes, that's fine. I've been ignoring them all</p> <p>25 the way through!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 <b>decisions, at the time cost lives, and I truly believe</b></p> <p>2 <b>that a lot more lives would've been saved if things were</b></p> <p>3 <b>done quicker.</b></p> <p>4 <b>We've discussed the lessons learnt, you know, I've</b></p> <p>5 <b>heard that before. There's been lots of lessons learnt</b></p> <p>6 <b>in the past. But we need actions. We need those</b></p> <p>7 <b>lessons actually completed and not in 10 years' time.</b></p> <p>8 <b>People need to feel safe in their homes.</b></p> <p>9 <b>That's it.</b></p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Gomes.</p> <p>11 Thank you for that and thank you for all your</p> <p>12 evidence. I just want to express our gratitude on</p> <p>13 behalf of the inquiry to you for coming here today and</p> <p>14 assisting us with our investigation. We really very</p> <p>15 much appreciate it, so thank you.</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'm very grateful to you, Mr Gomes.</p> <p>18 You've had an extraordinary and terrible experience, and</p> <p>19 you've given us a very clear and careful account of what</p> <p>20 went on that night as far as you and your family were</p> <p>21 concerned.</p> <p>22 You've given your evidence, if I may say so, with</p> <p>23 great courage and great dignity, and we're very grateful</p> <p>24 to you for allowing us to ask you questions about</p> <p>25 something that as personal as the call we've just been</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>
<p>1 (Pause)</p> <p>2 MR MILLETT: Mr Gomes, I have one question for you and it's</p> <p>3 the question we have been asking all witnesses at the</p> <p>4 end of their evidence, and it's this: in addition to the</p> <p>5 two witness statements that you've given us and the</p> <p>6 evidence that you've given us today, is there anything</p> <p>7 else about what you heard, what you felt, you smelt, you</p> <p>8 saw, on the night of the fire itself that you think it's</p> <p>9 important that the chairman should know?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Well, there isn't much more I can add that hasn't</b></p> <p>11 <b>already been said so well.</b></p> <p>12 <b>However, I think it's important to acknowledge that</b></p> <p>13 <b>the NHS staff as well that evening were amazing, and in</b></p> <p>14 <b>our case, the King's College Hospital staff did</b></p> <p>15 <b>everything that they could to help us and others.</b></p> <p>16 <b>Also, you know, I'd like to thank the firefighters</b></p> <p>17 <b>that were on the ground and helping as much as they</b></p> <p>18 <b>could, carrying people out and doing all sorts.</b></p> <p>19 <b>But mistakes were made, I think as you know.</b></p> <p>20 <b>Contrary to somebody's beliefs, there's a lot of changes</b></p> <p>21 <b>that would've happened if we could go back there and</b></p> <p>22 <b>change. We all know we can't change the past, but we</b></p> <p>23 <b>can influence the future.</b></p> <p>24 <b>So I beg you, make those decisions and influence the</b></p> <p>25 <b>future. The decisions, or better yet the lack of</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>	<p>1 listening to. Thank you very much.</p> <p>2 THE WITNESS: I hope it helps.</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank very much indeed.</p> <p>4 Now it's over and you're free to go.</p> <p>5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much.</p> <p>7 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, Mr Millett, that is no doubt</p> <p>9 a convenient point.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: It is.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Is there other work for us to do</p> <p>12 later on?</p> <p>13 MR MILLETT: Yes, there are two statements which I would</p> <p>14 wish to read into the record.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Well, I think we might do that</p> <p>16 after we've had a break.</p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: After a suitable break, yes, exactly.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, we've had a very long morning.</p> <p>19 Thank you all for sitting here so patiently. I felt it</p> <p>20 was really important that we should complete Mr Gomes's</p> <p>21 evidence, if we could, before we had a break.</p> <p>22 I'm going to break for slightly longer than usual</p> <p>23 this time and we'll resume at 2.50.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Thank you.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

