

<p>1 Thursday, 28 October 2021 2 MR SIMON HARMAN (affirmed)2 3 Questions from MS COLLIER2 4 Questions from MS HILL43 5 Questions from DR VAN DELLEN61 6 Questions from MR BARTH65 7 Questions from THE JURY72 8 MR RYAN EDWARDS (affirmed)74 9 Questions from MR O'CONNOR74 10 Questions from MR DAVIES136 11 Questions from MR SKELTON154 12 Questions from THE JURY163 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 London borough of Barking and Dagenham? 2 A. That's correct, yes. 3 Q. Then, in 2014, you were made a temporary detective 4 inspector serving in the role of duty officer? 5 A. Temporary police inspector. 6 Q. Sorry, temporary police inspector. That's right, my 7 mistake? 8 A. That's correct. 9 Q. You were fulfilling the role of duty officer? 10 A. That's right. 11 Q. As you know, I am going to be asking you questions about 12 your involvement at the scene of the discovery of 13 Gabriel Kovari's body on the morning of 28 August 2014. 14 It is right to note that you had a very brief 15 involvement at the scene of the discovery of 16 Anthony Walgate's body in June? 17 A. That's correct, yes. 18 Q. I believe you should have a witness statement there in 19 front of you. Please feel free to refer to it, if you 20 wish, during the course of giving your evidence. But 21 may I ask, do you have an independent recollection of 22 attending at the discovery of Gabriel's body on 23 28 August 2014? 24 A. I do, yes. 25 Q. That morning, you were the early turn duty inspector for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 (10.01 am) 2 (In the presence of the jury) 3 THE CORONER: Good morning, members of the jury. 4 Yes, Ms Collier. 5 MS COLLIER: May we call Mr Simon Harman, please. 6 MR SIMON HARMAN (affirmed) 7 Questions from MS COLLIER 8 MS COLLIER: Good morning, Mr Harman. Do feel free to 9 remove your mask and take a seat. 10 A. Thank you. 11 Q. Could you give us your full name, please? 12 A. It is Simon David Harman. 13 Q. And your currently occupation? 14 A. Ethics and data protection manager. 15 Q. I think you have been doing that since around about 16 2016; is that right? 17 A. That's correct. 18 Q. You joined the police, Mr Harman, in 1995, joined at 19 Essex Police? 20 A. That's correct. 21 Q. Then you transferred to the Metropolitan Police in 2001, 22 by which time you had been promoted to police sergeant? 23 A. That's correct. 24 Q. Then I think you worked in a number of different areas 25 of the Met before transferring in July 2012 to the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 Barking borough? 2 A. That's correct. 3 Q. Just in terms of a reminder for the jury, early turn 4 I think is 6.00 am to 2.00 pm? 5 A. In 2014 it was 7.00 am till 3.00 pm, I believe. 6 Q. 7.00 till 3.00. Thank you. 7 Before we come on to look in detail at your 8 attendance at the scene on the 28th, I would like to ask 9 you some questions, first, please, about the policies 10 which cover the role of duty officer. 11 The jury has heard from Inspector Learmonth, and he 12 was the duty inspector at the Walgate scene. He told 13 the jury a bit about the role of duty inspector, and one 14 thing that he said was that it is a full-time role, 15 rather than something that is allocated on 16 a shift-by-shift basis. Was that right for you, that it 17 was as early turn duty inspector, that was your full 18 time role at that time? 19 A. That's correct, yes. 20 Q. Can we start then by looking at a policy document which 21 is found in one of the bundles, the sort of smaller 22 bundle which is on the left in front of you. It is 23 tab 20, please. For the screen, IPC63. 24 This, we see, the title is "The homicide and 25 unexplained death policy roles and responsibilities".</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 I appreciate that, aside from preparing for giving 2 evidence, you will not have seen this for some time but 3 is it a document that you would have been familiar with 4 in 2014? 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. It is right to note that the date of that document there 7 is November 2014, but our understanding is that it 8 reflects accurately the practice as at August 2014. If 9 at any stage you think that it doesn't, then you should 10 let us know. 11 A. Okay. 12 Q. Looking then at that first page, "Key roles and 13 responsibilities", in the middle of the page, there is 14 a heading "Duty officer", yes? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. That is the role, as we have said, that you were 17 fulfilling at the time. It reads: 18 "The duty officer is responsible for attending all 19 deaths where there is clear evidence of a crime or 20 suspicion that a crime may have been committed, 21 suicides, unexplained or work-related death, fatal fires 22 and sudden unexplained death of an infant ..." 23 In the case of Gabriel Kovari, it is right to say 24 that it would be unexplained initially, is that right? 25 A. Correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 A. That's correct, yes. 2 Q. As the policy suggests, those are the priorities for 3 someone such as yourself as duty officer attending the 4 scene of an unexplained death? 5 A. That's correct, yes. 6 Q. Next, on the policies, can I ask you to turn to tab 23 7 in that same bundle, which is IPC127. Do you have that? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. This is an extract from the ACPO murder investigation 10 manual. Again, can I check: would I be right to assume 11 that you would have been aware of that policy in 2014? 12 A. I was certainly aware of the existence of it. I cannot 13 say that I knew the entirety of the document. I was 14 aware there was one, yes. 15 Q. Yes, it is a long document. 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. This section here, as it says, is section 2, which 18 concerns the strategic management of homicide and major 19 incident investigations. Turning over the page on to 20 IPC127, 33, and then turning to internal page 35 on the 21 bundle, that is IPC127, 37. At 2.2.2, do we see this is 22 the part of the policy that deals with the initial 23 response? 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. That would cover your attendance as duty officer at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 Q. "The duty officer [the policy goes on] is responsible 2 for overseeing all initial action, including the key 3 areas identified by the five building block principles, 4 the calling of any support services does not remove the 5 duty officer's responsibility for the incident." 6 Mr Learmonth confirmed to us that that means that 7 whatever other specialist services may be called upon by 8 yourself as duty officer to attend the scene, you remain 9 in command of the scene at that time? 10 A. That's correct. 11 Q. Just staying with this document for a moment, just below 12 the section on duty officer there is a heading "Borough 13 CID officers". There, when a CID officer, preferably of 14 sergeant rank goes to the scene to assess the situation, 15 the policy says: 16 "If there is the slightest doubt, the event will be 17 dealt with as a suspicious death." 18 Then in the event of any doubt about whether a death 19 is suspicious, it is the detective inspector's advice 20 that will be sought. 21 Recalling, under the heading "Duty officer" there is 22 reference to the five building blocks principles, can 23 I turn over the tab to tab 21, which is MPS602. These 24 are the five building blocks, aren't they, that are 25 being referred to in that earlier policy?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 a scene? 2 A. Yes, that's correct. 3 Q. Here it says: 4 "The actions taken by the first officers attending 5 the scene of a homicide or major incident are critical 6 to the success of the investigation. From the outset, 7 officers should adopt an investigative mentality and 8 approach." 9 The policy points out: 10 "During the initial response it is sometimes 11 difficult to determine if the death is the result of 12 natural causes, an accident, suicide or homicide. If in 13 doubt, investigate as homicide until the evidence proves 14 otherwise." 15 Then there is reference again at the bottom of the 16 page to the five building block principles. This policy 17 again points out that initial responders should be 18 guided by those five building block principles. 19 Does it come to this then, that as far as the 20 policies are concerned, that as the duty officer 21 attending an unexplained death, you would be responsible 22 for the investigation at the scene until it was handed 23 over to another officer? 24 A. Yes, that's correct, yes. 25 Q. And it may be difficult to determine what has caused the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

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<p>1 death when you first arrive, and in those circumstances, 2 you should investigate it as a homicide until the 3 evidence proves otherwise? 4 A. Correct. 5 Q. Then, as we have seen, the investigation at the scene 6 should be guided by those five building block 7 principles. 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. With that in mind as the policy background -- that 10 document can be taken down, thank you -- I want to turn 11 now to 28 August 2014. The jury heard yesterday from 12 Barbara Denham, who was the local lady who found 13 Gabriel's body as she was out walking her dogs. She 14 said that she called the police just after 9.00 am on 15 Thursday, 28 August. We know from your witness 16 statement, dated 17 November 2015, that you were told of 17 Mrs Denham's discovery shortly after 9.00 am, does that 18 seem right? 19 A. Yes, it does, yes. 20 Q. You can put away the bundle that the policy documents 21 are in and if you could take out the larger bundle, 22 which is on the right, please, that is jury bundle C. 23 Could you look behind tab 2 on that, please. For 24 the screen it is IPC27. The jury will now be familiar 25 with these types of document. This is a CAD and it is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 a confirmed dead body. 2 Do you know if you knew that before you arrived at 3 the scene or that was something that you were told when 4 you arrived there? 5 A. That was the information I received while on way to the 6 scene. 7 Q. I think it is right that you went together with 8 a sergeant, Police Sergeant Cooper? 9 A. That's correct. 10 Q. I don't think, and please correct me if you can see it, 11 I don't think we see where your arrival is recorded on 12 the CAD, but sergeant Cooper's call sign is KG3 and she 13 makes an entry over the page, IPC 27, page 9, at 14 09.21.17, her call sign being 3KG? 15 A. Correct. 16 Q. Am I right, first of all, that I don't think we see 17 recorded when you arrived? 18 A. No, we travelled in the car together, so at the same 19 time. 20 Q. But we can assume therefore that by that stage you would 21 have arrived there at 9.21? 22 A. Correct. 23 Q. You said in your witness statement that you were on the 24 scene just a little before the ambulance service 25 arrived, and I think we know from the CAD, just looking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 the CAD generated when Mrs Denham called the police that 2 morning. 3 Do we see on page 5, please, an entry at 9.07, which 4 says: 5 "KG1E aware, Inspector Harman." 6 Do you have that? 7 A. Yes, I do, yes. 8 Q. "KG1E" being your call sign? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. I don't know if you can remember where you were at the 11 time you were notified of the discovery, but what did 12 you do when you received the call about the body that 13 had been discovered in St Margaret's Churchyard? 14 A. I was actually at Fresh Wharf patrol base at the time 15 I would have been made aware of the discovery and on 16 hearing that information I immediately made my way to 17 scene, which was a couple of minutes at most from the 18 patrol base. 19 Q. The jury heard yesterday from PC Thomas Faulkner, who 20 was one of the first officers on the scene and he 21 arrived at 9.12. It was confirmed -- I think we see the 22 entry at 9.12, which is over the page, IPC27, page 7, 23 and then at 09.12, it is 911 is PC Holmes's call sign 24 and it is he who recorded on the CAD, or asked the 25 control room to record on the CAD, that we have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 down to the entry at 9.25, that they were on the scene 2 at 9.25 there. I think it follows from your answers to 3 the questions about the policy that from your arrival in 4 the churchyard you were in charge of the scene. Is that 5 correct? 6 A. That's correct, yes. 7 Q. Can you give us an idea of how common it was for you to 8 attend a sudden death? 9 A. As the duty officer, you would be expected, or typically 10 attend the scenes of sudden deaths a couple of times 11 a week. However, if we talk about situations such as 12 this incidence, far less common, maybe a couple of times 13 a year, two or three times a year. 14 Q. What is the distinction between the ones that you were 15 attending twice a week and this scene? 16 A. The distinction being what is more common is to attend 17 a scene perhaps at a care home or a situation where the 18 death is perhaps expected, for a prevailing medical 19 condition. So it is a sudden death, but the cause of 20 death is perhaps determinable or was expected. 21 Q. Therefore, this scene was different because it wasn't 22 expected, as far as you were aware, and there wasn't 23 immediately any cause of death? 24 A. Correct, yes. 25 Q. What then were your impressions, your first impressions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

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<p>1 upon arriving at the scene, what did you think had 2 happened? 3 A. It was -- as the policy says, it was to adopt 4 an investigative approach, to be open minded and then go 5 through the five building blocks. So it was about 6 making sure officers had control of the scene. I think 7 at that stage the building block of preserving life, 8 I think we had determined that unfortunately Mr Kovari 9 had died, so then it was about, you know, securing 10 forensic opportunities, preserving the scene and 11 everything associated with that. 12 Q. We will come to ask you in a bit more detail about, for 13 example, controlling the scene and forensic 14 opportunities. 15 Could I ask you first of all though to turn, please, 16 to tab 3 in that bundle, which is IPC625, a document 17 named "Incident management log". Can you explain to the 18 jury what sort of document this is, the sort of occasion 19 it would be used? 20 A. This would be used for more serious incident, major 21 incidents, where it is important to document the 22 decision-making process at an incident or event. So 23 maybe a significant crime scene or a public order 24 situation. This is where decisions and rationales and 25 actions would be recorded and documented.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 faced with the scene? 2 A. Certainly. I mean I didn't dictate or instruct 3 Sergeant Cooper to complete, but absolutely that is 4 correct, yes. 5 Q. That reflects what you wanted to happen nonetheless? 6 A. Yes, yes. 7 Q. Then immediately underneath that, we have the scene, 8 St Margaret's Church grounds and then the victim and 9 Gabriel's name is there and his date of birth. 10 How did you know who he was at that stage, can you 11 remember? 12 A. I believe Mr Kovari had a passport in a holdall with 13 him. I think that is how his name and date of birth was 14 established at the scene. 15 Q. Would it have been you that asked for those items to be 16 looked for or was that something that would have 17 happened before you got there? 18 A. That may have happened before I got there but certainly 19 that would be -- I would expect the officers to make 20 those enquiries at the scene whilst there, yes. 21 Q. Yes. Going down the page, suspects, none at this stage. 22 Then it is recorded that the London Ambulance Service 23 has pronounced life extinct. Entries re photographs 24 follow, and we heard yesterday from PC Faulkner about 25 the photographs that were taken by another officer who</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 Q. Is the idea then that there is one place in which all 2 the decisions are captured and the reasons given for 3 them, and that is on the log? 4 A. That's correct, yes. 5 Q. This log I think is in fact filled out by PS Cooper. 6 That is her writing, is it? 7 A. That's correct, yes. 8 Q. Would it be right to say that the decisions that it 9 records are ones that you would have made as the more 10 senior officer? 11 A. Yes, I mean there would be some things that she would 12 have instructed officers to do, so I would say they were 13 either decisions made by me or on my behalf, but 14 certainly with my knowledge, yes. 15 Q. Can we look first then at page 6 within this document. 16 Do we see, around a third of the way down the page, 17 it says, "Aim -- identify male, complete checks, 18 establish crime scene, NOK [that's next of kin], CID and 19 SOCO to be informed". 20 I think if we look up on the right-hand side, the 21 column where the signatures are, where there are the 22 dates and PS Cooper's signature, that is timed at around 23 about 9.25? 24 A. That's correct. 25 Q. Would this then be your initial plan of action when</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 was at the scene. Then can I ask you then about the 2 bottom entry, which says: 3 "KG5 requested to attend scene." 4 That is at 9.40. Can you explain what that entry 5 is? 6 A. That is a request for the borough CID officers to 7 attend, which is standard when dealing with 8 an unexplained death. 9 Q. KG5 being the? 10 A. On each operational shift there are two or perhaps three 11 CID officers who are earmarked to be not-on-call CID but 12 the CID who will attend incidents if required and KG5 13 would have been or is their call sign. 14 Q. Thank you. 15 Then can we go overleaf to page 7. The top entry 16 is, I think: 17 "PC607 [I think this is right] conducted walk of 18 grounds to check if anything was disturbed, or any signs 19 of any disturbance. Nothing found." 20 Then underneath that there is an entry about the 21 crime scene being preserved. Then the entry underneath 22 that: 23 "Two officers conducted body search, established no 24 obvious signs of trauma." 25 We heard yesterday from the paramedic who attended,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 describing seeing a small amount of blood from the nose. 2 There is no need to turn it over at the moment, but 3 I think it says later in the log PS Cooper has recorded 4 that the London Ambulance Service confirmed that the 5 blood on the victim's nose was not in relation to any 6 assault but stated that it was natural causes, part of 7 the body's decomposition, was that something that you 8 were aware of? 9 A. That information was relayed to me at the scene, yes. 10 Q. Then I want to ask you about an entry that is underneath 11 the heading "Physical evidence", where it says: 12 "Body not moved, London Ambulance Service did not 13 give first aid." 14 Then: 15 "No drugs paraphernalia." 16 What sort of paraphernalia would that mean? What 17 does that mean, that entry? 18 A. I am not sure what Sergeant Cooper was referring to. 19 I would describe drug paraphernalia as perhaps empty 20 containers, canisters, bottles that drugs may have been 21 in. Syringes, needles, spoons that often used to smoke 22 drugs from, they are the type of things that I would say 23 are drug paraphernalia. 24 Q. Yes. I'm sorry, Mr Harman, I do keep asking you about 25 a document that you have not written.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 and view CCTV, I would expect them to make 2 a contemporaneous note in their pocket book and then 3 perhaps upload that information gets carried across to 4 the Merlin at a later stage when they are back at the 5 police station. 6 Q. Is it to the Merlin that we should be looking to see 7 a sort of central area where the results of 8 investigative actions are set out, so that other people 9 involved in the investigation can see? 10 A. For this type of incident, absolutely, yes. 11 Q. Yes, because one -- I think what is not mentioned in 12 here is a search of Mr Kovari's belongings, but we know 13 that that took place. Is that something that you would 14 expect to see resulted on the Merlin? 15 A. Yes, I would, yes. 16 Q. Just looking at the top of that page, the timing there 17 is 09.37 we see at the top, and then going down we see 18 that the next time is 9.42 and then all entries to 19 grounds to be established and cordons put in place also 20 timed at 9.37. 21 Does that really reflect the fact that you and 22 Police Sergeant Cooper between you set in train all of 23 these actions to be carried out by a number of officers 24 who were at the scene, such as PC Faulkner who the jury 25 heard from yesterday?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 A. That is okay. 2 Q. But, as you have confirmed, these are decisions that 3 were taken with your authority and knowledge, and it is 4 important for the jury to understand what sort of 5 things, but you are happy -- 6 A. That is what I would describe as drug paraphernalia. 7 Anything used to store or administer drugs, controlled 8 drugs. 9 Q. Then CCTV, underneath that, you have tasked officers or 10 between you, you and PS Cooper have tasked officers to 11 attend the church to make enquiries about CCTV there and 12 also local authority CCTV. 13 Again, we don't need to go to it but there is 14 a Merlin log that we will come to later, a log that is 15 opened later where some of these enquiries are resulted, 16 including the CCTV enquiry. 17 Can I ask, in general, the results of the 18 investigative steps that you have identified that should 19 be taken are contained within this log, for example you 20 will have asked that the body be examined and the result 21 is that there is no obvious sign of assault and that is 22 recorded here. For enquiries that take a bit longer and 23 cannot be immediately resulted, where would we expect to 24 see the results of those enquiries captured? 25 A. I would expect officers -- if an officer is tasked to go</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 A. That's right, although I would suggest -- not I would 2 suggest, I know for a fact that the scene, the cordon, 3 the outer cordon was put in place considerably before 4 9.37. That was in place when I arrived, so for me the 5 time attributed to that action was incorrect. But to 6 answer your question, all of these actions are things 7 that were either done with my knowledge or on my behalf, 8 yes. 9 Q. And done within a very short period of time of your 10 arrival? 11 A. Correct, yes. 12 Q. In your witness statement you say that you tasked 13 PC Guthrie to get some tarpaulin from the local DIY 14 shop, can you tell us a bit about that? 15 A. Yes, on the morning it was overcast and it looked to me 16 like it might rain so adopting that investigative 17 approach and feeling that this was a scene we would need 18 to be preserving potentially, I think there is a Wickes 19 literally two minutes from the scene and I said to 20 PC Guthrie, "Just go down to Wickes, get whatever you 21 can, tarpaulin, in case we need to preserve the scene", 22 I can't recall making enquiries as to whether the crime 23 scene tent was available, but certainly the weather was 24 such that I thought we might need that, "Can you go and 25 get it?"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

