

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: DUDENEY, STEPHEN

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

Occupation: FIRE FIGHTER

This statement (consisting of 18 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:

Date: 06/07/2017

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

In July 2017 I will have 30 years in the Fire Brigade and currently hold the rank of Borough Commander Hackney. I have been based in the East all of my service but by the very nature of the job have attended fires all over London, including Kensington. However, I have never attended a fire at Grenfell Towers before.

I went off duty at 17.00 hrs on the 13 June 2017 and was not aware of the fire until I was woken by my wife at 5.45 am on the 14 June 2017. She had been looking at the news and had seen there was a large fire in West London. She told me that it was a 40 pump fire in a tower block. That in itself is an unprecedented incident so I turned on the news and used my remote access key to log into the Fire Brigade System. This allowed me to access Vision which is a mobilisation system that tells you what is going on in terms of live calls.

I rang Control and said I would be available to come back on duty. I was told that DAC FENTON was organising officer cover so I rang him and he said I would receive a pager message shortly.

At 7.28 am I received a pager message which said "1/2 MOB 076029 14062017 A1 Flat 16 Grenfell Tower, Lancaster, West Estate, London, W11 1TG Forty Pump Fire persons reported Arial x 4 FRU.10 CU x 6 High rise procedure fire surviv 0728 14 JUN2017".

This is a standard call out message which told me there was a fire and where it was and what resources were in attendance.

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

I left my home in my job lease car which is fitted out with blue lights and sirens. I knew exactly where to go as I have done the knowledge so did not have to rely on Sat Navs or a map. I had been informed over the phone that the RVP (Rendezvous point) was at Ladbroke Grove/Elgin Crescent.

As I came over Canning Town Flyover I could see a cloud of smoke, the plume of which had spread from the West to the North. Bearing in mind at this point I was several miles away, I was looking West as I was Heading West the smoke was heading North. What I had seen on TV in relation to this incident had defied anything I had seen before and the sight of the smoke from that far away reinforced that there was still a significant fire in progress.

After that due to the route I took I was unable to see anything more of the incident and continued on to Ladbroke Grove. As I turned into Ladbroke Grove I could see fire brigade vehicles parked along the street. I continued on turning left onto Blenheim Crescent and parked about 100m down the street. I then rang mobilisation control and booked myself Status 3 (in attendance) at 08.27 am. I got into my PPE and continued along the road. There were two Station Managers who had also just arrived and I advised them to phone in to note their arrival as the radio was busy. I recognised them as I have seen them before but do not know who they are.

I walked along Blenheim Crescent, right into St Marks Road, left into Cornwall Crescent, right into Clarendon Road and as I got to Dulford Street this was the first time I saw the fire up close.

At this point I took a picture on my Iphone. The time stamp on the picture is 14JUNE 0841 and it shows the tower from about 200m away. The reason I took the photo is because my first impression looking at the fire development, it didn't look right, it was unusual.

The upper floors were visible above the trees and I could see the entire upper section had been affected by the fire with multiple burnt out flats. At this point the fire was about 8 hours old yet significantly some of the flats below those that were burnt out appeared to be in the development stage. This is not what you would expect to see but it could be explained if the external fire spread had initially bypassed those flats but they were now being affected by other means of fire spread which I could not determinate from the outside of the building. This was not a flat by flat, floor by floor steadily progressing fire.

I continued along Walmer Road and right into Bomore Road with Kensington Sports Centre on my right. I looked left and saw a lot of fire, Police and Ambulance activity – rescue and staging areas with the building in the background. I then saw the LFB Command Unit – CU8 – and went and stood with other Senior Officer colleagues who had arrived to relieve officers who had been deployed in the early hours of

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

the morning. It was @ 8.45 am. I was told that there was a Silver meeting in CU8 and saw Assistant Commissioner Roe inside. I caught his eye and he gestured me to hold on and then continued his meeting. I recall it being very warm and so at that point took off my fire helmet and fire jacket to keep cool. I walked to the corner of Bomore Road and Grenfell Road to look again at the building. I still couldn't quite take it in. Within six minutes the fire had changed again. I could see water being applied from what was likely on aerial platform (I couldn't see this) although it was a weak jet and it made me wonder if we had water supply problems.

One flat about four or five floors below the top was now burning significantly on the East side of the building, while on the South side there was productive grey smoke suggesting hot but poorly ventilated fire in several flats. What this means is that for whatever reason those flats were to all intents and purposes alight but there was no air supply to ignite the flames.

I took a photo of this at 08.47 am which is how I am able to say that in six minutes the fire had again changed.