<p>1 (1.40 pm)</p> <p>2 (The short adjournment)</p> <p>3 (2.50 pm)</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>5 ANDREIA PERESTRELO GOMES (evidence read into the record)</p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, I am now going to read into the</p> <p>7 record a witness statement of Andreia Perestrelo Gomes,</p> <p>8 who is Mr Gomes's wife, also of flat 183 on the 21st</p> <p>9 floor of Grenfell Tower, who left the building at</p> <p>10 03.37 am.</p> <p>11 Her statement is at IWS00000349.</p> <p>12 It's dated 20 May 2018 and it stands under</p> <p>13 a statement of truth of that date on page 20.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>15 MR MILLETT: As we heard this morning from Mr Gomes, they</p> <p>16 moved into flat 183 in April of 2007 with their two</p> <p>17 daughters and their dog, Lili, and Ms Perestrelo was</p> <p>18 seven months pregnant at the time of the fire with the</p> <p>19 couple's son, Logan, who unfortunately, as you know,</p> <p>20 Mr Chairman, did not survive.</p> <p>21 It's also right to note that the family also lost</p> <p>22 Lili, the dog, in the fire.</p> <p>23 The family were all at home on the night of the</p> <p>24 fire.</p> <p>25 If I can pick it up in the statement first at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 additional flats in the Tower. I was not happy about</p> <p>2 the removal of the walk way as this meant that we were</p> <p>3 left with only one exit from the Tower in an emergency."</p> <p>4 Then at paragraph 29 she discusses her concerns with</p> <p>5 Lynda, a Rydon employee.</p> <p>6 And then at 30 she says:</p> <p>7 "30. I had assumed that ... the contractors knew</p> <p>8 what they were doing and ... I was not consulted ...in</p> <p>9 relation to the removal of the second exit"</p> <p>10 At 31, she says:</p> <p>11 "31. I also had concerns about there only being a</p> <p>12 single emergency escape stairwell for the entire</p> <p>13 Grenfell Tower. I have been to other tower blocks where</p> <p>14 there are two staircases providing emergency evacuation</p> <p>15 options. This worried me as there were several hundred</p> <p>16 people living in Grenfell Tower, but they all had access</p> <p>17 to but one staircase in the event of an emergency</p> <p>18 requiring a full evacuation.</p> <p>19 Then at 33 she says:</p> <p>20 "33. There was a fire hose on our corridor, just</p> <p>21 outside our front door, which had been there ever since</p> <p>22 we moved into the Tower. We had never been shown how to</p> <p>23 use the fire hose and in the 10 years that I had lived</p> <p>24 at Grenfell Tower, I had never seen anyone from the</p> <p>25 London Fire Brigade, the council or the TMO come and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p>
<p>1 paragraph 27 on page 4, under the heading "Concerns</p> <p>2 about fire safety" she says:</p> <p>3 "27. I was not provided with any information about</p> <p>4 fire safety when I moved into Grenfell Tower. I read a</p> <p>5 notice about fire safety on the notice board which</p> <p>6 confirmed the meeting point outside the Tower and</p> <p>7 advised occupants not to use the lifts in the event of a</p> <p>8 fire. I had heard about there being a stay put policy</p> <p>9 in the Tower but I cannot remember where I had heard</p> <p>10 this. I had several worries and concerns about fire</p> <p>11 safety in the Tower and I will set out each of my</p> <p>12 concerns below.</p> <p>13 "28. My primary concern was about the fire exits.</p> <p>14 Before the refurbishment works started, there were two</p> <p>15 fire exits in the Tower. One was at the main entrance</p> <p>16 and the other was the walk way which was renamed the 1st</p> <p>17 floor after they carried out the refurbishment works.</p> <p>18 The people authorising the refurbishment removed the</p> <p>19 fire exit via the walkway on the first floor during the</p> <p>20 works, which meant that all of the residents in the</p> <p>21 Tower had only one escape route, which was out of the</p> <p>22 front entrance. The fire exit on the walkway had been</p> <p>23 removed by Rydon, the contractors, so that the</p> <p>24 Kensington and Chelsea Tenants Management Organisation</p> <p>25 ('the TMO') could use the space created to add</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>	<p>1 check whether or not the hose was actually working or</p> <p>2 whether it was in a good condition. I thought the hose</p> <p>3 looked old and discoloured."</p> <p>4 Then if I can pick it up at paragraph 44 on page 8</p> <p>5 she deals with the question of windows.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: "44. Our main issues with the refurbishment</p> <p>8 works were in relation to the new windows. After the</p> <p>9 new windows had been fitted, there were gaps along the</p> <p>10 bottom of the windows under the window ledge which was</p> <p>11 letting draught into our flat. The draught was strong</p> <p>12 and I could feel it whilst I was sat on the sofa in my</p> <p>13 living room, it was also moving the curtains in the</p> <p>14 rooms when it was particularly windy and this was very</p> <p>15 noticeable in the girls' bedroom. I cannot remember if</p> <p>16 the gaps were visible but I could feel the draught. I</p> <p>17 recall asking the contractors to come and inspect the</p> <p>18 windows and when they came to inspect, they resealed</p> <p>19 them with filler. This did not work as the curtains in</p> <p>20 the girls' bedroom were still moving when it was windy.</p> <p>21 I did not go back to the TMO or the contractors as I</p> <p>22 think this was shortly before the fire."</p> <p>23 She says she spoke to Marcio about her concerns.</p> <p>24 Then she turns at paragraph 46 and following to the</p> <p>25 evening of 13 June, and then from paragraph 49 onwards,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p>