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<p>1 Q. Okay. Can I turn then to a slightly different topic, 2 which is a topic that of a critical incident. We heard 3 from Inspector Learmonth that a critical incident can be 4 any type of incident, but the point about it is that it 5 is one where the effectiveness of the police response 6 can have a significant impact upon the confidence of 7 either the victim or the community, or other parties or 8 stakeholders in the police. 9 What he explained was that if a critical incident is 10 declared, then that incident receives what he agreed 11 could be described as an enhanced status, because it 12 prompts other actions down the line, for example perhaps 13 more resources if necessary, or greater scrutiny from 14 the senior management team. 15 Do you agree roughly with that? Does that summarise 16 your understanding of a critical incident? 17 A. Yes, I do, yes. 18 Q. In the Walgate case Inspector Learmonth declared 19 a critical incident and that was recorded on the CAD and 20 the fact that he had declared it was therefore available 21 to be seen by others on the CAD. There is no record on 22 this CAD that a critical incident has been declared. 23 But I wanted to ask you about another page in the log, 24 which is tab 3, IPC625, page 5. 25 There at the top it says "Critical incident</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 a critical incident, so that box should have been left 2 blank. 3 Q. That answers my question, yes, thank you. 4 That document can be taken down from the screen. 5 I would like to ask you next, Mr Harman, about the 6 attendance of Detective Sergeant Sweetman and the 7 discussions that you had with him as to whether or not 8 this death was suspicious. 9 He will be coming to give evidence but not for 10 another few weeks. But he was involved with the scene 11 on 28 August, wasn't he? 12 A. That's correct, yes. 13 Q. Again, I am going to be showing you in particular 14 an email that he wrote and asking for your comments on 15 it. I appreciate that it, again, is not an email that 16 you were responsible for. 17 We saw earlier from the CAD that around about 9.40, 18 you asked CID to attend. Can we look again at the CAD, 19 which is behind tab 2, IPC27, at page 9. 20 The entry that I want to direct you to is at 21 10.06.44: 22 "Is this being treated as suspicious, please 23 confirm?" 24 Then the response: 25 "Unexplained at this stage. Awaiting KG5E to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 rationale", and PS Cooper has explained about Gabriel's 2 body being found in the church grounds and suspicious or 3 unexplained circumstances and that the cause of death 4 unknown. Can I ask, did you consider whether this was 5 a critical incident? 6 A. I did not declare this incident a critical incident at 7 any stage, no. 8 Q. Is that because you didn't think it was a critical 9 incident? 10 A. Yes. Yes. 11 Q. Can you explain why you didn't think it was a critical 12 incident? 13 A. In terms of the -- as you referred to Inspector 14 Learmonth's evidence, in terms of the critical incident 15 status makes other specialist resources available. As 16 the incident progressed, I felt I had all the resources 17 that I needed to manage and resource the incident. So 18 to me it didn't warrant the status of a critical 19 incident. It was something that I kept reviewing, but 20 at no point did I determine it was a critical incident. 21 Q. Then, PS Cooper has filled in this. Does that mean that 22 she just filled it in even though it wasn't a critical 23 incident or is that not actually that part of the form 24 not necessarily to be used only for critical incidents? 25 A. I don't know why she has done that, but to me it wasn't</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 attend." 2 You explained earlier that KG5E is the call sign for 3 CID. So at 10.07, you are still waiting, I think for 4 Detective Sergeant Sweetman to arrive. Does that seem 5 right? 6 A. It does and to be clear, I don't know who 40KG is. That 7 wasn't Sergeant Cooper's shoulder number, I don't know 8 who that is, but actually that is correct, the entry is 9 correct, but I don't know who that has been 10 attributable -- attributed to, rather. 11 Q. Thank you for that clarification, but as far as you are 12 concerned, at that time, it was that, as you have said, 13 is a correct entry in that it was unexplained and you 14 were waiting for Detective Sergeant Sweetman? 15 A. Correct. 16 THE CORONER: Can you just help with who asked the previous 17 question, "Is this being treated as suspicious, please 18 confirm?" 19 A. Ma'am, that would be I think one of the sort of senior 20 leaders within the Met control room. I am not 21 particularly familiar with their structure, but 22 I believe that is something to do with the control room. 23 I am afraid I can't be more helpful than that, but 24 certainly it is something to do with the control room. 25 MS COLLIER: The next entry, please, is at page 11, at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

<p>1 10.31.48. It says: 2 "KG5E, please pass to MFC for a photographer to 3 assist. Have spoken to crime scene manager and it is 4 non-suspicious at this time." 5 Firstly then, do we understand that to be an entry 6 from Detective Sergeant Sweetman? 7 A. Or one of the detectives with him and I am afraid 8 I can't recall who was with him, but there was at least 9 one other detective constable with him, but certainly it 10 is from him or one of his team. 11 Q. It is from CID? 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. I think we heard that DC Desai came with him? 14 A. Correct. 15 Q. At any rate, does this suggest that at some point 16 between 10.07 and 10.31, CID, including DS Sweetman, 17 arrived with you on the scene? 18 A. That's correct. 19 Q. Did he come to you to be briefed upon arrival? 20 A. I can't remember exactly how it happened. We certainly 21 did have a lengthy conversation at the scene, yes. 22 Q. Can you remember -- if you don't, please say -- what you 23 said to him about the scene? 24 A. I briefed him on the scene. I showed him the scene and 25 I explained my rationale for treating the incident as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 record; is this the Merlin record? 2 A. Yes, that's correct, yes. 3 Q. Again, for the jury's benefit, could you explain what 4 a Merlin record is? 5 A. Merlin is a separate police system which is used to 6 record certain types of incidents, predominantly missing 7 persons and deaths, or found bodies and deaths. 8 Q. I think we know that this was opened by PC Holmes at 9 2.30 that afternoon, by which point you would have left 10 the scene. Is that right? 11 A. Correct, yes. 12 Q. I want to ask you about one entry in this, first of all. 13 Could you turn over to page 2, please. Then on the top 14 right there is "Initial actions" and then it says, 15 "Death considered suspicious: N", and then "Reason". 16 The reasons given there essentially reflect what you 17 have said in your evidence now? 18 A. Correct, yes. 19 Q. Then the decision is said to be made by DS Sweetman and 20 supervised by yourself. 21 It may be that nothing particularly turns on it but, 22 as far as you are concerned, who did actually make the 23 decision as to whether the death was suspicious or not? 24 A. The primacy for investigating unexplained deaths sat 25 with me as the duty officer, so whilst I would welcome</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 an unexplained death at that time. And welcomed his 2 input and that of Sergeant Cooper, to be fair, to 3 challenge my thinking and, you know, not validate my 4 thinking but just, you know, do we need to consider this 5 in another light sort of ... 6 Q. So you and he discussed -- you said you briefed him. 7 What sort of things would you be briefing him on, so 8 that the jury understand what information was 9 communicated? 10 A. Sure. So the key information that he would have been 11 provided with was the findings of the body search by 12 both the officers and the ambulance service, the fact 13 that neither of ambulance service or the officers had 14 found any evidence of injury, assault or trauma; the 15 fact that around the scene there were no items which to 16 me could have been used as a weapon or otherwise used to 17 cause Mr Kovari's death. And another rationale for me 18 is that valuable or important personal effects of 19 Mr Kovari's were still with the body, which suggested 20 this was not a robbery or other acquisitive crime. So 21 they are the reasons why I was treating it as 22 unexplained and non-suspicious. 23 Q. Could you look, please, behind tab 7 in that bundle, 24 which is IPC28. 25 We referred earlier in your evidence to a Merlin</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 other officers, including DS Sweetman, to challenge my 2 thinking, the decision was mine. So that is actually -- 3 that should have been me, who has been putting that -- 4 filled that. 5 Q. Can we now look at an email, please, which is behind 6 tab 9. IPC81. This is an email from DS Sweetman to 7 Sean Wilson, who was by that time the deputy borough 8 commander, the superintendent, and then DCI Tony Kirk, 9 and copied to yourself and to the sergeant who was with 10 you at the scene, PS Tina Cooper. 11 Firstly, can I ask -- well, I should say, what this 12 email sets out, doesn't it, is a brief report, as it 13 says, to the deputy borough commander and to DCI 14 Tony Kirk, a brief report about the body of Mr Kovari 15 that had been found in the cemetery. Why was it that it 16 was DS Sweetman who was writing the email to update the 17 superintendent and the DCI, rather than yourself? 18 A. I honestly don't know. He may have agreed that he would 19 do that, I can't specifically recall why. 20 Q. Do you think that at this point, that is to say, at 21 about 1.45 on 28 August, you would still retain 22 responsibility for the investigation? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Looking then at the email, what DS Sweetman has done is 25 he has summarised the facts there, he has identified the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 deceased and explained how that identification was 2 obtained. Then he has set out the CID assessment, 3 explaining that on inspection of the scene and the body, 4 there was nothing to indicate suspicious circumstances 5 and that you agreed. 6 Then he goes on to identify a number of what 7 I suggest are the reasons for his conclusion that there 8 was nothing to indicate suspicious circumstances. They 9 are that the body had been searched and no marks or 10 injuries consistent with assault had been found. Then 11 he says the deceased was sat on what appeared to be 12 a jacket underneath a tree, which clearly offered 13 shelter from the rain. He was also sat propped against 14 the west side cemetery wall: 15 "It is my opinion that the deceased placed himself 16 in this position." 17 As far as DS Sweetman was concerned, would you 18 think, on a fair interpretation of this email, he 19 evidently felt that, rather than, for example, having 20 suddenly collapsed and therefore sort of been found 21 lying down, it looked as if Gabriel had -- well, 22 DS Sweetman thought he had placed himself in that 23 position, because he looked as if he was sitting, as if 24 he had placed himself deliberately under the tree to 25 shelter?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 party. 2 Is that something that you agreed with? 3 A. I did, yes. 4 Q. Then, DS Sweetman also identifies that there were items 5 that had been found with the body that, in his opinion, 6 would be likely to have been stolen had this been 7 a robbery incident. 8 Is it right then that -- sorry, I should note that 9 in conclusion, DS Sweetman notes that the CCTV has been 10 viewed and didn't offer any assistance. He concludes, 11 at the bottom of his email by saying the evidence 12 suggests an unexplained non-suspicious death. 13 Is it right then that with the exception of 14 DS Sweetman's observations about the way the body was 15 sitting, you agree with his conclusions? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. They are the conclusions you reached yourself, in fact? 18 A. Yes. 19 Q. We don't need I think, necessarily to go back to the 20 CAD, but we did see earlier that the entry at 10.31 was 21 that the death was being regarded as non-suspicious at 22 this time. 23 That means that roughly an hour after you had been 24 at the scene, that was the conclusion that you had come 25 to.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 A. Can I raise two issues regarding this email? 2 Q. Certainly. 3 A. The first one is perhaps a point of semantics, but 4 I think it is key, where he says that I agreed with him. 5 The responsibility was mine, so I think actually it 6 should reflect that his assessment corroborated my 7 thoughts. It might seem a minor point, but actually it 8 wasn't a case of me having to agree with him, it was 9 a case of him challenging my thinking and we both 10 agreed. So it is a minor point but I think it is worth 11 making. 12 Q. Definitely. 13 A. And the last sentence about the deceased placing himself 14 in that position, that might be DS Sweetman's thought 15 process, I think my thought process is we just don't 16 know. And I don't think we -- I wouldn't necessarily 17 agree with that. The fact is we don't know. 18 Q. No, that is helpful, Mr Harman. I mean it is exactly 19 whose decision it was, I have been asking questions 20 about that, so it is right to point out your 21 disagreement with the way this has been phrased. 22 Going on then with DS Sweetman's conclusions, or 23 rather reasons for concluding that there were no 24 suspicious circumstances. He says there was no sign of 25 struggle or anything to indicate the presence of a third</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 But you didn't know at that stage, did you, what 2 Gabriel had died of? 3 A. No. 4 Q. Nor how he had got there, or indeed what he was doing in 5 Barking? 6 A. Correct. 7 Q. In fact, I think it is probably right that you knew his 8 name and nationality, and you had a bank card and 9 a letter from a bank, but other than that, you knew 10 really very little about him? 11 A. Correct. 12 Q. Wasn't it then on one view a premature decision to say 13 that it was non-suspicious? 14 A. I think you should bear in mind that that is an ongoing 15 assessment, so much as that comment has been recorded at 16 9.31, that assessment as to the nature of the death was 17 ongoing. You know, it wasn't a snapshot in time -- 18 sorry, that was a comment at that time, but I go back to 19 the rationale for my decision, and, you know, there was 20 no evidence while I was there that he had been 21 assaulted, or that the body had sustained any other 22 injury or trauma. There was no evidence that another 23 crime had been committed and there was an absence of any 24 other objects which could have been used to cause his 25 death.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