Shortly after this AC ROE spoke to the assembled officers and briefed us around what had occurred over night. The current picture and the plan going forward. He said that all officers may not be required and some would go back to their base as they may well be required later on as it was expected the incident would be ongoing for days. He allocated a number of roles and then came to me and said something like "I am really sorry Steve, I know that you probably want to go in but I've got a very complex job that needs undertaking which requires someone I can trust and who has the ability to get this done". He then briefed me that I was to go to CU1 on Bramley Road to meet with DAC DRAWBRIDGE with a view to taking over the resourcing role but initially unpick the fire engines that were parked across the area as we needed to get crews away and replace them with fresh crews.

I was informed that anything I needed was at my disposal to make it happen as soon as possible.

I made my way to CU1 where I met with DAC DRAWBRIDGE and told him what I had been briefed. He said "GM West was already doing some resourcing but could you go out and try to sort out the location of the fire engines".

For the next hour I made my way around all sectors of the incident and all local roads taking a mental note of which appliances were sat in – this means sort into a hydrant and pumping water – to the fire ground – and those that were blocked in. Where I saw appliances with their crews who were ready to go, I dismissed them from the incident asking them to report to CU8 to let them know that I, GM DUDENEY had released them. I also kept DAC DRAWBRIDGE up to date.

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

Such was the complexity of the incident ground and surrounding streets and due to the urgent need to get fresh crews into the building I did the appliance reliefs dynamically opposed to listing and mapping all appliances before implementing a relief as would be the case usually.

All released crews were instructed to report to Paddington Fire Station for a debrief and access to counselling should it be required.

During that period I noticed a couple of things that I took photos of because they were of personal interest to me – having noticed Paddington's turntable ladder A213 parked under the podium next to Grenfell Tower covered in debris, I took a photograph at 09.49 am of the side access road now filled with debris where I would have assumed that was operating from. I then took a picture looking up the East side of the tower to where that debris had fallen from.

Also within the walk around I noticed a body covered with a sheet in a service area to the side of the covered access road that looked as though it had just been dragged out of the way. I saw a large staging area on the Northwest corner of the block with many fire fighters resting awaiting deployment and a number of TSG Officers in full PPE and shields standing by the escort fire crews into the building. On a walkway back up the Bramley Road I noted LAS personnel and what I believe to be Police DVI officers preparing a temporary holding area for fatalities.

Later on as I toured the area again I saw a number of bodies in body bags in this area.

Back at CU1 I had a list on a scrap of paper that detailed a number of fire appliances that were set in 0 – could not be moved. As I recall these were G271 and G272 from North Kensington whose crews had already walked back to the station. There was also A431 Kentish Town, G331 Kensington, G371 Chiswick and H421 Richmond. I briefed AC ROE that it was my opinion to release these vehicles would significantly impact fire fighting operations and that we should arrange transport for outgoing crews which was being taken care of but also assistance in bringing in crews directly from those stations whose appliances were tied up. This was again unprecedented in terms of business as usual LFB operations but that was my assessment and AC ROE took my advice and agreed the plan. I spoke to an unknown PC who had been allocated to me, I cannot recall his name or shoulder number and asked him to radio GT to ask for Police Carriers with driver only to go to those stations to collect the crews. He eventually told me GT had said no so I walked round to CU8 to ask where the Police on scene commander was located. I was told he was inside Kensington Leisure Centre and it was Commander Stuart Cundy.

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

I walked around to meet Cmndr CUNDY and outlined my issues. He agreed that the MPS would do this and he rang MPS Gold who also agreed. I then rang LFB Gold at GT – AC MILLS – and asked him to meet with MPS GOLD to facilitate my request. This pretty much took care of the early relief.

I believe this was around 10.41 am as I took a photo of the staging area at that time as I felt it was worth noting.

The brief meeting ended at approximately 10.44 am because I took a photograph of the Surrey Fire Service area ladder platform (ALP) that had been set up on the grass on the East side of the block. At 10.46 am I took a photograph of the Surrey Fire Service pumping appliance that had been sent with the ALP. I then made my way back towards CU1 via the walkway, stopping at the Southeast corner at 10.51 to take another photograph of the debris on the floor and looking up at the building where it had fallen from.

At approximately 11.00 am following a discussion with DAC DRAWBRIDGE back at CU1 I was informed Ladbroke Grove had been partially cleared by MPS traffic officers and CU3 from Barking was being set up to receive all incoming future relief crews due to the complexity of the original relief to which I was involved. I agreed with DAC DRAWBRIDGE that I would run this part of the ongoing operation as I had good knowledge of the local area and now a good appreciation of the fire ground so it was decided a new officer – GM JENKINS – would take over all other resource requirements apart from crews such as fuel, BA cylinders and other supply needs.

I walked back towards my car and repositioned it near CU3 in Ladbroke Grove to organise the reliefs going forward.

Essentially I spent the next six or so hours implementing the 1430 and 1730 reliefs. This involved briefing crews, speaking to the officer of the watch at control, liaising with DAC COHEN-HATTON at Paddington in relation to her team, keeping the OOW (Officer of the Watch) informed as to when these crews and appliances would be released back into service.