<p>1 the night of the fire itself, the morning of 14 June.</p> <p>2 I'll read into the record that down to paragraph 75:</p> <p>3 "49. I have subsequently learned that the fire at</p> <p>4 Grenfell Tower started at 00:54 in the morning of 14</p> <p>5 June 2017. I became aware of the fire when our</p> <p>6 neighbour, Helen Gebremeskel and her daughter,</p> <p>7 [redacted] from flat 186 on the same floor as us,</p> <p>8 knocked on our door to wake us. I cannot remember the</p> <p>9 time. I could also hear shouting and loud voices</p> <p>10 outside the Tower after I was woken up by Helen banging</p> <p>11 on the door.</p> <p>12 "50. I remember Helen knocking on our front door</p> <p>13 but the details of what happened after that are a little</p> <p>14 hazy. She told Marcio and I that there was a fire in</p> <p>15 the Tower, she was panicked and she was talking fast,</p> <p>16 like she did not know what to do.</p> <p>17 "51. I also remember seeing people talking on our</p> <p>18 landing with our neighbours next door, the el-Wahabi</p> <p>19 family and they were going into their flat, but I do not</p> <p>20 remember much more than that. I think I saw Abdulla</p> <p>21 el-Wahabi but I cannot remember, he lived in flat 182</p> <p>22 with his wife and three children.</p> <p>23 "52. The el-Wahabi family, I learned later, sadly</p> <p>24 died in the fire.</p> <p>25 "53. Helen, her daughter, [redacted] who was 12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 157</p>	<p>1 outside of her kitchen window. I looked out of the</p> <p>2 kitchen and when I looked up, I could see a hand from</p> <p>3 Nadia's flat waving a white towel or cloth outside the</p> <p>4 window. I do not know who it was.</p> <p>5 "58. I was panicked, worried and in a state of</p> <p>6 shock.</p> <p>7 "59. At some point I could see the fire on the</p> <p>8 outside of the Tower, on the left and right sides from</p> <p>9 the kitchen window. I had to reach out of the kitchen</p> <p>10 window to see properly as pillars restricted our views</p> <p>11 to the left and right sides of the Tower and I was only</p> <p>12 able to see the fire as it was being blown by the wind.</p> <p>13 I could also hear a crackling and burning noise coming</p> <p>14 from the right hand side of the Tower. I remember</p> <p>15 seeing it spread very quickly.</p> <p>16 "60. I could hear screams from my neighbours above</p> <p>17 shouting for help and from outside the Tower. I could</p> <p>18 smell burning and see a lot of smoke coming through the</p> <p>19 front door into our flat. The smoke was thick and</p> <p>20 black.</p> <p>21 "61. I received several calls from family and</p> <p>22 friends whilst I was inside the flat telling me to get</p> <p>23 out of the flat as they had heard about the fire either</p> <p>24 from other friends or in the news. I cannot remember</p> <p>25 the times of the calls or the number of the calls I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 159</p>
<p>1 years old at the time of the fire, and their dog Simba,</p> <p>2 a Chihuahua came into our flat. I remember sending</p> <p>3 [redacted] into the girls' room because my daughter</p> <p>4 [redacted] was still awake and playing on her tablet</p> <p>5 computer.</p> <p>6 "54. As Helen and I were walking into the kitchen,</p> <p>7 I think she told me that the fire was at the window in</p> <p>8 her flat in the living room. I do not know what she</p> <p>9 meant by this.</p> <p>10 "55. Helen was on her mobile telephone the majority</p> <p>11 of the time. I know that she had been speaking with</p> <p>12 Nadia Choucair, our neighbour in flat 193 on the 22nd</p> <p>13 floor, I do not know if she was speaking with her the</p> <p>14 whole time or with others. I was not paying attention.</p> <p>15 Nadia's flat was directly above our flat.</p> <p>16 "56. I do not remember much about the events that</p> <p>17 followed after.</p> <p>18 "57. I do not remember Marcio coming back into the</p> <p>19 flat or anything like that. I just remember standing by</p> <p>20 the kitchen window a lot, trying to see what was</p> <p>21 happening or hear what people were saying. I could see</p> <p>22 a lot of people gathering outside the Tower by the park</p> <p>23 and by the ramp. They were shouting up at the Tower</p> <p>24 'You need to get out', 'Get out' 'There is a fire, get</p> <p>25 out'. I could also hear Nadia screaming for help from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 158</p>	<p>1 received but they started after Helen came into our</p> <p>2 flat. My family and friends all told me the same things</p> <p>3 'Get out, there is a fire, it is really bad and you need</p> <p>4 to get out now'.</p> <p>5 "62. We only stayed in the flat as long as we did</p> <p>6 because Marcio had spoken to 999 and he told me that</p> <p>7 help was coming. I can only remember trying to leave</p> <p>8 the flat once before finally leaving the flat and on</p> <p>9 that first attempt I remember not being able to breathe</p> <p>10 as soon as we got onto the landing, and I panicked and</p> <p>11 we all came back in to the flat.