<p>1 So I determined it to be unexplained, but 2 non-suspicious for those reasons. 3 Q. How is that consistent, though, with the policies that 4 we looked at earlier, where, if there is a doubt, treat 5 the death as suspicious? There is no explanation for 6 the death of this young man. Shouldn't it be treated as 7 suspicious until you have found further information 8 about, for example, how he died or why he was there? 9 What he had been doing? 10 A. My interpretation of the policy is that the fact that we 11 didn't know how he came by his death made it 12 unexplained. But, to me, there were no circumstances, 13 no evidence, to suggest that it needed to be treated as 14 suspicious. 15 Q. You said a moment ago that it was not a snapshot. The 16 entry that is recorded at 10.31 saying not suspicious at 17 this time, I think you suggested, well, that is just 18 what was the current thinking at that time, it doesn't 19 mean to say there wasn't going to be an ongoing 20 assessment. 21 Can I return then to the email that is still on the 22 screen. The last line before DS Sweetman's signature, 23 and again, Mr Harman, I acknowledge this is 24 Mr Sweetman's email and not yours but I would like your 25 comments:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 with that? 2 A. The presence or conversely the absence of a phone was 3 never brought to my attention. I didn't ask if there 4 was a phone present, if I am honest. So as a potential 5 line of enquiry, it was never pursued. 6 Q. Looking back now, do you think that is something that 7 ought to have been pursued? 8 A. I don't know. It is something that I didn't consider at 9 the scene. 10 Q. No, I am asking you now -- I know that you didn't 11 consider it at the scene, but reflecting on what I have 12 suggested about the value of finding a phone, do you 13 think that actually it would have been a good idea to 14 search the grounds for a phone? 15 A. Well, officers were instructed by me to conduct a walk 16 around of the grounds for any evidence which could be 17 attributable to Mr Kovari's death, so that was done. 18 Q. Is the walk around the same as a search? 19 A. If you are talking about things such as a phone, then 20 yes, to me, if a phone had been discarded or otherwise 21 left near the scene, then to me a walk around is 22 something that would have located a mobile phone, yes. 23 Q. Is it right then that the officers would have located 24 a phone had there been one but they were not actually 25 looking -- they didn't have their minds on whether there</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 "The evidence suggests an unexplained non-suspicious 2 death. Naturally the coroner will conduct his 3 investigation and we may get the answer from that." 4 Is it not the reality that, it having been 5 determined to be non-suspicious, there wasn't going to 6 be any further investigation, because it was the coroner 7 there who was going to conduct the investigation? 8 A. In terms of any further investigation at the scene, that 9 is correct, that suggests and it is right that the 10 investing be brought to a close and it had been 11 classified as such, yes. 12 Q. Although Mr Kovari had some valuable belongings with him 13 that you have identified, those items did not include 14 a mobile phone. 15 Most people do, don't they, have a mobile phone? 16 I think it is fair -- of course you couldn't know 17 whether Gabriel would have a phone, but it is a fair 18 assumption that it is more likely than not that he would 19 have a phone? 20 A. Yes. Yes. 21 Q. They contain a huge amount of information about 22 a person, would you agree, someone's smartphone or -- 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. That would have been an important clue, perhaps, in 25 trying to explain this unexplained death. Do you agree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 was a phone there or not? 2 A. Correct, they were never expressly briefed to be 3 searching for a phone, that's correct. 4 THE CORONER: Did you say did you ask whether he had a phone 5 or did not? 6 A. I wasn't -- no, ma'am, I wasn't made aware at any point 7 whether a phone was or was not present. 8 THE CORONER: And did you ask? 9 A. No, I didn't, no. 10 MS COLLIER: Can I move then to the closing of the scene. 11 If we go back briefly to CAD, which is IPC27, and behind 12 tab 2, the entry at 14.56 -- let me find the page ... it 13 is on page 15. It says there: 14 "The crime scene can be closed on the authority of 15 DS Sweetman." 16 Again, can I ask who was in charge of the incident 17 at this stage? 18 A. Me. 19 Q. Why was it that DS Sweetman then was closing the crime 20 scene? 21 A. I don't know why that comment is attributed to him. 22 Q. Sorry, I didn't -- 23 A. I don't know why that entry has been recorded for him. 24 Q. Were you satisfied that the crime scene could be closed 25 though?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Was it, as far as you were concerned, an incident that</p> <p>3 would continue to be investigated?</p> <p>4 A. At that time, I was aware that the delay or the reason</p> <p>5 for keeping the scene open till this time was to do with</p> <p>6 finalising some CCTV enquiries and recovery of the body.</p> <p>7 So at that time, shortly before 3.00, my opinion was</p> <p>8 that the initial investigation had finished.</p> <p>9 Q. When you say initial investigation, is that the</p> <p>10 investigation that would take place at the scene?</p> <p>11 A. Well, the investigation at the scene, correct, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Would you expect a -- would it be called a secondary</p> <p>13 investigation, to take place to try and find out more</p> <p>14 about this unexplained death?</p> <p>15 A. No. No.</p> <p>16 Q. So, as far as the police are concerned, that is the end</p> <p>17 of the investigative activity for this death?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Just to complete your involvement on that day. Could we</p> <p>20 have on screen, please, MPS784.</p> <p>21 Are you able to identify that document, do you know</p> <p>22 what that is?</p> <p>23 A. That is the duty officer's handover.</p> <p>24 Q. Can you explain, again for the jury, what the purpose of</p> <p>25 this document is?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 that right?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. What sort of factor might change that, in order that the</p> <p>4 police would investigate, for example, are there any</p> <p>5 circumstances when the police might appeal for witnesses</p> <p>6 who might have seen Gabriel in the 24 hours prior to the</p> <p>7 discovery of his body?</p> <p>8 A. I would have expected those lines of enquiries to be</p> <p>9 pursued by secondary investigators if the incident was</p> <p>10 deemed to be suspicious.</p> <p>11 Q. It is only if the incident is deemed suspicious that</p> <p>12 there would be further police activity?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Can I turn then move away from August to ask you some</p> <p>15 questions about your role as duty officer overnight in</p> <p>16 September, on the night of 20 to 21 September.</p> <p>17 We know that on the morning of 20 September the body</p> <p>18 of a third young man, Daniel Whitworth, was found in</p> <p>19 almost exactly the same place as the place where</p> <p>20 Gabriel's body was found in August. The jury are aware,</p> <p>21 but we will hear more evidence tomorrow, about a note</p> <p>22 that was found with Daniel's body. That note stating</p> <p>23 that Daniel had taken the life of his friend</p> <p>24 Gabriel Klein. Upon reading that note on the morning of</p> <p>25 20 September, the borough officers had been trying to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, this is an electronic document that is created each</p> <p>2 day and the sort of pre-populated sections on the left</p> <p>3 are replicated for the early turn, late turn and night</p> <p>4 duty, and this document is used to brief senior</p> <p>5 management in the significant incidents that have gone</p> <p>6 on on the borough during that tour of duty and it also</p> <p>7 documents pool performance as well.</p> <p>8 Q. We see there the entry in the right-hand box that is</p> <p>9 associated with CAD2086. Is this an entry that either</p> <p>10 you completed or would have been completed on your</p> <p>11 behalf?</p> <p>12 A. That is something I would have completed myself.</p> <p>13 Q. As you say, the purpose of it is in order to brief the</p> <p>14 senior management team?</p> <p>15 A. Correct.</p> <p>16 Q. When it says, "Death to be treated as unexplained but</p> <p>17 non-suspicious at this time", would it be understood by</p> <p>18 the senior management team that that would be the end of</p> <p>19 the police investigation, as you have identified, as you</p> <p>20 have just said?</p> <p>21 A. Correct.</p> <p>22 Q. Coming back to the conclusion of the investigation, as</p> <p>23 it stands then, at mid afternoon on the 28th, your</p> <p>24 evidence is that there would be no further attempt by</p> <p>25 the police to discover what had happened to Gabriel. Is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 trace Gabriel Klein, the person referred to in the note,</p> <p>2 but as at the time that the late turn went off duty, so</p> <p>3 that is the afternoon into early evening shift, they had</p> <p>4 not had any success.</p> <p>5 You were the night duty officer that evening.</p> <p>6 I want to show you, firstly, a document that I think is</p> <p>7 right was updated during the night, but you will tell me</p> <p>8 if that is incorrect.</p> <p>9 Could you look, please, at tab 23 in the bundle. It</p> <p>10 is MPS802, and then the entry that I want to ask you</p> <p>11 about is on page 4. It is in the middle underneath the</p> <p>12 "Sensitive/irrelevant":</p> <p>13 "Update from earlier turn, DC Slaymaker has been</p> <p>14 making various enquiries throughout the shift to</p> <p>15 identify and locate Gabriel Klein as named in the</p> <p>16 suicide note. ... these will now pass to night duty</p> <p>17 CID."</p> <p>18 Is it right then that DC Slaymaker having been</p> <p>19 unable to identify Gabriel Klein, that task had been</p> <p>20 allocated to the next shift, so that they could continue</p> <p>21 to work on that?</p> <p>22 A. The night duty CID, yes, that's correct, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Yes.</p> <p>24 Then over the page at page 5, firstly, just to note</p> <p>25 there, it is yourself and Sergeant Cooper again who are</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

10 (Pages 37 to 40)

