

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: HAMMOND, PAUL

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

Occupation: INCIDENT RESPONSE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 6 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS

Date: 28/03/2018

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

My statement is in relation to an incident I attended at Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017.

I have been in the London Ambulance Service (LAS) since 1990. I have become an Ambulance person, which was 4 weeks where I would pick older people up and drop them where they needed to be, I have then applied to do front line work that was 15 weeks at Fulham. I have then applied to be a paramedic in 1995. That way I was able to administer medicine.

Currently I am an Incident Response Officer (IRO) for North West London. I am based at [REDACTED] Ambulance Station. I cover the whole of the North West London I have done this since 2015.

Before the current role I was a duty station officer and before that a clinical team leader. A Duty Station Officer role is to manage staff and a group of ambulance stations as well as dealing with incidents. I was based Homerton originally, moved to Brent and then ended at Friern Barnet. A Clinical Team Leader Role entails providing clinical leadership to colleagues. this was from 2001 – 2004. I was based in St Johns Wood.

In order to train as a IRO, it is all internal training. This training is run over two days. It is major incident training and scenario based. We complete a lot of table top training and classroom based. I have done the JESIP (joint emergency services interoperability programme) course which is multi-agency training.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

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Since 2015, I have attended one significant incident in Southall as an IRO for a multiple patient carbon monoxide poisoning where I was Bronze Sector. I have not attended any major incidents prior to Grenfell however, I have been in the job for a long time and I am confident and competent to attend such major incidents.

I have never been to Grenfell Tower before, nor have I been to the surrounding estate. I have worked in Willesden for a lot of my career so I do have a fair idea of the area of which Grenfell is situated.

Grenfell is the first major incident I have attended as an IRO. The difference between a major and significant incident is the level of resources needed. A significant incident is attended by four operational commanders and four ambulances, whereas with a Major incident is attended by eight operational commanders and twenty ambulances.

I started work at 1900Hrs on 13th June 2017. I have arrived at work earlier at 1800Hrs to allow the day shift to finish early. I started my shift as I usually do at [REDACTED] Ambulance Station. I have then travelled to Bow which is our Head Quarters to speak about the increase in major incidents in London. It was others from blue team who were present.

This discussion was held in Amanda WHEATON's office, who is Pan London silver Commander. It was whilst this discussion was being held that we have been notified of the Grenfell Fire. Persons present were Lawrence IANNOU, Maria CONYERS, Dave BARNES, Grahame BARWICK and Tom GLEESON all of which who are also IROs.

At 0130Hrs, Lawrence has taken a call on the radio stating there was a fire on the ground of South West London. As Lawrence is IRO for that part of London he has been despatched to it. When there is any fire and persons reported are trapped we are automatically despatched. It was only after he had gone and having found a little more information with regards to location of the incident that we realised the area of the incident was in North West London. At some point our control room has declared the incident as a significant. I remember stating that I needed to attend, as it is the area I cover. I was despatched at 0140Hrs my call sign is IR11.

I travelled to Grenfell Tower in a marked LAS vehicle assigned to my call sign. I made my way to the Tower on blue lights. I followed the Sat Nav in the vehicle, as I wouldn't know the best way from Bow to

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

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the Tower. I believe the route I have taken is via Whitechapel, through Pentonville road and Euston Road. When I arrived in the area of Kings Cross I heard Lawrence giving a windscreen report via radio.

A windscreen report is simply information relayed to about what can be seen from looking at the incident from where you are. Lawrence has stated he is a mile away looking at a block of flats which is approximately twenty storeys high and engulfed in flames. After hearing Lawrence, relay that over the radio I was taken aback at the scale of what we were going to attend.

Travelling on the A40 there were cars parked up and people filming the Tower block. It was then when I saw it and was like "oh fuck". I couldn't believe the severity of the fire and I thought that this would be declared a major incident. I have never seen anything like this before.

Getting closer to the Tower the West cross route was closed for road works. There were cones in the way but a workman saw that I wanted to get through has moved the cones for me. I have turned into Addison Crescent and parked on Treadgold Street. This is as close as I could get to the Tower with my vehicle. I have arrived on scene at 0154Hrs.

When I get out the car I didn't see much apart from a few fire appliances, I have my white helmet and high vis jacket with me as well as my board with my paperwork. I have gone to find Lawrence and he is situated by the front of the tower. The LFB command unit was also there. I could see debris coming off the building. So we have based ourselves under a mezzanine walkway where the carpark is. This was the best place to be at the time due to the fact that we weren't getting hit with any falling debris.