</p> <p>12 "63. I remember seeing Marcio soak the living room</p> <p>13 floor with water, I do not know how but I just remember</p> <p>14 him throwing water on the floor.</p> <p>15 "64. There was a lot of smoke inside our flat at</p> <p>16 this point and it was very hot, like a dry sauna, before</p> <p>17 we left. I seem to have blanked it from my mind, but I</p> <p>18 now know that the fire had reached our bedroom as Marcio</p> <p>19 saw it. I was not aware of that when we left the flat.</p> <p>20 I just remember Marcio saying that we had to leave.</p> <p>21 Marcio gave all of us wet towels to cover our mouths and</p> <p>22 we had big sheets over our heads.</p> <p>23 "65. We all left the flat together and the girls,</p> <p>24 [redacted] and [redacted], were holding the dogs. Helen</p> <p>25 was in front, [redacted] was behind her and then it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 160</p>



<p>1 me, [redacted], [redacted] and Marcio was at the end of  2 the group. Marcio had co-ordinated the exit and his  3 instructions were to grab hold of the hand rail as soon  4 as we got onto the stairwell and to keep hold of it  5 until we got to the bottom of the stairs.  6 "66. When we walked out of the flat, it was pitch  7 black, I could not see a thing. All I could smell was  8 smoke, plastic and chemicals burning. It was very hot,  9 again like a sauna.  10 "67. As soon as we came out on to our landing, we  11 all headed towards the stairwell which was on the right,  12 we were all lined up one behind the other. The smoke on  13 the stairwell was very thick, I could not breathe or see  14 through the smoke. I felt like I was choking and I  15 thought I was going to die. It was pitch black and I  16 could not see. We were able to get onto the stairs  17 immediately as I do not think there was anyone on the  18 stairs towards the top of the Tower. The smoke on the  19 landing and the stairwell was the same. It took maybe  20 couple of seconds from my front door to walk onto the  21 stairwell. I knew the direction to walk in and as soon  22 as I got onto the stairwell, I grabbed hold of the  23 handrail, and I did not let go. There was no noise at  24 the top but as we got further down the stairs, I could  25 hear people on the stairwell crying and asking for help.</p> <p>Page 161</p>	<p>1 7th floor. The fire fighters escorted [redacted] and I  2 out of the Tower. They just kept saying, 'Keep going,  3 keep going', I looked back and saw [redacted] with a  4 fire fighter and felt relieved.  5 "71. Descending felt like a lifetime but I cannot  6 remember how long it took.  7 "72. I remember telling a fire fighter while I was  8 still inside the Tower by the main entrance that there  9 were still people on the stairs. It was lighter further  10 down the stairs but this was not until we got to the  11 floors lower down the Tower where the water was gushing  12 down the stairs.  13 "73. Escaping the Grenfell Tower fire was the worst  14 experience of my entire life. I thought that we were  15 all going to die and that is the worst feeling to have  16 had to have experienced.  17 "74. I did not encounter fire fighters until the  18 lower levels of the Tower when they helped guide me down  19 stairs.  20 "75. This is the only contact I had with them."  21 And she then describes what she experienced once she  22 got outside the tower, I just pick it up at  23 paragraph 81.  24 "81. We were given foil blankets and water whilst  25 we were sat outside. There were lots of people. I</p> <p>Page 163</p>
<p>1 I cannot remember how far down the stairwell this was.  2 I could not see anyone as it was pitch black. I did not  3 know what we were walking over to begin with, it was  4 only when I tripped over someone and they let out a  5 groan, that I realised I was walking over people.  6 "68. I remember someone grabbed my ankle and  7 somebody also did the same to [redacted] as we were  8 coming down the stairs. We were one of the last to come  9 out of the building.  10 "69. Although we all left as a group and we were  11 behind one another in a chain, I was only holding my  12 daughter, [redacted]'s, hand as we came down the stairs.  13 I was going as fast as I could but I was heavily  14 pregnant at the time and it was difficult to go fast as  15 I was holding my daughter's hand.  16 "70. I just kept saying to [redacted] as we were  17 going down, 'Keep going, keep going'. [redacted]  18 started saying she could not go anymore and she fell.  19 [redacted] had tripped over a body on the stairs which  20 caused her to fall. I picked [redacted] up and was  21 holding her by the collar of her clothes and started  22 pulling her down the stairs. I was exhausted, out of  23 breath and I felt like I was going to collapse just  24 before I saw the light from a fire fighter. I cannot  25 remember where this was but I assume it was the 6th or</p> <p>Page 162</p>	<p>1 remember meeting with one of my neighbours and asking  2 her if she was ok.  3 "82. I waited and kept looking for Marcio and  4 [redacted], it felt like a long time and I was worried  5 that something had happened to them. I saw Marcio first  6 but I did not see [redacted] as there was a lot of  7 commotion around me. I was panicking as I could not see  8 [redacted]. When [redacted] arrived she needed  9 immediate medical attention. Marcio told me not to look  10 and that she was being taken care of and that is when I  11 saw paramedics around her. She was on the floor, I do  12 not know what they were doing. While I sat by the tree,  13 I knew that [redacted] was in shock because she kept  14 staring at the building, I kept asking her questions and  15 she just kept saying 'Yes, yes, yes'. There was no  16 engagement or interaction, she was in shock.  