<p>1 the duty officer team. Looking at the entry, the first 2 sort of substantive entry "Update on sudden death, 3 Daniel Whitworth", it says: 4 "Enquiries conducted by KG5N [CID] reveal that the 5 Gabriel Klein mentioned in Daniel's suicide note is 6 Gabriel Kovari, and Mr Kovari died on 28/08 having taken 7 drugs during a sexual relationship with Mr Whitworth. 8 Mr Whitworth appears to return to the place where 9 Mr Kovari died, in order to take his own life." 10 It seems then that the CID night duty officers had 11 identified that Gabriel Klein was in fact 12 Gabriel Kovari. Would you agree that that was 13 a significant breakthrough in the investigation? 14 A. Yes, it was, yes. 15 Q. Can I ask, did you direct any actions to follow up on 16 this breakthrough? 17 A. I don't recall directing any actions. However, at that 18 point it appears from this document that a secondary 19 investigation was underway. I don't recall being asked 20 for resources or assistance in that investigation, but 21 I certainly don't recall instructing any enquiries in 22 relation to that information. 23 Q. So that we understand, who would be responsible then for 24 picking up on this information? 25 A. Well, the CID -- I mean I don't know whether at that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 Questions from MS HILL 2 MS HILL: Good morning, I ask questions on behalf of the 3 families of those who were murdered by Stephen Port, 4 save for Daniel Whitworth, who has his own lawyer. Some 5 of the families are here in court and some are watching 6 upstairs remotely. 7 At the time of the events that we have been hearing 8 about this morning, do I have this right, you were 9 a temporary inspector, is that right? 10 A. Correct. 11 Q. It was in 2014 that you had been temporarily promoted to 12 the role of duty officer? 13 A. Correct. 14 Q. I am sorry if you mentioned this earlier, but can you 15 tell us when in 2014 that was? 16 A. I can't recall, I believe it was in January but I can't 17 recall I am afraid. 18 Q. We have heard this from other officers but is this 19 right, that that was part of a wider pattern across the 20 borough of people acting up into roles or being in 21 temporary roles? 22 A. Correct. 23 Q. Dealing first, please, if I may with the involvement you 24 had in Anthony Walgate's death, you have given a witness 25 statement about this. If I could bring up please, if</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 point Mr Whitworth's death was being treated as 2 suspicious or non-suspicious, so I am not quite sure who 3 had primacy of the investigation, but at the very least 4 it would have been with the borough CID officers. 5 Q. Mr Harman, you had some very minor involvement at the 6 scene where Anthony Walgate's body was found. As we 7 have heard today, you also attended the scene of 8 Gabriel Kovari. 9 Then, as a result of being on night duty on the 10 20th, you also had some knowledge of the discovery of 11 Daniel Whitworth's body. You said at the beginning of 12 your evidence that the sort of sudden death that you 13 attended when you went to the scene of Gabriel's body 14 was unusual. Did it not strike you as unusual that 15 there were three sudden deaths of three young men that 16 were all unexplained in Barking? 17 A. If we are talking about this date in September, there is 18 an obvious link between the death of Mr Kovari and 19 Mr Whitworth. I didn't make the link with the death of 20 Mr Kovari or Mr Whitworth with the death of Mr Walgate. 21 I didn't draw any link between those. 22 MS COLLIER: I have no further questions, thank you very 23 much. 24 A. Thank you. 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 I may, HAL4, internal page 1, paragraph 4, you describe 2 your involvement there. You describe attending at the 3 scene at around 8.00 am, by which point -- just to 4 anchor this in the jury's memory -- the forensic tent 5 had been erected. You were made aware of broadly what 6 had happened by Inspector Learmonth. You were advised 7 by him that a male in early 20s had been found dead, is 8 that right? 9 A. Correct, yes. 10 Q. And that he had been found seated in an upright position 11 in the vicinity of the property? 12 A. Correct. 13 Q. You were made aware I think of what actions had been 14 taken; is that right? 15 A. Correct, yes. 16 Q. Then is this your evidence, paragraph 6, that during 17 your time at that incident, it was clear to you that 18 Inspector Learmonth would retain responsibility for the 19 management of the incident and that your role was to 20 provide him with support and resources as required. Is 21 that right? 22 A. Correct. 23 Q. Just to see if I can understand that a little bit 24 better, please, if I may. 25 We heard some evidence about that from Inspector</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 Learmonth when he gave evidence. Just for the learned 2 coroner's note, Day 5, transcript of 8 October, page 75 3 of the transcript. He describes your attendance at the 4 scene, and I will just read this to you and see if this 5 chimes with your memory: 6 "He came to the scene [that's you] he didn't enter 7 the crime scene, he came to the outside of the scene and 8 I had a conversation with him. I don't recall the exact 9 nature of the conversation. It would have been 10 a summary of what we had been dealing with and the 11 actions that I had taken and what I required from him 12 being the day duty officer. 13 "By the time I saw Simon Harman my role was almost 14 complete as I had done the majority of actions required 15 by a duty officer at the scene, prior to handing over to 16 secondary investigators." 17 He says this: 18 "So there weren't any need for him to relieve me at 19 that scene, but at the point where I left the crime 20 scene it then falls to him to have oversight of that 21 scene and to resource it ongoing, so there is still 22 a crime scene in place and it would have been his early 23 turn team that actually resourced the cordons, so he 24 needed an understanding about what the nature of the 25 incident was and what enquiries were still ongoing."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 you arrived at the scene of his death, can I again bring 2 up your witness statement, please, it is HAL4, internal 3 page 2. The foot of that page, you describe being met 4 by PC Holmes, who escorted you to where Mr Kovari's body 5 was situated. Then, over the page, you identified at 6 the top of that page, please, that again he was a young 7 male in his early 20s, is that right? 8 A. Correct, yes. 9 Q. Seated on what appeared to be a jacket? 10 A. Correct, yes. 11 Q. And in an upright position? 12 A. That's correct. 13 Q. Two immediate similarities with Anthony Walgate from 14 your evidence, early 20s, deceased and seated in 15 an upright position, is that right? 16 A. Correct. 17 Q. You have described in detail what occurred at the scene. 18 Can you help us, please, understand what investigative 19 steps you understood were in train to find out what 20 Gabriel's last movements had been? 21 A. In terms of understanding his last movements, enquiries 22 were made with CCTV, both within the London borough of 23 Barking and Dagenham and with the actual church itself 24 to try and understand how he had come to be in the 25 position he was in. And I understand that neither CCTV</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 A. Correct. 2 Q. Does that chime with your recollection? 3 A. It does, yes. 4 Q. Is it your understanding that it was your team's 5 responsibility to continue managing the crime scene for 6 Anthony Walgate? 7 A. In terms of resourcing the scene, absolutely, yes. 8 Q. Did you believe that you, as inspector, retained 9 responsibility for managing the incident or just the 10 scene? 11 A. No, sorry, just the scene. It was clear to me and 12 apologies, this should have been clearer in my 13 statement, that the investigation moving to a secondary 14 investigation, and then there was specialist resources 15 investigating the incident and apologies my statement 16 should have been clearer. My role there was to resource 17 the crime scene and anything else to support that 18 investigation. 19 Q. I see, so there is no disagreement between you and 20 Inspector Learmonth based on what I have read out of his 21 evidence? 22 A. None at all. 23 Q. Thank you for clarifying that. 24 Moving then to what you did in terms of the 25 involvement with Gabriel Kovari's death, if I may, when</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 systems covered the area where Mr Kovari was found, so 2 in terms of his last steps, we didn't know. 3 Q. Accepting that, that you didn't know how he had got to 4 where he was, and what his last movements were from the 5 CCTV, how else did you envisage the police were going to 6 understand that? 7 A. Well, I don't know. There were no other steps, as far 8 as I was concerned, that we could have pursued at the 9 scene. 10 Q. Is it really that, as you have explained to the learned 11 coroner's counsel, this was then handed over as a matter 12 for the coroner to investigate. Is that really what you 13 are saying? 14 A. I think that sounds very, very flippant and the fact was 15 as far, as I was concerned, we had exhausted all the 16 enquiries we could at the scene and determined that it 17 was an unexplained, non-suspicious death and therefore 18 the matter would be referred to the coroner. But 19 I think it is a little bit flippant to say it was then 20 just a matter to the coroner, because I don't think that 21 does justice to the enquiries we did at the scene. 22 Q. Forgive me, I didn't mean it to sound like that. We 23 heard yesterday from PC Faulkner and we saw from email 24 correspondence that I think he was responding to 25 requests from the coroner by about 1 or 2 September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 I think. Does that sound about right to you?</p> <p>2 A. I don't know, I am afraid I can't help with that.</p> <p>3 Q. Just as I am sure it was clear to the jury, you know who</p> <p>4 PC Faulkner was, I think?</p> <p>5 A. The name rings a bell. I can't picture the face, but</p> <p>6 the name rings a bell, yes.</p> <p>7 Q. That is a police constable from the uniformed branch?</p> <p>8 A. Yes, he was on my team. He was on my team, so yes.</p> <p>9 I think it was a he, he was on my team.</p> <p>10 Q. In terms of the decision making at the scene, you have</p> <p>11 explained that, essentially, you had formed your own</p> <p>12 view about whether this was a suspicious or</p> <p>13 non-suspicious death. To what extent were you</p> <p>14 influenced by the role of the detective, DS Sweetman?</p> <p>15 A. I don't think I was influenced at all. I think I have</p> <p>16 used the expression a couple of times that others were</p> <p>17 there to challenge my thinking. And I certainly</p> <p>18 welcomed their thoughts on how we proceeded. But, as</p> <p>19 I have said, it was my decision and as far as I am</p> <p>20 concerned, Sergeant Cooper and DS Sweetman completely</p> <p>21 agreed with me about the classification of the death.</p> <p>22 So I don't think I was -- well, I wasn't influenced at</p> <p>23 all.</p> <p>24 Q. I think we have seen on the Merlin record that there</p> <p>25 were no drugs paraphernalia items found on Mr Kovari, is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 going to read this out, as far as I understand it this</p> <p>2 is what is said -- this is the incorrect page, sorry, it</p> <p>3 is IPC999, internal page 24.</p> <p>4 Sorry, that shouldn't be brought up, it's 999,</p> <p>5 internal 24. Scroll in on the second half of that page,</p> <p>6 please.</p> <p>7 It says here:</p> <p>8 "In the back of my mind was what I was thinking.</p> <p>9 I couldn't see a conclude, I couldn't make an assessment</p> <p>10 at the time exactly what had caused Gabriel's death,</p> <p>11 however, you know, being honest, he was a skinny, his</p> <p>12 body was very skinny, and I am not saying that I could</p> <p>13 tell immediately he was on drugs but I am a police</p> <p>14 officer and if I looked at someone I think I would like</p> <p>15 to be able to assess the situation, where I might think</p> <p>16 actually it is possible this guy was taking drugs, and</p> <p>17 that is the kind of person that he looked like, without</p> <p>18 being -- I don't want that to come across wrong in any</p> <p>19 shape or form, but it looked to me that it could be</p> <p>20 possible that he was a drug user."</p> <p>21 Was that a discussion you had with Mr Sweetman at</p> <p>22 the scene about whether or not Gabriel was a drug user?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. Was that something that was on your mind?</p> <p>25 A. No, and I disagree with what Sergeant Sweetman said</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 that right?</p> <p>2 A. Correct.</p> <p>3 Q. You helpfully gave the jury some indications of the sort</p> <p>4 of things that they might be. I don't know if you can</p> <p>5 help with this, but we heard some evidence yesterday</p> <p>6 about Jack Taylor, not about Gabriel Kovari, that one of</p> <p>7 the items found with him was a tourniquet. Can you help</p> <p>8 the jury understand what the police officers might think</p> <p>9 that would be?</p> <p>10 A. That is used to -- often used to limit the supply of</p> <p>11 blood or in recreational drug use it can be used to</p> <p>12 expose a vein or to cause a vein to be more accessible</p> <p>13 for a needle.</p> <p>14 Q. None of those sort of items were identified as far as</p> <p>15 Gabriel was concerned; is that right?</p> <p>16 A. Correct.</p> <p>17 Q. Having identified that there were no other marks on his</p> <p>18 body and no weapons, what was your thinking about how he</p> <p>19 had died?</p> <p>20 A. I had no idea how he died, which is why it remained</p> <p>21 an unexplained death.</p> <p>22 Q. Can I bring up, please, IPC99, internal page 24, which</p> <p>23 is part of the interview, an interview that took place</p> <p>24 with Mr Sweetman. Can we scroll in, please, on the</p> <p>25 bottom half of that page. In the narrative -- I am just</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 there about -- sorry, I don't want to misquote what he</p> <p>2 said, "It is possible this guy was taking drugs, he</p> <p>3 looked like ..."</p> <p>4 I am just trying to make sure I don't misquote him,</p> <p>5 but if I can answer the question, he didn't look like</p> <p>6 a drug user or a typical drug user to me.</p> <p>7 Q. You left the position with no real idea of how he had</p> <p>8 got there or how he had died; is that right?</p> <p>9 A. Correct. That's correct.</p> <p>10 Q. The enquiries that were made at the scene included for</p> <p>11 example as you have said checking CCTV. I think, is</p> <p>12 this right, some officers walked the path in and out of</p> <p>13 the area where Gabriel had been found and there was some</p> <p>14 attempt to check, I think on the path, for anything</p> <p>15 obvious, is that right?</p> <p>16 A. Yes, I think my statement doesn't detail it but my</p> <p>17 instruction would have been -- when I say a walk around,</p> <p>18 I mean the jury has seen, there is a large park next to</p> <p>19 the churchyard. My instruction would not have been just</p> <p>20 to walk the park, it would have been to do a thorough</p> <p>21 area search, not just limited to the park, although</p> <p>22 I realise that is not expressly mentioned in my</p> <p>23 statement.</p> <p>24 Q. Just to be clear though, when we have talked about</p> <p>25 preserving the scene and looking around, this is not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 a fingertip search or POLSA-type search, is it?</p> <p>2 A. No, and this was outside -- the area I'm referring to</p> <p>3 was outside the cordon, so this was a wider enquiry, not</p> <p>4 just limited to the crime scene area.</p> <p>5 Q. Again, we have heard some evidence about POLSA officers,</p> <p>6 those were not officers that were called to this scene,</p> <p>7 were they?</p> <p>8 A. No, they weren't.</p> <p>9 Q. The level of search that was carried out, although you</p> <p>10 have described it both inside and outside the cordon,</p> <p>11 was quite different to what a POLSA officer search would</p> <p>12 have looked like?</p> <p>13 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>14 Q. I think we have heard that no phone for Gabriel was</p> <p>15 located by those searches; is that right?</p> <p>16 A. Correct, yes.</p> <p>17 Q. The Merlin document that you have described was</p> <p>18 appropriate for this type of incident, I think you said,</p> <p>19 is that right?</p> <p>20 A. I don't recall saying that. When I say this type of</p> <p>21 incident, Merlin is used to record incidents involving</p> <p>22 missing people and deaths.</p> <p>23 Q. Sorry, I made a note of you saying that in answer this</p> <p>24 morning. I had understood that you were describing the</p> <p>25 Merlin being used. Just so that the jury understand,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 "Clearly someone else was involved [it says], I knew</p> <p>2 I had to have some element of suspicion in order to</p> <p>3 justify the calling of a HAT car, as they are known in</p> <p>4 the Met."</p> <p>5 Is it not right that he was also part of that</p> <p>6 decision making?</p> <p>7 A. He was, yes.</p> <p>8 Sorry, the decision making regarding?</p> <p>9 Q. As to whether or not to call the HAT car to this scene?</p> <p>10 A. The policy states that if there is any doubt the matter</p> <p>11 should -- as to whether it is suspicious, it should be</p> <p>12 referred to the borough DI, who is then the person who</p> <p>13 is authorised to call the HAT car. So if DS Sweetman</p> <p>14 had have said to me, "I think it is suspicious for these</p> <p>15 reasons", we would have had a conversation with the</p> <p>16 borough DI, who was the person authorised to call the</p> <p>17 HAT car.</p> <p>18 Q. I think from your evidence there was none of that</p> <p>19 conversation on this occasion in relation to Gabriel?</p> <p>20 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>21 Q. The decision, as you have indicated, was made to declare</p> <p>22 this a non-suspicious death. The email that we have</p> <p>23 looked at, please, can we bring up IPC81, internal</p> <p>24 page 1. The decision making is set out in this email</p> <p>25 and you have explained what your role was in relation to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 I think your evidence was that that was one place in</p> <p>2 which the decision making was recorded, as well as the</p> <p>3 log from the scene. Is that right?</p> <p>4 A. Correct, yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Is this right, that no CRIS was opened for this case</p> <p>6 because you were not investigating a crime?</p> <p>7 A. Correct.</p> <p>8 Q. That is another way in which decision making is</p> <p>9 recorded --</p> <p>10 A. Correct.</p> <p>11 Q. -- in criminal investigations?</p> <p>12 A. In a criminal investigates, the CRIS reporting system</p> <p>13 would have primacy, yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Any decision at the scene to seek advice from the HAT</p> <p>15 car would likely be made by Mr Sweetman, not you, is</p> <p>16 that right?</p> <p>17 A. No, that is not correct. It was my decision to -- if</p> <p>18 I wanted the support of the HAT car, it would have been</p> <p>19 my decision to contact the borough DI, have</p> <p>20 a conversation around the incident and then the borough</p> <p>21 DI would have been the person to call the HAT car.</p> <p>22 Q. Can I just bring up, please, IPC999, internal 22, just</p> <p>23 to test that a little bit. It looks as if, in the</p> <p>24 middle of the bottom half of that page, Mr Sweetman in</p> <p>25 his narrative says this:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 it. At the end of the email, the next steps, I think,</p> <p>2 set out here were that the coroner will conduct his</p> <p>3 investigation -- in fact I think it is a her, but</p> <p>4 perhaps it matters not, the coroner will conduct his</p> <p>5 investigation and we may get the answer from that, is</p> <p>6 that right?</p> <p>7 A. Correct.</p> <p>8 Q. Can I just understand, please, how that fits, please,</p> <p>9 with the policy to which you were taken. It is MPS588,</p> <p>10 internal page 6.</p> <p>11 Forgive me, we will just go to the front page of</p> <p>12 this document. It is in jury bundle A, tab 22. This is</p> <p>13 the non-suspicious sudden death checklist. Are you</p> <p>14 familiar with this document?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. It sets out a series of actions and when one gets</p> <p>17 further into the documents, if you look, please, at</p> <p>18 internal page 5, if I have understood this correctly,</p> <p>19 and please tell me if I do not have this right, on</p> <p>20 internal page 5 is a heading "Non-suspicious sudden</p> <p>21 death", yes, do you see that?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. I think that is what your view is -- what you were now</p> <p>24 dealing with as far as Gabriel's body was concerned?</p> <p>25 A. Correct, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

14 (Pages 53 to 56)

<p>1 Q. Secondary investigation, so this is the next level of 2 investigation, is that right?</p> <p>3 A. Correct.</p> <p>4 Q. Sets out immediate actions. Then, I don't know if 5 I have this right but if you look over the page, there 6 are immediate actions, there are then further things set 7 out. On internal page 6 it says: 8 "If the death remains non-suspicious and 9 unexplained, the duty officer will retain responsibility 10 for the investigation on behalf of the coroner. 11 Is that what you understood the policy to indicate?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Did you therefore understand that you retained overall 14 responsibility for investigating Gabriel's death on 15 behalf of the coroner?</p> <p>16 A. That's correct.</p> <p>17 Q. How much active involvement did you have in that 18 investigation after the events about which you have told 19 us this morning?</p> <p>20 A. I didn't have any further involvement.</p> <p>21 Q. Were you in any way sighted on how Gabriel's death was 22 being investigated?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. Were you aware of what enquiries were being made?</p> <p>25 A. I wasn't aware that any enquiries were being made.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 Q. You certainly knew in relation to both men that they had 2 been found seated in an outside location?</p> <p>3 A. Correct.</p> <p>4 Q. Did you know in relation to Mr Walgate that his top had 5 been pulled up exposing part of his tummy in the same 6 way as Gabriel?</p> <p>7 A. I don't recall being told that, no.</p> <p>8 Q. You did know I think that there was a distance of about 9 400 metres between where Mr Walgate was found and where 10 Gabriel was found?</p> <p>11 A. Correct.</p> <p>12 Q. In relation to both men, is this right, that there were 13 things on their bodies, such as bank cards and 14 identification documents?</p> <p>15 A. Correct, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. In both cases the telephone, or a telephone, was 17 missing?</p> <p>18 A. I wasn't aware that there was a phone missing from 19 Mr Walgate, and as I have said with Mr Kovari I was not 20 aware of it and I didn't expressly ask the question.</p> <p>21 Q. I think I understood your evidence this morning to be 22 that this sort of death that was unexplained happened 23 around two times a year, I think you said, as opposed to 24 care home deaths and things like that, is that right?</p> <p>25 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 Q. Did you know about the contact with John Pape?</p> <p>2 A. Yes, I was made aware of that conversation, which 3 I think arose from some correspondence in Gabriel's bag, 4 I believe.</p> <p>5 Q. Is it fair to say that other than what is written on the 6 Merlin and what we have been through today, you didn't 7 really have any involvement in that further 8 investigation on behalf of the coroner?</p> <p>9 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>10 Q. You have been asked some questions about Mr Walgate's 11 death and Mr Kovari's death and you were obviously made 12 to some degree aware of Mr Whitworth's death. You were 13 asked some questions in particular about whether there 14 was any linking in your head between Mr Walgate's death 15 and then the next two deaths. 16 Just putting aside Mr Whitworth's death for now, you 17 had already been made aware, and seen in fact, that both 18 Anthony's death and Gabriel's death involved young males 19 in their 20s, both found in a seated position. Is that 20 right?</p> <p>21 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Both white and quite slim?</p> <p>23 A. Well, I didn't see Mr Walgate, so -- but he was white. 24 I was told he was white. Whether he was slim, I don't 25 know, but yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 Q. Just taking that evidence, Anthony's death and Gabriel's 2 death were two in a matter of weeks for you, so how is 3 it then that you didn't link these two?</p> <p>4 A. I just -- at no point dealing with Mr Kovari's death did 5 I think of linking that with Mr Walgate's death.</p> <p>6 Q. But you had been to both scenes?</p> <p>7 A. Correct, yes.</p> <p>8 Q. You had seen or been made aware of the features that 9 I have just been through. Your evidence has been that 10 it was only around two of this sort of unexplained death 11 you attended a year. So these were I think, if I have 12 the maths right, about 10 weeks apart. Is it really the 13 case these didn't link in your head in any way at all?</p> <p>14 A. It is that case, yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Even when you were then made aware of Mr Whitworth's 16 death, again I think a matter of weeks after Gabriel's 17 death, when those two deaths occurred I think you said 18 you did link Gabriel and Daniel?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. But you still did not link them back to Anthony's death?</p> <p>21 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Even then, this is now, is it not, three of these 23 unexplained deaths in a year and we are only still 24 in September. Still you didn't link them, is that 25 right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 A. I didn't link the deaths of Gabriel and Daniel with the 2 death of Mr Walgate, no. 3 Q. Was there not any discussion at all about Mr Walgate's 4 case when you came to look at Gabriel's body and learnt 5 about Daniel's death? 6 A. No. Not that I recall at all, no. 7 MS HILL: Thank you. 8 MS COLLIER: Looking at the time, ma'am, I wonder if it is 9 a good time for a break. 10 THE CORONER: So was I, yes. 11 We will take a short break, members of the jury, 12 thank you. 13 (11.26 am) 14 (A short adjournment) 15 (12.01 pm) 16 (In the presence of the jury) 17 THE CORONER: Yes, Dr van Dellen. 18 Questions from DR VAN DELLEN 19 DR VAN DELLEN: Mr Harman, I ask questions on behalf of 20 Ricky Waumsley, who is Daniel Whitworth's partner. As 21 you know, Daniel was murdered a few weeks after Gabriel. 22 You explained in your evidence before the brief 23 adjournment that you did attend the scene of 24 Anthony Walgate's death, is that correct? 25 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 Q. Before the brief adjournment, my learned friend Ms Hill, 2 to my right, Queen's Counsel, asked you about your 3 investigation of Gabriel's last movements. My note of 4 your answer, I am sure I will be corrected if I have 5 taken this down incorrectly, is that you answered about 6 CCTV from the London borough of Barking and Dagenham and 7 the church, and then you said: 8 "Last steps we didn't know. No other steps we could 9 have pursued at the scene." 10 Do you remember that evidence that you gave? 11 A. Yes, I do. 12 Q. On scene, at Gabriel, you referred in your evidence to 13 an address in correspondence in Gabriel's bag. Do you 14 remember giving that evidence? 15 A. I do, yes. 16 Q. I am going to read to you, if I may, evidence that the 17 jury heard yesterday from one of your officers, 18 PC Holmes. It was in fact a witness statement that was 19 read out whilst a PC Faulkner was giving evidence, but 20 just in fairness to you, I will read out the relevant 21 excerpt. So this is from PC Holmes's witness statement. 22 PC Holmes said: 23 "Under direction from CID we have searched the bag 24 and suitcase next to the body. In the small bag I found 25 a small empty bottle of vodka and a pair of glasses. In</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 Q. In fairness to you I will just ask for your statement to 2 come up on the screen again, it is HAL4, page 1, 3 paragraph 5. It will make its way on to screen in 4 a moment. Paragraph 5, you said: 5 "Around 08.00 hours on the same day I attended 6 Cooke Street, Barking, where I met with Inspector 7 Learmonth." 8 You refer to the forensic tent, a male aged early 9 20s had been found "... deceased and seated in 10 an upright position in the vicinity of 47 Cooke Street". 11 The CSM was in attendance and Inspector Learmonth's 12 actions were: 13 "... notifying borough CID and HAT of the death and 14 a local street search." 15 You were fully aware that that scene was 16 Cooke Street, that's correct, isn't it? 17 A. That's correct, yes. 18 Q. The jury has had the benefit of visiting Cooke Street. 19 But you were also there when you attended Anthony's 20 death, so you are aware of the layout of the street, 21 that it is pedestrianised, with houses relatively close 22 together, is that right? 23 A. It was dark. I don't recall the area particularly well, 24 but I do remember it being pedestrianised around where 25 Mr Walgate was found, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 the suitcase there were several bags of clothing and 2 toiletries, as well as some paperwork and medication. 3 Some of the paperwork was from HSBC about the opening of 4 an account and gave an address." 5 My learned friend, counsel to the inquest, then 6 commented on that and said: 7 "Then he reads the address in Deptford, which 8 I think we will later hear was John Pape's address." 9 Then PC Holmes continued in his statement to say: 10 "The paperwork dated for August 2014 and an HSBC 11 card was found in a wallet which started this month as 12 well. CAD2948 was created for officers to call on that 13 address [in other words the address in Deptford] to see 14 if we could contact a next of kin." 15 That address was in Deptford, so it wasn't in 16 Barking, was it? 17 A. No. 18 Q. So there was an arrangement to send a police officer to 19 that address in Deptford to make enquiries, wasn't 20 there? 21 A. Correct. 22 Q. So there was an opportunity to ask any person at that 23 address, such as John Pape, why Gabriel was in Barking? 24 A. Correct. 25 Q. The officer attending that address as part of enquiries</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