At about 14.30 there was a tactical withdrawal from the building. I believe this actually took place after the 14.30 relief had been deployed because up until that point as crews arrived, I was giving them an immediate briefing and sending them to the incident ground to report to GM NORMAN who was running BA resources (breathing apparatus). This was a very efficient system because as soon as the tactical withdrawal was declared crews were now being held on the pavement in Ladbroke Grove as appliance commanders from the scene were being sent up to me to check off the names on the appliance nominal roll boards which were with CU3. Due to the importance and need for absolute clarity around this, I

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

instructed SM ALIE who had just been relieved from the fire ground to assist me in the roll call. We placed all the boards on the steps of a house in Ladbroke Grove near the junction with Cornwall Crescent where CU3 was located. I asked all newly arrived crews to move away from this immediate area. I also asked several members of the public who were congregating to clear the area so I could facilitate this important task. Within a short time – possibly 20 minutes - all personnel had been accounted for and I was able to report this back to the fire ground.

As I sit here now I think this may well have been after the 17.30 relief. In any event the timing of this tactical withdrawal will be reflected in other people's notes / logs.

I noticed that this event caused a real change in the tempo of the incident. We gradually released the crews who had been at the fire and begun to have to manage the expectation of newly arrived crews who were keen to get involved. I established from the fire ground that some noises had been heard from within the building which had caused concern leading to the tactical withdrawal. I kept crews at the RVP updated so as to maintain their interest and keep them engaged but understanding of the delay whilst the building was checked by a Dangerous Structures Engineer.

At some point in time after this all crews were sent into Kensington Leisure Centre.

After a conversation with the CU crew to ensure we were all up to date with the business we had conducted so far, I returned to the fire ground to meet with GM JENKINS to discuss overall resource requirements as I couldn't get him on the radio.

GM JENKINS command unit, I cannot recall which one, was parked in Walmer Road towards Dulford Street. He was not on the unit so I walked to the Kensington Sports Centre where I was told the majority of officers had gone into the tower to check the lifts. I recall this being around 19.40 hrs as it was the first time I had seen the tower in several hours and the fire situation was pretty much under control. I took a picture at this point looking at the east side of the tower. I noted almost every flat above the middle floors had now been burnt out. By the differences in the facade of the building, some of which appeared burnt but clean, the remainder appeared burnt but sooty. I reasoned the cleaner areas had been extinguished by water from the ALP monitor. The remainder were above the reach of the ALP and as evidenced by the soot staining had burnt out after all of the available fuel had been consumed. I must stress this is an opinion I formed from experience just from the visual indicators and is not an opinion on what actually happened, as at that point I had no knowledge of what fire fighting tactics had been employed whilst I had been at the RVP in Ladbroke Grove

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

At some point after this I met the Command Team as they come out of the building. I spoke with GM JENKINS about the resourcing issues and also GM GILES who was going to take over from GM JENKINS.

Having discussed that the 17.30 relief hadn't been used in offensive fire fighting up to this point we decided that although CU staff required a relief at change of watch, which was now imminent at 20.00 hrs. The operational relief we could hold back for a 21.00 hr ordering to arrive by 22.00 hrs. This would enable control and the BCC (Brigade Co-ordination Centre) to get a slow time view of LFB resources across London before any more were sent to Grenfell Tower. We agreed this with the incident commander who was now AC ELLIS D and then between myself, GM BILES and GM JENKINS we agreed that one officer could now manage resourcing going forward. At this point my role in the incident concluded. I believe this to be approximately 20.15 hrs. I returned to CU3, informed them they had a relief on route and GM BILES was now taking care of resourcing overall. I then thanked them for their assistance, returned to my car, changed out of my fire kit and left the scene at approximately 20.30. I drove home and booked off duty at approximately 21.30 hrs. The incident log will reflect that time accurately.

When I mentioned earlier that I briefed the crews as they arrived, my briefings were purely with regard to getting them ready and up to the fire ground. It included things like ensuring they were kited up, had their BA and had locked their appliances, leaving their keys with the Command Unit. I then informed them of the route they had to take to get up to the fire ground and the fact they had to report to GM NORMAN at the Kensington Leisure Centre who was in charge of BA resources.

Staff in my command unit kept a record of crews movements on white boards in the CU and took photographs of the whiteboards as a means of tracking what had been done as we only had a specific number of boards and therefore had to rub out information so it was replaced with new crews and timings as the day went on. Watch Manager Stuart JONES was one of those members of staff and it was his colleague who was taking the photos. I have no knowledge of where they are stored.

I have referenced a number of photographs that I took during my deployment and I have emailed these to the mailbox as requested by DC JAMES with the subject title A614.

I retain the photographs on my phone.

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

RESTRICTED

Statement of: DUDENEY, STEPHEN

Form MG11(T)

Page 8 of 8

Signature:
2017

Signature witnessed by:

RESTRICTED