17 "83. [redacted] was being taken into an ambulance  18 and Marcio, [redacted] and I were also told to go into  19 the same ambulance as at that point they realised I was  20 pregnant and needed to be checked immediately. I do not  21 know what happened to Helen and her daughter; I know  22 Helen was looking for [redacted] and we both I assumed  23 that she had gone out of the other exit."  24 Then she describes her injuries and other matters.  25 Mr Chairman, that's all I propose to read from her</p> <p>Page 164</p>

<p>1 statement.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: The entirety of her statement will of course</p> <p>4 stand in the record and be taken into account in full</p> <p>5 accordingly.</p> <p>6 ELPIDO BONIFACIO (evidence read into the record)</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: The second and only other statement I would</p> <p>8 wish to read into the record this afternoon is the</p> <p>9 statement of Mr Elpido Bonifacio.</p> <p>10 He was from flat 83 on the 11th floor. He was the</p> <p>11 last person to be rescued alive from Grenfell Tower. He</p> <p>12 was brought out by firefighters at 8.07 am.</p> <p>13 The reference to his statement is IWS00001085.</p> <p>14 It's dated 18 September 2018, and it has a statement</p> <p>15 of truth at page 11.</p> <p>16 Mr Bonifacio and his wife had lived in</p> <p>17 Grenfell Tower for 36 years at the time of the fire.</p> <p>18 They rented their flat from RBKC.</p> <p>19 Mr Bonifacio is partially sighted and is registered</p> <p>20 as blind. He was alone in the flat at the time of the</p> <p>21 fire as his wife had gone to work.</p> <p>22 I would start by reading paragraph 5. He says:</p> <p>23 "5. The flat was unfurnished with no carpets when</p> <p>24 we first got the keys. I remember we received a letter</p> <p>25 with our tenancy book which contained fire safety</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 Then at paragraph 13 and following Elpido Bonifacio</p> <p>2 discusses safety checks and he says this:</p> <p>3 "13. I am not aware of the London Fire Brigade</p> <p>4 conducting home safety checks in the tower. I do</p> <p>5 remember them attending once after the refurbishment to</p> <p>6 check the smoke alarm was working. They didn't replace</p> <p>7 them, just checked to see if they still worked. This is</p> <p>8 the only time in 36 years I remember them attending our</p> <p>9 home.</p> <p>10 "14. I believe each flat had individual smoke</p> <p>11 alarms, but the building did not have communal fire</p> <p>12 alarms or sprinklers. There was a smoke alarm in our</p> <p>13 kitchen and one in the hallway. To my knowledge</p> <p>14 Grenfell Tower never had communal fire alarm systems</p> <p>15 during my 36 years of living in the Tower.</p> <p>16 "15. I remember the electrics were checked every</p> <p>17 year and the gas supply was checked but I can't remember</p> <p>18 if it was every year like the electrics."</p> <p>19 Then at 19, under the heading, "The refurbishment of</p> <p>20 Grenfell Tower", which starts at paragraph 16, he says</p> <p>21 this:</p> <p>22 "19. Before the refurbishment I didn't have</p> <p>23 difficulty navigating the building as a blind man.</p> <p>24 Following the refurbishment it was not easy for me to</p> <p>25 find my way around because the tower now had 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 167</p>
<p>1 information. The letter was in English which isn't our</p> <p>2 native language but we could just about understand the</p> <p>3 fire safety instructions. We were never shown the</p> <p>4 escape routes and nobody from RBKC checked to make sure</p> <p>5 we understood the fire instructions. There was no</p> <p>6 follow up since then."</p> <p>7 Then at paragraph 8 on page 2, he says:</p> <p>8 "8. On entering our flat you would have pull the</p> <p>9 door behind you to close it and then lock the door with</p> <p>10 the key.</p> <p>11 Pausing there, he probably means "On leaving our</p> <p>12 flat":</p> <p>13 "Our door has a letter box which would always spring</p> <p>14 back once the letters had fallen to the floor."</p> <p>15 Then he explains the door arrangements in the flat.</p> <p>16 At paragraphs 9 to 12 he deals with the TMO, and at</p> <p>17 11 he says:</p> <p>18 "11. The TMO knew I had disabilities. Every time</p> <p>19 my wife would go down to the TMO office to report a</p> <p>20 repair they would often tell her to do it herself. She</p> <p>21 would then remind them that I was elderly and blind and</p> <p>22 then would escalate our repair turn over time.