<p>1 about Gabriel's last movements could have asked whether 2 Gabriel was linked to any address in Barking? 3 A. Correct. 4 Q. If an officer had attended and had been informed of 5 Gabriel's link to 62 Cooke Street, that would have been 6 significant, wouldn't it? 7 A. Yes. 8 DR VAN DELLEN: Thank you, no further questions. 9 Questions from MR BARTH 10 MR BARTH: Mr Harman, I ask questions on behalf of the 11 Metropolitan Police. 12 I want to first ask you about your attendance at the 13 scene of Gabriel Kovari's body. You were asked by 14 Ms Collier, counsel to the inquest, as to whether, 15 because of the circumstances of how Gabriel ended up in 16 the place he was found or how he died were unknown or 17 unexplained, you should have deemed it non-suspicious. 18 Would you have a look, please, at INQ6, page 19, it is 19 going to come up on the screen, I hope. 20 This is the report of the coroner's expert, retired 21 Detective Superintendent Julie Mackay. If you have a 22 look, please -- this section deals with Gabriel Kovari 23 and if you have a look, please, at the first sentence of 24 paragraph 76. She says: 25 "In response to the question: was it reasonable to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 conducted part of her investigation, "Actually evidence 2 has emerged now which means this does look suspicious", 3 and refer it back to you? 4 A. Absolutely, yes. Yes. 5 Q. In fact we know that events were then overtaken by the 6 discovery of Daniel Whitworth's body. You were asked 7 a moment ago by Dr van Dellen about contact with 8 Mr Pape. Can you have a look, please, at IPC26, which 9 will hopefully come up on the screen. IPC26. This is 10 a CAD, the jury have seen a number of these before. Can 11 you see the date of that CAD? 12 A. 28 August 2014. 13 Q. So on the date that Gabriel's body was discovered? 14 A. Correct, yes. 15 Q. The call name, you can see about eight lines down, is 16 Mr John Pape? 17 A. Yes, correct, yes. 18 Q. So it seems, at least on that day, that Mr Pape was 19 spoken to? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. He was. We know, because we heard yesterday from 22 PC Faulkner, that a statement was taken from him on 23 6 September but then signed on 8 September? 24 A. Sure. 25 Q. Turning then to your role as the night duty officer on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 treat Gabriel Kovari's death as non-suspicious at this 2 time? I do consider it was reasonable." 3 It is right, isn't it, that the coroner's expert 4 considers it was reasonable to treat Gabriel's death as 5 you did as unexplained but non-suspicious, is that 6 right? 7 A. Yes, I have not seen that document before but that is 8 certainly what it reads, yes. 9 Q. Thank you, we can have that off the screen now, please. 10 After your involvement, when you decided that the 11 death was non-suspicious but unexplained, and you 12 explained that you had taken all the actions that you 13 could at the scene and that was the end of your active 14 involvement, it wasn't the end of the investigation 15 though was it, because the coroner takes on the 16 investigation, is that right? 17 A. That's correct. 18 Q. It is also not the end of police involvement, because 19 the coroner tasks the police to support her 20 investigation where necessary, is that right? 21 A. That is also correct, yes. 22 Q. As Ms Hill mentioned to you, we heard from PC Faulkner 23 yesterday and he detailed the various steps that he took 24 on the coroner's behalf. 25 Could the coroner say to the police, having</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 20 to 21 September, you were asked about this by 2 Ms Collier, and what further steps you took, or were 3 taken when it was identified that Gabriel Klein was in 4 fact Gabriel Kovari. 5 Is it right that at the same time that you are the 6 duty inspector, there is also a cluster detective 7 inspector at the same time? 8 A. That's correct, yes. 9 Q. The jury have heard reference to the cluster detective 10 inspector I think before, but can you just explain what 11 the cluster detective inspector is? 12 A. Yes, I have made reference in my evidence to a borough 13 DI, a DI within the Barking and Dagenham borough. If we 14 effectively say out of hours, when there is not a DI for 15 Barking and Dagenham, there is a detective inspector 16 that will support a number of boroughs, I think, the 17 cluster role, effectively out-of-hours covers, for 18 simplicity. 19 Q. Where there is a secondary investigation by the CID, is 20 the cluster DI the go-to liaison where it is necessary, 21 rather than you as the duty inspector? 22 A. Correct. 23 Q. Can you have a look, please, in your bundle at tab 25. 24 It is MPS801. It is the large bundle. 25 A. Tab 25?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 Q. Tab 25, yes. I think it is self-evident what it is at 2 the top, it is 20 to 21 September 2014 night duty DI 3 return. 4 It is the same sort of document that you completed 5 as duty inspector but completed by the cluster DI, is 6 that right? 7 A. That's correct, yes. 8 Q. Keep your finger in that, if I may, and turn back, 9 please, to tab 24, which, for the screen, is IPC471. 10 This is a document entitled "Criminal investigation 11 department [CID] night duty occurrence book, 12 20 September to 21 September". 13 It covers the same period that we are talking about, 14 is that right? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. If you turn, please, in that tab, to the penultimate 17 page, it is page 7, you will see that that is completed 18 at the bottom by T/DC Pridige and DC Hagan. They are 19 members of CID? 20 A. Barking and Dagenham CID, yes. 21 Q. If you look at the last substantive paragraph, that 22 starts: 23 "I have spoken to the on-call DI Ian Bowles, he is 24 of the opinion that nothing else can be done at this 25 stage and no crime scene to be put in place, as this</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 the CID team. 2 Forgive me, I should have pointed out in the first 3 half of that page, halfway through that paragraph, it 4 says: 5 "I have spoken to DC Pridige and we are in agreement 6 that this male is referred to in Whitworth's suicide 7 note." 8 That is the link back to that other document we saw 9 that was completed by T/DC Pridige. Sorry, have a look 10 at the bottom half of that document and he sets out his 11 advice, doesn't he: 12 "I do not intend to call the HAT team at this stage 13 but it should be a consideration to seek some advice 14 during office hours on the 21st. At this stage 15 I believe the incidents are non-suspicious, but if 16 Kovari's body is still in the mortuary then we may wish 17 to consider toxicology." 18 He advises four actions: 19 "Historical call data should be sought for 20 Whitworth's mobile phone around the time of Kovari's 21 death. 22 "Clothing from Kovari and Whitworth to be seized. 23 "Seek advice from SC&O1 [that's homicide command]." 24 And: 25 "Conduct enquiries to trace the address where</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 incident is three weeks old." 2 It sets out a bit more of his conversation with 3 Bowles and then finally at the end: 4 "DI Bowles has advised for early turn to organise to 5 attend the morgue and to seize clothing from Daniel and 6 the possibility of toxicology for Gabriel if the body 7 has not been subjected to burial et cetera and his 8 clothing." 9 If you now turn back to MPS801, that is at tab 25, 10 and turn over to page 2. It appears from the 11 combination of these documents that those enquiries 12 overnight which identified that Gabriel Klein in the 13 note was in fact Gabriel Kovari, had been identified by 14 CID and there had been discussions between CID and the 15 cluster DI about next steps. Is that right? 16 A. That's correct. 17 Q. Can you have a look, please, in that page, at the top: 18 "DI Andy Dunn from Met intel contacted me about 19 01.15. He has uncovered a potential match for 20 Gabriel Klein, real name Gabriel Kovari." 21 That seems to be the source for the information that 22 is in your inspector return? 23 A. Correct, yes. 24 Q. If you look to the bottom half of that, starting, "I do 25 not intend ..." he sets out the advice that he gave to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 Whitworth administered the extra G shot, Facebook 2 interrogation may assist." 3 That was advice that the cluster DI was giving to 4 the CID team and that was picked up, would have been 5 picked up, is this right, by the CID when they started 6 their early turn shift in the morning? 7 A. Correct. 8 MR BERRY: Thank you. 9 MS COLLIER: I have no further questions, thank you. 10 Questions from THE JURY 11 THE CORONER: There are a couple of questions from the jury, 12 Mr Harman. 13 One reads, I understand you have nothing to warrant 14 foul play, but you also have no evidence to warrant 15 natural causes, so how does the sudden death for no 16 apparent reason of a young male warrant no suspicion? 17 A. Well, ma'am, it was a case of we didn't know how he 18 died. We didn't know the circumstances, but there were 19 no suspicious circumstances at the scene that would 20 warrant me treating it differently. That may seem 21 a wholly unsatisfactory answer and a repetition of what 22 I have said before, but to me there was nothing specific 23 to treat it as suspicious, even though, as the question 24 says, we didn't know how he died. I am sorry if that 25 has not really answered the question, but I am not sure</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 how else I verbalise that answer.</p> <p>2 THE CORONER: Thank you.</p> <p>3 There was a question in relation to trying to</p> <p>4 contact Gabriel's address, but we have just established</p> <p>5 that was in fact done, I think on the afternoon of the</p> <p>6 28th --</p> <p>7 A. I think it was early afternoon, ma'am, that a last known</p> <p>8 address was found in the Lewisham borough.</p> <p>9 THE CORONER: How does that square with your decision to</p> <p>10 close the investigation down?</p> <p>11 A. No information was sort of sent back to me from that</p> <p>12 call on to suggest there was suspicious circumstances.</p> <p>13 I believe -- and this is purely from memory -- that</p> <p>14 there was a suggestion that Mr Kovari had left the</p> <p>15 London borough of Lewisham and gone to Barking and</p> <p>16 Dagenham, but I don't think any other information was</p> <p>17 presented which caused me to think that those</p> <p>18 circumstances were suspicious. I don't think it added</p> <p>19 anything to my rationale.</p> <p>20 THE CORONER: Thank you.</p> <p>21 Finally, the coroner emailed PC Faulkner to carry</p> <p>22 out further investigations on their behalf. PC Faulkner</p> <p>23 checked -- this is what he said in evidence yesterday --</p> <p>24 with his supervisor to confirm the request. The</p> <p>25 question is: should the supervisor have passed up this</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 Mr Edwards, it is right, isn't it, that you moved to</p> <p>2 Barking in 2005?</p> <p>3 A. That's right.</p> <p>4 Q. I think it is right that you have lived, even if not in</p> <p>5 the same place, but still within Barking ever since?</p> <p>6 A. That's correct.</p> <p>7 Q. We believe that you will be able to provide evidence to</p> <p>8 the jury that is relevant to the inquests they are</p> <p>9 hearing in relation to at least three matters.</p> <p>10 First of all, you were someone who knew Stephen Port</p> <p>11 in the years before 2014, is that right?</p> <p>12 A. That's correct.</p> <p>13 Q. It is also the case, I believe, that you in fact met</p> <p>14 Gabriel Kovari, at Stephen Port's flat, only a few days</p> <p>15 before he died?</p> <p>16 A. I did.</p> <p>17 Q. It is also the case, we know from your witness</p> <p>18 statements, that you were the chair of Barking and</p> <p>19 Dagenham LGBT network in I think about 2012/2013 -- in</p> <p>20 fact I think you set up that network, is that right?</p> <p>21 A. I did, that's correct.</p> <p>22 Q. In that role, you had dealings with the Barking and</p> <p>23 Dagenham borough police relating to the way in which the</p> <p>24 police worked with the local LGBT community.</p> <p>25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 information to you, in other words what the coroner was</p> <p>2 interested in?</p> <p>3 A. Yes, I can't answer why that was not done and I don't</p> <p>4 know what those lines of enquiry were.</p> <p>5 THE CORONER: You didn't know what the coroner was asking?</p> <p>6 A. I was not aware that the coroner had directed any</p> <p>7 further enquiries, ma'am.</p> <p>8 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Thank you.</p> <p>9 Thank you, Mr Harman.</p> <p>10 A. Thank you.</p> <p>11 MR O'CONNOR: Madam, the plan is now to move to the next</p> <p>12 witness. I know there will just be a very brief pause</p> <p>13 while we prepare the witness box.</p> <p>14 THE CORONER: Yes. (Pause)</p> <p>15 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, may we please call Ryan Edwards.</p> <p>16 MR RYAN EDWARDS (affirmed)</p> <p>17 Questions from MR O'CONNOR</p> <p>18 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, Mr Edwards, do take a seat and take</p> <p>19 your mask off if it is more comfortable, as I imagine it</p> <p>20 will be.</p> <p>21 Could you please tell us your full name and also</p> <p>22 your occupation?</p> <p>23 A. My name is Ryan Edwards and I am a consultation</p> <p>24 specialist for National Highways.</p> <p>25 Q. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 Q. I am going to ask you about each of those matters this</p> <p>2 morning, Mr Edwards. But I should say now that I am</p> <p>3 only going to touch briefly on the last of those</p> <p>4 matters, the LGBT network and so on. That is because</p> <p>5 you have very kindly agreed to come back and give</p> <p>6 evidence for a second time in a couple of weeks' time</p> <p>7 when we, with the jury, will be looking at some broader</p> <p>8 issues relating to these cases.</p> <p>9 So although, as I say, I will touch on that matter,</p> <p>10 it is not our intention, and I don't think anyone else</p> <p>11 will be questioning you about those general matters that</p> <p>12 you have referred to in your statements, do you</p> <p>13 understand?</p> <p>14 A. I understand.</p> <p>15 Q. Today the focus of my and I think the other questions</p> <p>16 that you will be asked will be on that period of time</p> <p>17 running up to and including 2014, and in particular your</p> <p>18 dealings with Stephen Port and briefly Gabriel Kovari?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. May I ask in that context, as we have been asking most</p> <p>21 of the witnesses, we are of course asking you, sitting</p> <p>22 here in 2021, about matters that took place seven years</p> <p>23 ago.</p> <p>24 Do you actually have an independent memory of those</p> <p>25 events now?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 A. I do.</p> <p>2 Q. Again, as with many of the witnesses, you have made</p> <p>3 witness statements relating to those matters over time,</p> <p>4 over the last seven years or, so haven't you?</p> <p>5 A. I have.</p> <p>6 Q. I know you have copies of them in front of you and if it</p> <p>7 would help at any time during the course of your</p> <p>8 evidence to just have a look at those statements and to</p> <p>9 remind yourself of what you said, then of course feel</p> <p>10 free to ask to do that.</p> <p>11 I will probably be asking you to just look at one or</p> <p>12 two passages before you answer some questions and it may</p> <p>13 well be that those behind me do the same when they ask</p> <p>14 you questions. All right?</p> <p>15 A. I understand.</p> <p>16 Q. Let's start then with the chronology. As we have said,</p> <p>17 you moved to Barking in 2005?</p> <p>18 A. That's right.</p> <p>19 Q. Was that for work reasons or -- tell us why you moved</p> <p>20 and what the circumstances of the move were?</p> <p>21 A. So I lived on Canvey Island previously and I wanted to</p> <p>22 obviously move out and become independent and I needed</p> <p>23 to, in order to find somewhere suitable to live,</p> <p>24 I needed to prove a connection to the local area and</p> <p>25 I had studied at university in the University of East</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 A. Yes, that's right.</p> <p>2 Q. More importantly, it shows the area of St Margaret's</p> <p>3 Church and the green space around it.</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Yes?</p> <p>6 This is an area that the jury have some familiarity</p> <p>7 with, because they have been on a visit and walked round</p> <p>8 this area. Do you see, Mr Edwards, at the top left-hand</p> <p>9 corner of the photograph, that there are a couple of</p> <p>10 markers, one to the home address of Stephen Port and</p> <p>11 also, of course, very close, just outside it, the place</p> <p>12 where Anthony Walgate's body was found. This is an area</p> <p>13 you are very familiar with, I take it?</p> <p>14 A. I am, indeed.</p> <p>15 Q. You say that you lived sort of opposite or diagonally</p> <p>16 opposite Stephen Port. Can you help us -- I mean in</p> <p>17 general terms, using this photograph, to tell us where</p> <p>18 it was that you moved, back in 2005, Gateway House?</p> <p>19 A. Yes, if you look pretty much opposite the marker of</p> <p>20 where Stephen Port lived, and it is the new block and it</p> <p>21 is -- I was on the corner, so the furthest corner up</p> <p>22 Cooke Street on the new block, so very, very, very close</p> <p>23 indeed.</p> <p>24 Q. You say on the corner then, so if you walked out of your</p> <p>25 front door, would you be looking straight at the block</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 London in Barking, so I was able to prove a connection</p> <p>2 in order to get on to the social housing waiting list</p> <p>3 effectively, so Barking then was the logical choice for</p> <p>4 me.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay. We know from your statement that at that time you</p> <p>6 moved to a property in Gateway House, St Ann's, Barking?</p> <p>7 A. That's right.</p> <p>8 Q. You described it as being pretty much opposite</p> <p>9 Stephen Port's flat in Cooke Street?</p> <p>10 A. It was actually diagonally opposite.</p> <p>11 Q. I wanted to ask you if you could have a look with us at</p> <p>12 a photograph that the jury have seen. As well as your</p> <p>13 bundle in front of you, there are two other bundles,</p> <p>14 I think, both of which we will probably look at,</p> <p>15 although some of documents will appear on screen,</p> <p>16 including this one, but, for the jury, it is jury</p> <p>17 bundle A, tab 9, please. That is the smaller of your</p> <p>18 two bundles, Mr Edwards.</p> <p>19 For the screen, it is IPC132, page 6.</p> <p>20 We will just wait for it to come up on screen,</p> <p>21 page 6, please. That's it. Perhaps we could just</p> <p>22 enlarge it a little.</p> <p>23 This aerial photograph -- in fact it shows the Town</p> <p>24 Hall pretty much. On the left-hand side of the picture,</p> <p>25 doesn't it, Mr Edwards?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 which contained Stephen Port's flat or would you have</p> <p>2 been at 90 degrees to it?</p> <p>3 A. Yes, if I walked out, I would then need to look left,</p> <p>4 diagonally left, and I would see Stephen Port's flat.</p> <p>5 Q. I think we can see that.</p> <p>6 Let's keep the photograph on the screen, please,</p> <p>7 because that is where you moved in 2005?</p> <p>8 A. That's right.</p> <p>9 Q. Did you continue living there all the way through to the</p> <p>10 time that we are interested in, particularly 2014?</p> <p>11 A. No. So I lived there for approximately three and a half</p> <p>12 years, and I moved to Axe Street, where I live</p> <p>13 currently, in December 2008.</p> <p>14 Q. Axe Street?</p> <p>15 A. Axe Street.</p> <p>16 Q. Is that either on this photo or very close to it?</p> <p>17 A. So if you look -- Axe Street is actually marked on the</p> <p>18 map. It is where there is Cooke Street and then there</p> <p>19 is St Paul's road underneath and the road running</p> <p>20 beneath parallel is Axe Street and on the left-hand side</p> <p>21 of the image there is a U-shaped building and where</p> <p>22 I live is just next to the U-shaped building, so it is</p> <p>23 just off the map to the left.</p> <p>24 Q. The jury will remember that when they went on the visit,</p> <p>25 we turned right out of the Town Hall and walked round</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