Having liaised with Lawrence who has spoken to an LFB Commander. The Commander has said the fire is superficial and on the outside of the building and there are currently no patients. Due to the information from the LFB Commander Lawrence has kept it as a significant incident.

I was surprised at the fact there were currently no patients. I have gone back to the car to get major incident tabards as I didn't have the bronze sector tabard on me. At the car I have got the rucksack and got the tabards.

As Lawrence was first on scene and currently the Incident Commander, I asked him if he wanted me to be Bronze Sector. Bronze Sector oversees and manages the immediate area. Whereas the incident commander will oversee everything.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

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We were located on the east side of the building. HART team had established a casualty collection point (CCP). I have marked this on exhibit PRH/1 where we have been located. I have marked it with a * and HART casualty collection point (CCP) where they were treating people also marked on the exhibit PRH/1. The Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) has been set up by Peter APPLEBY, who is an advanced paramedic and is running as it should be. As Bronze Sector, I have checked to make sure that everything is running in order. There was an issue with regards to where the loading point would be for ambulances. I don't know where ambulances were parked. I don't know that Bowmore Rd was blocked. I have left that discussion between Caroline DRISCOLL and Peter APPLEBY as I was confident that they were able to figure this out.

I have given Dominic STARK triage tabard and Clive DYETT who is HART supervisor was also there and had set up a triage point. Any patient who was brought out of the tower was triaged by STARK. HART paramedics would carry them to an ambulance crew due to the fact they have a better PPE than a non HART paramedic. The patients would be carried out of the tower by LFB not too far from the main door of the building.

I remember LFB carrying out two people from the Tower. I believe these people were deceased. I can't recall many people coming out.

There was a lot of pressure from senior LFB Commander stating that we LAS staff needed to go into the Tower. I have stated to this Commander that we can't go in due to not having the relevant equipment. We were not prepared for any of our staff to go into the building. I believe this LFB commander was borough commander level and had a white hard with a single thick white line. The HART paramedics know that they shouldn't be going in due to not having the relevant kit to deal with fire. There was also falling debris.

At 0225Hrs, Lawrence decided to declare this as a major incident. I have written major incident in my log but not time stamped. This was due to Lawrence attending a silver meeting and a LFB Officer stated they had seventy Fire survival calls in progress. Before we hadn't had any patients and the fact that LFB have now stated that we would potentially have patients. This has raised the incident level. Lawrence has updated control. I have then chased up the fact that we are yet to get two more operational officers.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

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LFB have asked us for a carry sheet, these are sheets of plastic with handles where you can carry people out on them. I have two on my vehicle. My car was locked on run lock. I believe someone may have gone to my vehicle to get the carry sheet although I can't recall who and when.

At 0255Hrs LFB have said they have smashed the other side of the Tower and they will be bringing people out both sides of the building but couldn't guarantee that they wouldn't bring any more out from my side. Lawrence has come over and I have informed him of the fact people will be coming out the other side of the building, West side, so I have told 3x HART officers to attend the other side of the building. I have now sectorised the building. Sector 1 was on the East side and Sector 2 was the West side. Graham, Maria and Tom has gone to Sector 2. I have only dealt with Sector 1.

Myself and Lawrence felt that it was important to duplicate what we had on Sector 1 as the distance between the two points meant we were unable to share any of the resources. Especially due to the fact we believed that patients maybe be coming out of Sector 2 it was important to duplicate the fact that we had a CCP over there. Due to the falling debris it wouldn't be possible for patients to be brought from Sector 2 to be dealt with in sector 1 without a long walk. We didn't need a lot of equipment as we didn't see many patients come out of the Tower.

As the fire progressed, we have moved the CCS due to the worrying that the tower would come down. Andrea RIGGS from HEMS has stated that it will be moved around the corner to outside Kensington leisure centre and that is where it stayed.

We have relocated to the grass bank at 0320Hrs. This is just outside the Kensington Leisure Centre. Lawrence has stated LFB were worried about the structure of the building. Their Commander has stated that they were considering moving all the LFB out of the building. So due to that new piece of information I have moved my staff further up the bank for safety and so I can have a better line of sight of the building.

I have been waiting for patients to come out and no one was coming out. I believed at the time patients must have been coming out of the other side. IRO GOULD has taken over from HART bronze triage as they were redeployed to Sector 2.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

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I remember a message coming over the radio stating if I hear a whistle then that's evacuation cue and there is a high risk of the building coming down. A structural engineer has come and stated that the building was structurally sound.