</p> <p>23 "12. Despite this there were never any</p> <p>24 conversations about the Council relocating me to a flat</p> <p>25 on a lower floor."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 166</p>	<p>1 additional floors. It became a different way of living</p> <p>2 for me. There were too many doors which made it</p> <p>3 confusing for me to know which floor I was on.</p> <p>4 "20. Especially when the lift was not working, I</p> <p>5 would find it very hard to find my way around.</p> <p>6 "21. The first time when the lift was not working,</p> <p>7 I had to go down the stairs but I didn't know where to</p> <p>8 go. It took me a long time to get out of the building</p> <p>9 as I got lost between floors.</p> <p>10 "22. To this day, I wouldn't know how to exit the</p> <p>11 building. It is unclear to me and it is still unclear</p> <p>12 to my wife who can see.</p> <p>13 "23. As a blind person living on the 11th floor I</p> <p>14 was extremely reliant on the lifts. There were two</p> <p>15 lifts in the tower but they were often not working.</p> <p>16 Everybody would report it to the Council/TMO but</p> <p>17 sometimes it would take hours, days, even weeks to fix</p> <p>18 them.</p> <p>19 "24. Other times we would have one lift to service</p> <p>20 the whole building. It wasn't easy but I would have to</p> <p>21 wait for the lift to come or take the stairs. There is</p> <p>22 a door which is opposite the lifts which leads to the</p> <p>23 main communal staircase. The stairs run through the</p> <p>24 middle part of the building. On average I would say at</p> <p>25 least one of the lifts did not work at least once or</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 168</p>

<p>1 twice a month.</p> <p>2 "25. During the refurbishment it was particularly</p> <p>3 difficult to use the lifts as the residents would have</p> <p>4 to share the lifts with the contractors carrying out the</p> <p>5 work so I would often have to walk up the stairs."</p> <p>6 Then he covers the events of the night of</p> <p>7 13/14 June 2017 at paragraphs 28 and following.</p> <p>8 He says this:</p> <p>9 "28. On 13th June I was home alone as my wife had</p> <p>10 gone to work. She left around 8pm and I was already</p> <p>11 asleep when she left. I was awoken by my wife who</p> <p>12 phoned me on the house phone at roughly lam in the</p> <p>13 morning of 14th June. She worked night shifts at the</p> <p>14 time and had received a call from a friend checking if</p> <p>15 we were ok as the tower was on fire. She didn't know</p> <p>16 the building was on fire or how bad it was as she wasn't</p> <p>17 there.</p> <p>18 "29. My wife started to call me frantically as she</p> <p>19 made her way home. The first time she called I did not</p> <p>20 answer because I was sleeping. I could hear the phone</p> <p>21 but did not want to break my sleep to answer it. The</p> <p>22 second time she called I didn't want to get up out of</p> <p>23 bed but I thought the call must be important for</p> <p>24 somebody to call so late. I answered the phone and</p> <p>25 remember her telling me there was a fire on the lower</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 169</p>	<p>1 firefighters and local residents on the ground.</p> <p>2 "32. Gordon's wife, also phoned me shortly after</p> <p>3 Gordon saying the same thing; that the fire brigade</p> <p>4 would come and get me so I should remain calm and stay</p> <p>5 put. The firefighters are professionals and being blind</p> <p>6 I had to listen to them and stay in the flat. I packed</p> <p>7 a rucksack with our passports, and important documents</p> <p>8 and I waited to be rescued.</p> <p>9 "33. After a couple of hours, I could smell the</p> <p>10 smoke and I wanted to go down the stairs to try and</p> <p>11 escape but I was worried about being trapped on the</p> <p>12 stairs so I decided to stay in the flat. I could see</p> <p>13 some burning flames coming from above and going past the</p> <p>14 windows. I could feel the heat after some time I was</p> <p>15 there, before the fire alarm started.</p> <p>16 "34. I'm not sure when but later the fire started</p> <p>17 to spread to the sitting room forcing me to retreat to</p> <p>18 my bedroom marked X on the plan attached (Exhibit EB2).</p> <p>19 I could see the colour of the flames and hear the sound</p> <p>20 of burning and the crackling of the flames. It was at</p> <p>21 this point that I could no longer take phone calls from</p> <p>22 my wife and Gordon as the landline was positioned in the</p> <p>23 sitting room and I could no longer enter that room as it</p> <p>24 was too hot from the heat of the flames. I believe the</p> <p>25 last call I took was from my wife at roughly 1.30am or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 171</p>