20 (Pages 77 to 80)

<p>1 the back towards Cooke Street, crossed over St Paul's</p> <p>2 Road to get into Cooke Street, so walking that way, we</p> <p>3 must have pretty much walked past where you live?</p> <p>4 A. No doubt, yes, just two roads away.</p> <p>5 Q. Just for clarity then, it was in that second place on</p> <p>6 Axe Street that you were living in 2014?</p> <p>7 A. That's right.</p> <p>8 Q. Thank you. We can put that photograph away, thank you.</p> <p>9 With that in mind, but going back to 2005, if we</p> <p>10 may, is it right that you met Stephen Port shortly after</p> <p>11 you moved to Gateway House in 2005?</p> <p>12 A. That's right.</p> <p>13 Q. In a few sentences, can you tell us how you came to meet</p> <p>14 him and how you got to know him?</p> <p>15 A. I mean, at the time in 2005, Barking didn't have a very</p> <p>16 gay friendly reputation and obviously I had just moved</p> <p>17 to the area, as a gay man I wanted to obviously</p> <p>18 establish some local friends and I recall one summer's</p> <p>19 day and Stephen was entertaining some young men in his</p> <p>20 front patio, so it was an educated guess that he</p> <p>21 probably was gay like myself and obviously, in order to</p> <p>22 get into the town centre, I have to effectively walk</p> <p>23 past his apartment. So I took the opportunity to</p> <p>24 introduce myself one day to Stephen and we became</p> <p>25 friends, neighbours, at that point.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 either side and Stephen had made it clear anyway to me</p> <p>2 that I think he found guys only up to the age of 23,</p> <p>3 a very particular marker, attractive and by that point</p> <p>4 I was over the hill, I was I think 29 at that time, so</p> <p>5 certainly that was never on the cards.</p> <p>6 Q. In very general terms, how often would you either meet</p> <p>7 up with Stephen Port or communicate with him perhaps by</p> <p>8 messaging, over those years? Again, just to give us</p> <p>9 some idea of how close you were to him?</p> <p>10 A. I think we would probably have a coffee say once</p> <p>11 a month? And text messages, a text a week, a couple of</p> <p>12 texts a week. It was never a best friend or anything</p> <p>13 like that, but it was certainly a neighbourly friendship</p> <p>14 and he actually referred to me on texts as, "Hey</p> <p>15 neighbour".</p> <p>16 Q. We will see that shortly.</p> <p>17 I think in one of your statements you refer to</p> <p>18 an occasion where you went round to his flat and met his</p> <p>19 mother. Was that the only occasion you met his family</p> <p>20 or were there others?</p> <p>21 A. Yes, Stephen never really talked about his family. He</p> <p>22 was a very private person and there was one occasion</p> <p>23 where he actually invited me round but he had gone out</p> <p>24 for whatever reason and so to my surprise the mum was</p> <p>25 there and she let me in and so we had a short amount</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 Q. Yes. And obviously it doesn't matter precisely when,</p> <p>2 but this was back in 2005, or weeks or months after you</p> <p>3 moved in, was it?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, I moved in in April 2005, so this would have been</p> <p>5 the summer, I would have guessed probably about June?</p> <p>6 Q. Can you tell us, again just in brief, how your</p> <p>7 friendship with Stephen Port developed after that, over</p> <p>8 the years ahead?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, so initially, obviously, I wanted to see how much</p> <p>10 I could cultivate the friendship, so we arranged on</p> <p>11 occasion a couple of outings to gay bars and things like</p> <p>12 that and I found Stephen's company quite tough going,</p> <p>13 because he was a man of very few words, so socially</p> <p>14 I would be doing all the talking and he would just kind</p> <p>15 of be standing there, monosyllabic, so I quickly</p> <p>16 realised that that was probably a stretch too far for</p> <p>17 the friendship. So from that point onwards then it was</p> <p>18 kind of relegated to an occasional coffee, you know,</p> <p>19 I would go round to his place, he would come to my</p> <p>20 place, we would discuss topics from boyfriends to the</p> <p>21 weather to work.</p> <p>22 Q. Just to be clear then, before we go on, I think what you</p> <p>23 are telling us is that you never moved beyond a platonic</p> <p>24 relationship with Stephen Port?</p> <p>25 A. No, and I don't think there was any sexual interest on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 of -- you know, time together before Stephen returned.</p> <p>2 Q. Now, you said already that Stephen was -- you described</p> <p>3 him as a private person, you say that there were not</p> <p>4 an easy person to talk to and someone who in your words</p> <p>5 was only interested sexually in younger men. Is there</p> <p>6 anything else you can say to give us an idea of what he</p> <p>7 was like over that time that you knew him?</p> <p>8 A. That is a very open-ended question really.</p> <p>9 Q. Yes.</p> <p>10 A. I mean he would always talk in a very quiet tone, he</p> <p>11 would not give much eye contact, he would often sort of</p> <p>12 bow his head when he was chatting. And he lived quite</p> <p>13 a humble life, really, working in a cafe in East Ham in</p> <p>14 a bus garage.</p> <p>15 He had a voracious appetite for meeting guys, so</p> <p>16 I was always astonished really at how he was able to</p> <p>17 meet so many because I thought, you know, he is not</p> <p>18 exactly Mr Personality, so how is he kind of doing this?</p> <p>19 So that was always -- that was slightly strange.</p> <p>20 Another quirk of his behaviour as well was his love of</p> <p>21 Transformers toys and I love retro things, I am a child</p> <p>22 of the 80s myself, but he would take it a step further</p> <p>23 and he would actually go to the Toys R Us at the time</p> <p>24 and actually buy the children's versions of the toys,</p> <p>25 not the adult collectors' versions of the toys which</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 they often target older people for, but just the ones 2 that were targeted for children and he would play with 3 himself with these toys, trucks moving them back and 4 forth. Strange for a grown man to do that but, you 5 know, obviously I took Stephen for his quirks, and there 6 were many.</p> <p>7 Q. You referred there, Mr Edwards, to what you knew about 8 Stephen Port as you described it as voracious appetite 9 to meet men. The jury have seen evidence of his 10 voracious appetite to watch porn and not only porn but 11 violent porn. Was that something you were aware of?</p> <p>12 A. No. So when I would go round for coffee, he would often 13 have his nose tucked into a laptop and it was a bizarre 14 scene really, because I am very talkative, so he would 15 make the coffee, he would sit down, he would be 16 scurrying away on his laptop and I would be chatting 17 away kind of constantly and Stephen would just be saying 18 "yes" and "no" at required intervals.</p> <p>19 So it was a bizarre encounter really, but that was 20 that. I think, because our friendship was completely 21 platonic, we -- you know, porn was never a topic of 22 conversation, effectively, it just wouldn't come up.</p> <p>23 Q. Of course we all now know, and the jury have heard, that 24 this man you were going around meeting socially killed 25 four men --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 that and when I had spoken to Stephen, he had always 2 told me that they were 16, 17, 18, plus, so no, there 3 was no reason to pursue that line of enquiry further.</p> <p>4 Q. Just to be clear, you say obviously you would have 5 raised it, raised it with whom?</p> <p>6 A. I would have raised it to the police.</p> <p>7 Q. Let me move on and ask you just a few questions, 8 Mr Edwards, about your involvement in the Barking LGBT 9 network. I said I would just touch on it.</p> <p>10 I think it is right to say that in late 2012 you 11 wrote a report -- you might call it a needs 12 assessment -- relating to the way in which Barking and 13 Dagenham police sort of liaised with and worked with the 14 local LGBT community, is that right?</p> <p>15 A. That's right.</p> <p>16 Q. That is a report that you had been asked to write?</p> <p>17 A. Yes, I was actually commissioned by the Council for 18 Voluntary Services to undertake a local needs assessment 19 for the LGBT community.</p> <p>20 Q. Yes. At about the same time -- as I think 21 I mentioned -- you had founded your own group called the 22 Barking and Dagenham LGBT network?</p> <p>23 A. This was actually part and parcel of the package of work 24 that I was doing.</p> <p>25 Q. As part of all of that work, I think it is right that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 A. Hmm.</p> <p>2 Q. -- and raped seven others.</p> <p>3 Over that time that you knew him, did it ever occur 4 to you that he might be dangerous?</p> <p>5 A. My slight concern with Stephen Port was that sometimes 6 the guys he would introduce me to were very young. So 7 when I say that, I would say sort of 16, 17 years, 8 sometimes. Obviously very, very close to the age of 9 consent and they were also of often difficult 10 circumstances, so, you know, broken homes -- needing 11 somewhere to stay, vulnerable, effectively. And so 12 informally I had actually shared my concerns with some 13 friends. You know, I wondered if he was, you know, 14 bordering on paedophile tendencies, actually, that was 15 my slight concern with Stephen, but obviously I didn't 16 have any evidence to that and obviously tragically 17 I was -- my concerns were off the mark, when obviously 18 all this came to light.</p> <p>19 Q. You mentioned talking to friends about those concerns, 20 did you do anything else about it?</p> <p>21 A. No, because on the gay scene it is not unusual for men 22 to like younger ...</p> <p>23 If I had ever known that Stephen had pursued anyone 24 under the age of legal consent, obviously I would have 25 raised it, but I certainly didn't have any evidence of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 you met up with and communicated with a man who the jury 2 have heard evidence from, Detective Inspector 3 Eugene McCarthy?</p> <p>4 A. That's right.</p> <p>5 Q. As I have said, I don't want to go into the detail of 6 all that, that is for next time and we will look at the 7 report and everything that happened around it.</p> <p>8 I just want to ask you about one particular element 9 of this story today. That relates to a Facebook page 10 that I think you established.</p> <p>11 For these purposes, can we go on the screen, 12 please -- this is not a document in the jury bundle -- 13 to INQ15. These are, are they not, Mr Edwards, emails 14 exchanged between you and a police officer called 15 Paul Sloan?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. If we look towards the bottom, ignoring the top one, in 18 late 2013?</p> <p>19 A. That's correct.</p> <p>20 Q. Again, we will look at these for a different reason and 21 in more detail when you come back to give evidence, but 22 just for the moment I want to look at the email on the 23 bottom of the page. We see it is an email sent by you 24 to Mr Sloan on 24 September. We have helpfully scrolled 25 up, so that on the screen we can see both halves of it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 We see you say:</p> <p>2 "Hi Paul, just to update you, I have added the four</p> <p>3 hate crime questions you asked onto the LGBT network for</p> <p>4 Barking and Dagenham Facebook page. It would be a good</p> <p>5 idea if the four(?) liaison officers add themselves on</p> <p>6 there and they can promote some discussion and encourage</p> <p>7 responses to the questions."</p> <p>8 Then you provide the link to the Facebook page,</p> <p>9 I assume that is what it is?</p> <p>10 A. That's right.</p> <p>11 Q. I think we can take that email down now, thank you.</p> <p>12 Tell us just in general terms about the Facebook</p> <p>13 page, what it was intended to do, how much it was used,</p> <p>14 what it was used for and so on?</p> <p>15 A. Again, as part of the needs assessment, it was found</p> <p>16 that -- obviously we will come to that at a later date</p> <p>17 and there was a whole area ... lacking areas that needed</p> <p>18 addressing, but one of those was communication between</p> <p>19 LGBT people in the borough, so Facebook was an emerging</p> <p>20 social media tool at the time, so it was seen to be</p> <p>21 fairly pioneering actually to set up a Facebook page so</p> <p>22 that members of the local LGBT community could</p> <p>23 communicate with each other and organisations, such as</p> <p>24 the police, NHS, local authority, et cetera, et cetera,</p> <p>25 if they had information pertinent to members of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 A. That's right.</p> <p>2 Q. Give us an idea then, Mr Edwards, of roughly speaking</p> <p>3 members there were on that Facebook page?</p> <p>4 A. Obviously it is hard for me to recall an exact number,</p> <p>5 but I think we were dealing with about 80 -- in the</p> <p>6 region of 80. We had done -- I had organised an event</p> <p>7 at the Broadway Theatre, which had been well attended by</p> <p>8 members of the community, that had helped to swell the</p> <p>9 numbers and so, yes, within the region of 80 to 100</p> <p>10 I think. So not a bad size at the time.</p> <p>11 Q. I think it is clear from what you have said but that</p> <p>12 number would have perhaps -- you may not have included</p> <p>13 those organisations within that number, but those</p> <p>14 organisations had access to the page --</p> <p>15 A. Yes, that's right.</p> <p>16 Q. -- to enter things or upload things to the page if they</p> <p>17 wanted to?</p> <p>18 A. Yes, absolutely, I was telling everyone, everyone about</p> <p>19 it, as long as they wanted to listen.</p> <p>20 Q. That email we saw was dated September 2013.</p> <p>21 We are obviously going to focus on matters about</p> <p>22 a year later, towards the end of 2014. Was the Facebook</p> <p>23 page still working in the way you have described then?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, it was. So I had actually stood down by that point</p> <p>25 as the chair of the LGBT network, but the page certainly</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 community, they could publish it on that as well.</p> <p>2 A kind of one-stop shop for information for the</p> <p>3 local LGBT+ community.</p> <p>4 Q. We see that you were, as it were, promoting the Facebook</p> <p>5 page to the police in that email. Do I take it from</p> <p>6 what you said that either you or other members of the</p> <p>7 network promoted it to other organisations you have</p> <p>8 mentioned, the NHS, for example?</p> <p>9 A. Absolutely, yes.</p> <p>10 Q. We all probably have varying degrees of familiarity with</p> <p>11 Facebook, we know that you can have Facebook pages that,</p> <p>12 as it were, are locked or closed with controls on them</p> <p>13 and others that are pretty much open to anyone using the</p> <p>14 internet.</p> <p>15 Was this a Facebook page that anyone could access?</p> <p>16 A. I think -- it was a group, so at the time you actually</p> <p>17 had to click to kind of say that you wanted to be a part</p> <p>18 of it. So there was concerns that if we had made it</p> <p>19 fully open, because the LGBT community felt vulnerable,</p> <p>20 that it would be a detriment to them joining if we made</p> <p>21 it too open. So no, you had to actually kind of opt</p> <p>22 into that.</p> <p>23 Q. Yes, we saw reference in that email to hate crime and</p> <p>24 that is start of the story that we will come back to, is</p> <p>25 it not?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 carried on for quite some time after that period. The</p> <p>2 Council for Voluntary Services that had kind of</p> <p>3 commissioned me to undertake the work initially, they</p> <p>4 kept the page going for several years after that and</p> <p>5 I think it is still there to this day, in fact.</p> <p>6 Q. Good.</p> <p>7 I am going to move on and just ask you now about</p> <p>8 a couple of episodes that you describe in your evidence</p> <p>9 that took place, I think we will find, before, quite</p> <p>10 possibly some months before, you met Gabriel Kovari,</p> <p>11 okay?</p> <p>12 The first is an episode which I think you probably</p> <p>13 describe as taking place in early 2014, and it involves</p> <p>14 a visit that you made to Stephen Port's flat. Let me</p> <p>15 just ask you just to remind yourself, if you look at</p> <p>16 your witness statement, it is on page 4 of 5. This is</p> <p>17 the witness statement dated 2015. It is the occasion</p> <p>18 where you went round and you arrived unexpectedly, as it</p> <p>19 were.</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. You will note the individual who was there with</p> <p>22 Stephen Port and how he is described.</p> <p>23 I think what you say in your witness statement is</p> <p>24 that this episode took place in the first half of 2014?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