It was between 0215Hrs and 0255Hrs the only time I had seen people being escorted out of the Tower. Then at around 0445Hrs I have witnessed four Pilipino adults being escorted, they were in vest tops and shorts and were dark from soot, males and females in their 30s. They had towels over their faces. I didn't treat anybody. These people were walking out. I assumed Sector 2 was busier with getting patients and the busier side of the Tower.

I was ready with Andy GOULD awaiting patients to come out of the Tower on Sector 1.

The whole building was engulfed in flames as I arrived on scene, as the night wore on the fire was more inside the building and at around 0530Hrs most of the fire on the outside had burnt itself out. There was one pocket that would not die down but I think that was due to it being connected to a gas main.

At Sector 1, I did notice that whilst we were on the bank there was a male a few floor up who kept coming to the window and looking to see what was going on. His flat looked untouched but all around him was on fire. I knew there were a couple of jumpers but it wasn't until later on that HART dealt with the deceased. The only time we would move a deceased person is to access a live casualty.

At 0754Hrs I have handed my log over to Nick GOH his call sign was IR51. I have stated to him no one has come out for a while, I have shown him the Casualty Clearing and the process of what was being done. He has then carried on with the incident log I initially started. My entries stop at 0745Hrs, anything past that will have been written by Nick GOH.

I have been told to go to Hammersmith Hospital for a hot debrief. At 0830Hrs I have arrived at the Hospital and spoke to Jason HALLAHAN. He has asked me for any immediate pressing issues. I have stated to him that I am exhausted and need to go home. I have stated to him that I will put something together once I have slept. I did have one pressing thing and that was the fact that we came under immense pressure from the LFB Commander to go into the building. I'm assuming it was the fact that LFB have seen HART in their kit which may look similar to LFB kit. HART's kit though isn't fire resilient and it just isn't our job to do that. I felt like he thought we should go in. I did inform the LFB Commander that we couldn't and wouldn't be allowing our staff to enter the burning Tower.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

Signature witnessed by:

I have left Hammersmith Hospital at 0930Hrs and driven back to [REDACTED] Ambulance Station where I finished by tour of duty.

I have returned to work on 14th June 2017 at 1900Hrs and done a night duty. We have been getting calls but not with regards to Grenfell. I have suggested that we should have a hot debrief at Bow. This has been done at around 0200Hrs. The debrief didn't last long.

On 15th June 2017, I have had a call from Glenn PROBST at home to state I will be going back to Grenfell to deal with the DVI. I was due to start work at 19:00 hrs but started early at 17:30hrs. The vehicle I usually use wasn't here so I have used an Astra instead. I arrived at Grenfell at 1918Hrs and took over from incident commander Colin PASSEY.

I attended silver meetings throughout my time at Grenfell. At 1930Hrs LFB have stated they have scaled up their pumps from four to eight pumps. I have parked on Silchester Road this time and I have noticed that Sector 2 had been closed. With regards to the meetings the following was discussed this is what has been stated: Tri service teams were recovering bodies comprised of Police DVI, LAS HART and LFB urban search and rescue personnel. There was to be no body recovery after 2200Hrs only firefighting. Three adults plus a baby had been recovered. I did not personally see them.

At 2131Hrs HART teams were on 9th floor dealing with recovery of a bariatric patient. HART completed ROLE (recognition of life extinct) at 2149Hrs for this patient. I heard this over the radio.

At 2230Hrs another meeting was held still stating, LFB have walked the building and there are still pockets of fire, crews getting equipment out throughout the night, DVI have recovered 4 deceased people from stairs. DVI body recover begins. Four more HART teams coming tomorrow at 8am. Forensic have also finished examining the scene of the original fire on the 4th floor.

I handed over to Neil FISHER, 3 HART will remain, Amanda WHEATON has scaled this down to one on one. TC82 ambulance crew to remain on scene. At 2315Hrs I have transferred command to Neil FISHER.

I did not once enter the building nor did I enter the casualty clearing Centre. I did do a walk around when I have taken over from Colin PASSEY.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
2018

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Whilst at the incident I did take a video on my mobile phone of the burning Tower, once at 0244Hrs of the East side, I exhibit this as PRH/2 and at 0639Hrs of the same side and exhibit this as PRH/3. I have emailed both these videos to ukpoliceimageappeal.co.uk/uploadGT.

I did feel mentally and physically exhausted from the incident.

With regards to the Action Cards the section on "Commence the actions" of bronze triage, I didn't completed as Dominic STARK was dealing with the triage. With regards to Bronze extraction this wasn't needed due to the fact LAS weren't extracting people from the building as LFB were doing that.

Timings on the log are times I have gained from my phone, due to not being able to wear a watch as I have to bare below the elbow.

Signature: P.HAMMONDS
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