<p>1 floors and instructing me to put some wet towels on the</p> <p>2 floor around the doors.</p> <p>3 "30. I thought about leaving the flat but I didn't</p> <p>4 want to get trapped on the stairs as I knew I wasn't</p> <p>5 familiar with the new layout of the building following</p> <p>6 the refurbishment. I did open the front door but I</p> <p>7 could smell the smoke. It was a strong smell and the</p> <p>8 temperature was warm, hotter than usual. Prior to the</p> <p>9 refurbishment I would have felt confident that I would</p> <p>10 be able to leave the flat and navigate my way around the</p> <p>11 building to get out but as the building layout had</p> <p>12 changed I was trapped and stood no chance of escaping.</p> <p>13 "31. I did what she said and put wet towels on the</p> <p>14 floor by the doors. Shortly after, I received a call</p> <p>15 from my son Gordon. He said, 'There is a fire in the</p> <p>16 building, stay there dad, we've spoken to a firemen and</p> <p>17 they have said they will come and rescue you'. I think</p> <p>18 he called me at roughly 2am. Being blind and elderly I</p> <p>19 had no choice but to wait to be rescued. I could hear</p> <p>20 people shouting for help outside and lots of screaming</p> <p>21 and crying. I went to the living room window marked X</p> <p>22 on the plan attached (Exhibit EB1) and shouted for help.</p> <p>23 Somebody on the ground asked me what floor I was on. I</p> <p>24 told them and continued to shout help, help from the</p> <p>25 window and I managed to attract attention from the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 170</p>	<p>1 just after and the sitting room had already starting to</p> <p>2 burn.</p> <p>3 "35. I signalled for help from my bedroom window,</p> <p>4 [marked on the plan], waving a white towel. I think a</p> <p>5 lot of people saw me waving the towel from the window.</p> <p>6 I did that for about an hour back and forth to the</p> <p>7 window in my bedroom to the opposite side of the room. I</p> <p>8 could feel the water from the fireman's hose from the</p> <p>9 window. The water from the hose was cold so I would</p> <p>10 move away from the window to keep warm but then would</p> <p>11 need to stick my head outside of the window to get air</p> <p>12 as the room started to fill with smoke.</p> <p>13 "36. I thought about jumping out of the window to</p> <p>14 escape. I tried to drag the mattress off the bed to</p> <p>15 throw it out of the window to cushion my fall but it was</p> <p>16 too heavy to lift and it was too big to pass through the</p> <p>17 window. I quickly gave up on this plan and continued to</p> <p>18 shout for help.</p> <p>19 "37. Hours passed me by and I began to feel</p> <p>20 hopeless. The flat was becoming hotter and I started to</p> <p>21 tell myself that this was the end and I was destined to</p> <p>22 die in the fire. The thought of burning to death was</p> <p>23 horrific, I was petrified. I started to consider taking</p> <p>24 my own life. I took a handful of medication for my</p> <p>25 [redacted] and started to psych myself up to taking them</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 172</p>

<p>1 so if the fire was to eventually catch me I wouldn't 2 feel it. I wanted to numb the pain. 3 "38. Suicide is against my religion so I didn't end 4 up taking the tablets. I just said to myself 'whatever 5 happens, happens' I was ready to die, I just let go. I 6 had lost hope. I didn't tell any of my family members 7 that I intended to take my own life. I could hear the 8 mirror in the sitting room shatter and I knew it was a 9 consequence of the heat from fire. It was a loud bang. 10 It was so frightening. I could hear the crackling 11 flames in the sitting room. I said to myself 'it's 12 finished, this is the end' and I prepared myself to die. 13 'Lord into your hands I commend my spirit' I said to 14 myself. 15 "39. The smoke alarms in the flat were all 16 inter-linked so if one sounded they would all go off 17 together. Both alarms went off as the heat started to 18 rise. I could hear the alarms from the bedroom. 19 "40. Suddenly, I heard the sound of running water 20 from the firemen's hose in the flat. When I heard that 21 I knew they were inside my flat as the sound was louder 22 than the sound of the hose from outside the window. I 23 opened the bedroom door and there they were - four maybe 24 five firefighters with a hose. They were big men, they 25 looked like giants to me. They said, 'Come on, relax,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 173</p>	<p>1 surrounded by smoke and heat. The stairway is very 2 narrow which made it difficult for the firefighters to 3 take me down the stairs. 4 "45. At one point there were firemen trying to go 5 up and down the stairs at the same time we were trying 6 to go down so we had to stop at the top of the stairs to 7 allow the other firefighters enough room to pass us. I 8 remember we stopped twice on the way down. I believe 9 the firefighters were helping each other to bring up the 10 hose. 11 "46. I cannot describe the lobby area from sight 12 but the lobby area was smoky and I could hear people 13 from the ambulances and lots of other people. I got out 14 of the building just after Sam in the morning which 15 means I was waiting to be rescued for about 6-7 hours. 16 I think I was the last person to leave the tower alive 17 and I still can't get my head around that. 18 "Firefighters 19 "47. The firefighters who came to rescue me were 20 very brave and courageous. They were prepared to 21 sacrifice their lives for mine. The fire had circled 22 the building and every room except the room I was hiding 23 in when the firefighters arrived. I owe my life to them 24 and I am grateful for their efforts to save me from the 25 fire."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 175</p>