<p>1 Q. That was a witness statement, as we have just said, that 2 you made towards the end of 2015. So it is now many 3 years later, but if that is what you said in 2015, can 4 we take it that that was roughly when it happened?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Then, tell us, it seems that Stephen Port invited you 7 round to meet a new partner or boyfriend of his, is that 8 right?</p> <p>9 A. That's right.</p> <p>10 Q. We see from your witness statement that that individual 11 is the person that the jury know as X10, yes?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, that's right.</p> <p>13 Q. Tell us what happened.</p> <p>14 A. So it was a very frequent occurrence, Stephen meeting 15 someone new, for him to introduce me to, so this 16 occasion was no different: 17 "Hey neighbour, come round and meet my new guy." 18 So we had arranged it I think for the evening, 19 something like that, and so I go round there, as per 20 normal, I ring the doorbell and Stephen takes ages to 21 come to the door, which is unusual for him. And 22 immediately he looks really bad, he looks like he has 23 just woken up. He would always normally present himself 24 to me looking his best, with makeup, hair, always 25 precision. This time he looked, yeah, his face was bad</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 photographs up in a moment.</p> <p>2 Tell us what you assumed -- all right, we have the 3 photo. Here is one photo, and let me just -- the jury 4 will recall these are photographs of items found with 5 Jack Taylor's body, Mr Edwards, but we have blanked out 6 a more distressing photograph that appears on that page.</p> <p>7 You see at the top left there, there is a picture 8 of -- in fact two bottles. The bottle that was found 9 with Jack Taylor's body is that little bottle on the 10 left. The bottle in the middle is a specimen bottle 11 that was used to contain the contents of that bottle. 12 So ignore the middle bottle, but it is the one on the 13 left which was found with Jack Taylor's body and we can 14 see that it is just a little bit smaller than 15 a cigarette lighter.</p> <p>16 Then you see on the right-hand side at the bottom, 17 a sachet, a small sachet. Just before I ask you about 18 this, if it is possible, could we have the other picture 19 up, please.</p> <p>20 This was a different bottle that was found, in fact, 21 with the body of Anthony Walgate. It appears to be 22 a similar size, we can see, can't we, it is an inch or 23 two big but on this occasion it is a brown colour.</p> <p>24 Thank you. Let's take those photos down.</p> <p>25 Going back to then your visit to Stephen Port's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1 and everything like that, so --</p> <p>2 Q. What did you assume? How did you explain to yourself 3 his appearance?</p> <p>4 A. My immediate assumption was he had been in bed with 5 a guy all day and he has just like woken up and he 6 immediately said to me, "I forgot you were coming 7 round".</p> <p>8 Let me into the living room, put the coffee on and 9 said, oh, I will get the new guy up to meet you.</p> <p>10 Bearing in mind this was about 6.00 in the evening, 11 so I thought that was a bit strange but what immediately 12 took me back was he had a fairly large square coffee 13 table in the middle of his living room and as I sat down 14 on one of the two sofas, you couldn't help but see that 15 there was a large tupperware container on the coffee 16 table, so large in fact that it pretty much was to the 17 edges of the circumference of the coffee table and it 18 was full of little vials of clear liquid and little bags 19 of white powder.</p> <p>20 Q. Just pause there, because I hope we might be able to 21 bring some photographs up on the screen. These are 22 photographs that the jury have seen in a different 23 context. Let's see if it is possible to bring them up. 24 Which shows some bottles and also a little sachet. 25 Let's move on, we might be able to bring the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 flat, the first few months of 2014 and you seeing on the 2 coffee table a box, were the bottles and/or the sachets 3 that you saw similar to those pictures that we have 4 seen?</p> <p>5 A. Yes. Not necessarily the brown one, but the clear 6 bottle and the sachets, yes.</p> <p>7 Q. What did you think might be in them?</p> <p>8 A. So even though I am very anti drugs, I am obviously no 9 idiot, so I immediately thought they are drugs, so it 10 made me feel uncomfortable.</p> <p>11 Q. Did you speak is to Stephen Port about them, did you ask 12 what they were or did he volunteer what they were?</p> <p>13 A. Not at the time. So pretty much as I sat down then the 14 new partner was then sort of produced to show me and sat 15 on the opposite side of the sofa to me, who was pretty 16 much unable to speak and seemed very, very intoxicated. 17 Similarly looked terrible, terrible rings round his eyes 18 and things like that. 19 So it was a typically English thing, really, so 20 there was kind of me, Stephen is not saying much, his 21 partner is saying nothing, unable to say things. I am 22 thinking this is very uncomfortable situation so I sort 23 of drink my coffee very quickly and then leave.</p> <p>24 Q. How long were you there, roughly?</p> <p>25 A. Probably about 10 minutes, if that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>

24 (Pages 93 to 96)

<p>1 Q. By this time, as we have seen, you had been working with 2 the police in the context of the LGBT network. So 3 presumably you had contact numbers for police officers, 4 including, probably, Mr McCarthy?</p> <p>5 A. If not numbers, because they were fairly reticent to 6 publicise such --</p> <p>7 Q. Email addresses?</p> <p>8 A. Certainly email addresses, yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Even if you didn't, it is not difficult to walk into 10 a police station and make a report to the police, is it?</p> <p>11 A. That's right.</p> <p>12 Q. If you had been to Stephen Port's flat, seen the drugs 13 and, as you say, seen X10 in the condition that you 14 described, did you report it to the police?</p> <p>15 A. No, I did not.</p> <p>16 Q. Why not?</p> <p>17 A. So I did ask Stephen about it afterwards, and he 18 reassured me via text messages and also speaking on 19 phone that it was for his own personal use and sort of 20 reassured me not to worry.</p> <p>21 Now, I didn't necessarily believe that it was for 22 his own personal use entirely, because it was a fairly 23 substantial quantity. However, rightly or wrongly, 24 drugs are very prevalent on the gay scene and even 25 though I do not partake myself, I don't really see it is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 A. I think a little before.</p> <p>2 Q. Yes.</p> <p>3 This incident involved you going to McDonald's with 4 Stephen Port and also X1, the McDonald's in Beckton 5 I think?</p> <p>6 A. That's right.</p> <p>7 Q. Tell us what happened then?</p> <p>8 A. So as well as partners, Stephen was also fascinated 9 about getting new cars. So on this occasion it was 10 like, "Hey neighbour, do you want to have a drive in my 11 new car?" So we went to the location of the Beckton 12 McDonald's. I can't remember why, I think it was 13 Stephen's idea to go to that destination.</p> <p>14 So --</p> <p>15 Q. Before you go on, you said we, was that you and 16 Stephen Port or was X1 with you in the car?</p> <p>17 A. X1 was -- yes, me and Stephen was in the front and X1 18 was in the back.</p> <p>19 Q. Thank you, go on.</p> <p>20 A. So, yes, we arrived at the McDonald's, I seem to recall 21 I ordered myself a milkshake. And it was peculiar 22 because Stephen and I went to the front counter and the 23 partner stayed near the door. And I asked Stephen why 24 was he there and why was he not with us, and Stephen 25 jokingly said, "Oh, that is because I am going to pimp</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 my place to police that.</p> <p>2 Had he said to me that, you know, he was dealing or 3 anything like that, then that would have prompted and 4 triggered me to report it to the police. Because he 5 said he had it under control, and that they were for his 6 own personal use. After challenging him, I left it at 7 that.</p> <p>8 Q. I said there were two instances I wanted to ask you 9 about. Let's move on to the other one. That, if you 10 want to remind yourself, is addressed on page 2 of that 11 same witness statement.</p> <p>12 This incident involved the man who the jury have 13 heard referred to as X1; is that right?</p> <p>14 A. That's right.</p> <p>15 Q. I think as far as the timing of this incident is 16 concerned, we see from this statement, don't we, that 17 when you made this statement, in October 2015, you 18 described this incident as having happened a couple of 19 years ago. So the precise timing doesn't matter but can 20 we take it then that best guess, it is late 2013, 21 possibly early 2014, something of that nature?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. So maybe about the same time as the time you saw the 24 drugs in Stephen Port's flat, or possibly a little 25 before?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 him out". I nervously laughed at that, because Stephen 2 had a peculiar sense of humour, and at first glance 3 I thought he was joking, but the way he just sort of 4 stared at me very seriously afterwards made me think 5 that perhaps he was doing that and I do recall speaking 6 to friends about that afterwards.</p> <p>7 Q. Did you actually see, for example, another man come and 8 sit with X1 or what Stephen described as pimping him out 9 actually happening or not?</p> <p>10 A. No, I didn't. But to my best recollection, I believe 11 that I left with Stephen and so we left the person 12 there.</p> <p>13 Q. Right. So you say you spoke to friends about that. Was 14 that because you were concerned about it?</p> <p>15 A. It was very -- it was a very unusual thing to happen, 16 yes, and so I shared my concerns.</p> <p>17 Q. Were there any other occasions over those years that you 18 knew Stephen Port where something similar happened to 19 your knowledge?</p> <p>20 A. Not to my knowledge.</p> <p>21 Q. Again, was it something you considered approaching the 22 police about?</p> <p>23 A. Again, no, because I don't feel that I had sufficient 24 evidence. If I had seen, you know, another man approach 25 him or anything like that, then perhaps it would have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