<p>1 we will take you down'. The Lord had answered my 2 prayers. 3 "41. The firefighters gripped me either side under 4 my armpits to take me down the staircase. They just 5 whisked me out of the flat. I remember that the water 6 hose was coming from inside the flat, not outside but by 7 the lift and the front door of the flat. 8 "42. On leaving the flat I could see flames in the 9 kitchen and the living room and had begun to make its 10 way into the bedroom where I was hiding. The flat was 11 very, very hot. 12 "43. Two firemen supported me down the staircase 13 either side of me and I believe at least two 14 firefighters remained in the flat to fight the fire. I 15 cannot describe the staircase very well but I remember 16 water falling down. It was very wet. They told me to 17 keep calm. I could smell smoke but nothing else. There 18 was smoke everywhere but I didn't care that I didn't 19 have the breathing apparatus, I was just so happy to be 20 rescued. I even forgot the rucksack I had packed with 21 our passports as I was in such a hurry to get out of the 22 flat. 23 "44. I remember stepping on things as they rushed 24 me down the stairs. I'm not sure if it was the hose or 25 something else but it was a horrible feeling. I was</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 174</p>	<p>1 Then he goes on to explain his experiences outside 2 the tower and I'll just read one or two paragraphs of 3 that. 4 "48. My lungs were full of smoke. On exiting the 5 tower I was put straight onto a stretcher and placed in 6 an ambulance which took me to the Chelsea and 7 Westminster Hospital. I didn't have time to speak to 8 anybody, and in fact I couldn't speak. I traveled to 9 the hospital with the paramedic who helped me lay down 10 in the ambulance and my family travelled behind me. 11 "49. I couldn't breathe but no oxygen was provided 12 in the ambulance. It took roughly 5-8 minutes to get to 13 the hospital. We drove with the siren on the whole way 14 there so I think we arrived at the hospital at 8.30am." 15 Then he goes on to describe the rest of that 16 experience. 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you. 18 MR MILLETT: So Mr Elpido Bonifacio's statement will go into 19 the record in its entirety and be read and taken into 20 account in full. 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 22 MR MILLETT: If I didn't read it at the start, I will again: 23 IWS00001085 as the Relativity reference for that 24 document. That includes the exhibits which are behind 25 it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 176</p>

1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, it's right I should thank both  
 2 Mr Bonifacio and Mrs Perestrelo for the time and trouble  
 3 they've taken to make these statements.  
 4 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, indeed.  
 5 I just want to mark the moment at which we have come  
 6 to the end of almost all of the BSR witnesses. There  
 7 remain a number of witness statements which we intend or  
 8 at least hope to read into the record next week, during  
 9 appropriate moments next week, but we have certainly  
 10 come to the end of the oral witnesses that the inquiry  
 11 is going to hear from at this phase.  
 12 I think it's right I should mark our deep gratitude  
 13 to all the bereaved, survivors and residents who have  
 14 assisted the inquiry in giving us witness statements and  
 15 coming to the inquiry to give their evidence. They've  
 16 done so with dignity, courage and conviction and they  
 17 are, if I may say so, a source of hope when we despair.  
 18 I wish to extend our gratitude to all of them.  
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. I would  
 20 heartily endorse everything you've said.  
 21 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, thank you.  
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.  
 23 So we break now and we resume on Monday with some  
 24 more witnesses but of a different kind.  
 25 MR MILLETT: We do. We start on Monday morning at a time to

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1 suit you, Mr Chairman, which I think is probably 10 am.  
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think that suits everyone,  
 3 Mr Millett!  
 4 MR MILLETT: Indeed!  
 5 And we have the evidence of Acting Inspector  
 6 Thatcher.  
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good.  
 8 Thank you very much, then. 10 o'clock on Monday.  
 9 Thank you.  
 10 (3.25 pm)  
 11 (The hearing adjourned until Monday, 12 November 2018  
 12 at 10.00 am)  
 13 I N D E X  
 14 MARCIO GOMES (affirmed) .....1  
 15 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY .....1  
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