<p>1 been something to have raised to the police. In fact, 2 you know, when I had concerns many years prior to that 3 about an actual boyfriend of my own, I reported that to 4 the police, so I certainly -- if I have sufficient 5 concerns, that was a matter obviously not concerning 6 this jury, but of potentially looking at underaged 7 material actually, where there is sufficient evidence, 8 obviously I take it very seriously and I would report it 9 to the police. 10 On this occasion, I didn't have that level of 11 evidence. 12 Q. I see. 13 Thank you, Mr Edwards. 14 Madam, I am about to move on to another topic, so 15 perhaps this might be a convenient moment? 16 THE CORONER: Yes, before we stop, Mr Edwards, as far as 17 that individual was concerned, X1, did you know whether 18 or not he was a partner of Stephen's at the time? What 19 did you understand the position to be? 20 A. Stephen would refer to him as a partner -- 21 THE CORONER: Right. 22 A. -- but this could sometimes last a week or two weeks. 23 THE CORONER: All right, thank you very much. We are going 24 to break off there now for lunch. 25 Members of the jury, 2.00, please.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 Q. You went over and met Stephen Port and the new flatmate, 2 who was Gabriel Kovari, and that meeting took place on 3 the evening of Sunday, 24 August? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. I think it is right to say you hadn't had any contact 6 with Gabriel before that time? 7 A. That is right. 8 Q. But I will ask you some questions about your memory that 9 you did have some contact with him after that meeting? 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. But then your attempts to contact him after that were 12 not successful. We will see, won't we, that you then 13 had, over the weeks that followed, some further 14 exchanges with Stephen Port, first of all which involved 15 Stephen Port telling you that Gabriel had gone away? 16 A. Hmm, yes. 17 Q. Then, subsequently, Stephen Port telling you that 18 Gabriel had died? 19 A. That's right. 20 Q. And asking you not to talk about or put that news onto 21 social media? 22 A. That's correct. 23 Q. With that introduction, let's have a look at the text 24 messages. 25 For the jury this is tab 10 of the bundle.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 (12.58 pm) 2 (The Luncheon Adjournment) 3 (2.00 pm) 4 (In the presence of the jury) 5 THE CORONER: Yes. 6 MR O'CONNOR: Mr Edwards, before lunch I was asking you 7 questions about those two incidents that took place 8 involving Stephen Port and X1 and X10, some time around 9 the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014. Do you recall 10 that? 11 A. I do. 12 Q. I want to move on now and ask you about the period of 13 August and September 2014, focusing in particular on 14 those few days around the time that Gabriel Kovari died. 15 As you know, what we have, which we will go through 16 in some detail, is a table that was prepared by 17 Operation Lilford of the text messages and WhatsApp 18 messages, I think, that were exchanged between you and 19 Stephen Port during that period. As I say, we will have 20 a look at that in a minute but before we do, just so the 21 jury can have an idea of the outline of this, it is 22 right, I think, that in late August of that year, that 23 is 2014, Stephen Port contacted you and invited you over 24 to his flat to meet a new flatmate of his? 25 A. That's right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 You are very welcome to look at it at tab 10 as 2 well. Mr Edwards. 3 For the screen, it is IPC86, starting at page 32. 4 We don't need the first sort of section of the page, 5 but starting with the top of that table, just to get our 6 bearings then, Mr Edwards, we will see as we go down 7 that the first two columns indicate who the message was 8 sent from and who received it, although the phone 9 numbers and so on are not the same throughout, in fact 10 all these messages one way or another are messages 11 between you and Stephen Port, aren't they? 12 A. That's right. 13 Q. Then, of course, we have the date and time and the 14 content of the message. 15 The first few entries in fact all relate to 16 an exchange you had with Stephen Port on 25 June 2014, 17 so rather earlier than that late August time that 18 I mentioned. The jury, of course, will remember that 19 25 June was the Wednesday of the week after 20 Anthony Walgate's body was found. It was the Wednesday 21 before the Thursday when Stephen Port was arrested. You 22 may not be aware of that detail? 23 A. No. 24 Q. But let me just ask you this, and since we are looking 25 at that date, were you living in Axe Street in Barking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 in June 2014?</p> <p>2 A. I was.</p> <p>3 Q. Which, as you have shown us, was close to Stephen Port's</p> <p>4 flat, even if not as close as your previous flat, which</p> <p>5 was just across the way from him?</p> <p>6 A. That's right.</p> <p>7 Q. The jury have heard at least on the day of 19 June,</p> <p>8 there was a fair amount of activity outside</p> <p>9 Stephen Port's flat, a forensic tent, people coming and</p> <p>10 going and so on. Did you have any knowledge that</p> <p>11 Anthony's body had been found, either because you saw</p> <p>12 those events or because you heard about them?</p> <p>13 A. No, not at all. I definitely would have gone to the</p> <p>14 police if, you know, anything as dramatic as that had</p> <p>15 happened I would have wanted to know what had happened</p> <p>16 and I certainly would have engaged Stephen to find out</p> <p>17 what was going on.</p> <p>18 Q. In any event, we see these text messages then on that</p> <p>19 Wednesday, in the evening, it would seem.</p> <p>20 First of all, Stephen Port contacts you to tell you</p> <p>21 that he is not with X10 anymore and the jury have heard</p> <p>22 some other evidence about Stephen Port getting back</p> <p>23 together with/breaking up with X10 and X1 around this</p> <p>24 time. He tells you that he has left him for an 18-year</p> <p>25 old and then he goes on to say that he is planning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 know, as in, you know, this was Stephen fantasising</p> <p>2 really, so, no, I thought I would just attend myself.</p> <p>3 Q. All right. Knowing what we know about Stephen Port,</p> <p>4 those words that he uses, he asks you to "invite some</p> <p>5 friends over who you know and trust", one might read</p> <p>6 them in a slightly sinister way. What do you think he</p> <p>7 meant by asking you to invite friends who you trusted?</p> <p>8 Perhaps what did it -- did that word strike you as odd</p> <p>9 at the time?</p> <p>10 A. I didn't think anything of it at the time. I guess,</p> <p>11 knowing now what we know, perhaps Stephen was feeling</p> <p>12 paranoid or insecure or concerned.</p> <p>13 Q. All right. Let's move on. We can see that there is</p> <p>14 a message from Stephen Port on 1 July, as the jury know,</p> <p>15 in between the 25th and the 1st, Stephen Port had in</p> <p>16 fact been arrested and held in custody for a time and</p> <p>17 his phone had been seized. That is a good explanation</p> <p>18 for the fact that his number has changed. We have heard</p> <p>19 some evidence about the fact that he had a new phone and</p> <p>20 used a new number there.</p> <p>21 This is the first occasion, but we will see one or</p> <p>22 two more occasions where Stephen Port changed his number</p> <p>23 and told you about it in the following months. Was</p> <p>24 that, as far as you can remember, the first time that he</p> <p>25 had given you a new number? Or perhaps you simply</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 a 21st birthday party for X1 and again the jury have</p> <p>2 heard about X1 coming in and out of Stephen Port's life</p> <p>3 at the same time as X10 was doing the same thing. He</p> <p>4 would ask for your help with inviting friends over who</p> <p>5 you know and trust.</p> <p>6 Was that something -- you have told us a little bit</p> <p>7 about your friendship with Stephen Port. Was this the</p> <p>8 first time that he had asked you to help him arrange</p> <p>9 a birthday party and as it were supply friends for the</p> <p>10 party?</p> <p>11 A. The thing with Stephen is he didn't have very many</p> <p>12 friends. He had a very good friend who lived in</p> <p>13 Dagenham, he had me as a neighbour and I didn't really</p> <p>14 know of any other friends. He knew I was very social</p> <p>15 and knew lots and lots of people, so I think he was</p> <p>16 wanting to get the numbers up for this birthday.</p> <p>17 Q. Did this birthday party happen?</p> <p>18 A. I seem to recall it did, and it was me, Stephen and the</p> <p>19 person.</p> <p>20 Q. Because you couldn't find any of your friends to come or</p> <p>21 you decided not to invite them?</p> <p>22 A. No, because I had been a bit tired on various occasions</p> <p>23 where Stephen had said, you know, I am getting married</p> <p>24 to this guy or I am getting engaged to this guy, bring</p> <p>25 some friends round and I knew it would never happen, you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 cannot remember?</p> <p>2 A. I am not entirely sure. He tended to go things through</p> <p>3 things quite a lot, partners, cars, if it was a new</p> <p>4 number, it wouldn't have struck me as anything</p> <p>5 particularly surprising from Stephen.</p> <p>6 Q. All right, let us move on because we then come to</p> <p>7 24 August 2014. Can you see, about four entries up from</p> <p>8 the bottom?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. That, as we know, was a Sunday. So we have the</p> <p>11 chronology in mind, that was Sunday, 24 August, four</p> <p>12 days before Gabriel's body was found on the morning of</p> <p>13 28 August, the Thursday.</p> <p>14 We see then Stephen Port contacting you at 5.45 in</p> <p>15 evening, saying "hey neighbour", and you have told us</p> <p>16 that is often how he used to start his messages and we</p> <p>17 will see that -- plenty more examples of that:</p> <p>18 "... come meet my new Slovakian twink flatmate</p> <p>19 tonight or [presumably that means 'tomorrow']. Soz but</p> <p>20 won't have room for your Polish boy."</p> <p>21 Your Polish boy being?</p> <p>22 A. So that is a reference to I was also using a website</p> <p>23 called Couch Surfing at the time, which is a voluntary</p> <p>24 community endeavour where travelers are looking for</p> <p>25 a place to stay for free for a couple of nights on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

27 (Pages 105 to 108)

<p>1 someone's couch, and I seem to recall, perhaps on this</p> <p>2 occasion, I had a flatmate, I had a two-bedroom</p> <p>3 apartment, and I think I already had a couchsurfer</p> <p>4 staying on the couch, so I was full effectively and so</p> <p>5 I think I had said to Stephen, you know, could you</p> <p>6 possibly help out this person and stay at yours.</p> <p>7 Q. I see.</p> <p>8 Of course Stephen Port's reference to his Slovakian</p> <p>9 twink flatmate is a reference to Gabriel Kovari. The</p> <p>10 jury have heard that "twink" was a word that</p> <p>11 Stephen Port used referring to a younger looking man.</p> <p>12 Was that a way of describing his boyfriends that was</p> <p>13 out of the ordinary?</p> <p>14 A. I would have inferred to that that Stephen thought, you</p> <p>15 know, the person was attractive. But it is a term that</p> <p>16 Stephen would often use.</p> <p>17 Q. Just carrying on down, we see you agreeing to come over,</p> <p>18 then saying, "Is he hot?" and then "LOL".</p> <p>19 If we can go over the page, please, or just scroll</p> <p>20 down on the screen, perhaps and then one more message</p> <p>21 from you, "Can I come by about 7.00?"</p> <p>22 A typical exchange with Stephen Port?</p> <p>23 A. Yes, very much so.</p> <p>24 Q. Stephen Port replies, "He is 22, quite cute, tall and</p> <p>25 skinny, I am at work until 10 tonight or free after</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 see about five or six entries down from the top, it has</p> <p>2 now moved on to 10.06, which was one of the times -- he</p> <p>3 previously said he was at work until 10.00, and you text</p> <p>4 him saying, "Hey Steve, at yours now but no one is</p> <p>5 answering". He replies, "I am not home yet, he won't</p> <p>6 answer to strangers".</p> <p>7 Is that a reference to Gabriel?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. You then suggest, "Bring him over for coffee once you</p> <p>10 get in".</p> <p>11 Stephen Port then says:</p> <p>12 "Well, I did say I finished work at 10.00. I will</p> <p>13 text him to let you in."</p> <p>14 And you say, "Okay".</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. One infers that this is an exchange taking place while</p> <p>17 you are standing outside his door?</p> <p>18 A. I believe so.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you remember now, did Gabriel then let you in?</p> <p>20 A. He did.</p> <p>21 Q. Looking at the schedule, there is then a gap, another</p> <p>22 series of messages that happened after midnight that</p> <p>23 night, between and you Stephen. Does it follow that you</p> <p>24 were then at his flat for a couple of hours or so?</p> <p>25 A. Less time than that. I would probably say less than</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 2.00 pm tomorrow".</p> <p>2 You reply:</p> <p>3 "Will pop by later with my friend Paul if that's</p> <p>4 okay?"</p> <p>5 Paul being the person who was already staying, is</p> <p>6 that right, or someone different?</p> <p>7 A. Actually, no, that was a friend of mine who I have known</p> <p>8 for many years and we were due to meet that day, so</p> <p>9 I would be in Paul's company, so I thought, yeah, we</p> <p>10 will pop over together to say hello to Stephen's new</p> <p>11 flatmate.</p> <p>12 Q. We can see some of these messages and some of the future</p> <p>13 ones, both you and Stephen Port are ending with a kiss.</p> <p>14 You have told us that your relationship was platonic,</p> <p>15 was that simply a habit you were both in with the way</p> <p>16 you message each other?</p> <p>17 A. It is something I personally do quite often for people</p> <p>18 that I have known for quite some time and am on good</p> <p>19 terms with. For example, I have another platonic</p> <p>20 neighbour where I currently live and I finish my</p> <p>21 messages to her and she does to me with an X. Purely on</p> <p>22 a platonic thing. I think it is quite common.</p> <p>23 Q. Let's read on, so you have said you would pop by with</p> <p>24 Paul later. He says yes, that is fine. That whole</p> <p>25 exchange was just before 6.00 in the evening. Then we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 an hour. The time to meet Gabriel -- I am not sure if</p> <p>2 we had a coffee, I think we had a soft drink. I think</p> <p>3 Gabriel offered me a Diet Pepsi if I remember rightly,</p> <p>4 to me and Paul, offered me a packet of crisps and we had</p> <p>5 a pleasant discussion.</p> <p>6 Q. Do you remember how much of that time you were with</p> <p>7 Gabriel before Stephen Port got back or -- you have only</p> <p>8 mentioned you and Paul speaking to Gabriel. Did</p> <p>9 Stephen Port in fact come back while you were there?</p> <p>10 A. I seem to recall that no, I think actually Paul and</p> <p>11 myself saw Gabriel without Stephen at all.</p> <p>12 Q. Right. It is obviously a long time ago, but what then</p> <p>13 was your impression as far as you can remember it of</p> <p>14 Gabriel or what did he say, how did he seem when you met</p> <p>15 him that evening?</p> <p>16 A. I thought Gabriel was really nice, actually. So in</p> <p>17 contrast to the vulnerability that I have sort of</p> <p>18 noticed in a lot of Stephen's partners, Gabriel seemed</p> <p>19 to kind of have an air of confidence about him, he had</p> <p>20 come over as an aspiring artist, he was articulate,</p> <p>21 intelligent, so -- although obviously there was</p> <p>22 a distinction that he was a flatmate rather than</p> <p>23 a partner, but certainly, yes, very favourable</p> <p>24 impression.</p> <p>25 Q. Let's read on.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

28 (Pages 109 to 112)

<p>1 As I say, there is then an exchange which takes 2 place some time after midnight. You contact 3 Stephen Port and say: 4 "I thought Gabriel was really nice. Do bring him 5 over to meet the girls soon." 6 The girls being? 7 A. So at the time I had two pet chickens. 8 Q. All right. 9 Female chickens? 10 A. Yes, hens. 11 Q. Stephen Port replies: 12 "Will do, I am taking good care of him, he he." 13 Did that strike you as an unusual thing for him to 14 say, or concerning in any way? 15 A. I mean, no, not unusual. I inferred from that that 16 Stephen perhaps had romantic interest in Gabriel, from 17 that comment. 18 Q. You then reply with a smiley face emoji and then you say 19 again, "Ask him if he has any single friends for me?" 20 Again, a laugh. 21 Was that a type of exchange you had with 22 Stephen Port often or not? 23 A. Yes, as I said earlier on, the three main topics would 24 be men, the weather and work, it tended to be one of the 25 three, came up with frequent occurrence.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 unhappy living with Stephen and that he wanted to move 2 on. I can't remember why Gabriel said he was unhappy. 3 I offered to put Gabriel up for a few days until he 4 found somewhere else to live and he said he would think 5 about it." 6 Just to add one other thing, I've got a note, it is 7 not a transcript but a note of some evidence that you 8 gave at Stephen Port's trial at the Old Bailey, where 9 you give very much the same account but you add 10 a reference to a memory that Gabriel told you that 11 Stephen Port was "not a nice person", to use those 12 words. 13 Can you help us, first of all, is that, doing the 14 best you can now, more or less a memory that you have? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Was this a conversation that you think you had with 17 Gabriel at that meeting at the flat at 10.00 on the 18 Sunday night or an exchange you had with him afterwards? 19 A. So, no, afterwards. I believe actually the next day 20 Stephen did bring Gabriel around to meet the girls, as 21 I had indicated. 22 Q. Right. 23 A. So we had coffee at mine, met the chickens, and then the 24 exchange happened, Stephen went to the toilet and 25 I remember Gabriel whispering to me to say, "Stephen is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 Q. In any event, that is the end of that exchange. The 2 story then was that you went round on the Sunday evening 3 at 10.00. You spent an hour or so with Gabriel, as far 4 as you can remember Stephen didn't come back at that 5 point. An hour or so later you have had this brief 6 exchange with Stephen Port. 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. By this time it is early in morning on Monday. And if 9 we look at the schedule, we can see that the next entry 10 is in fact on the Tuesday afternoon; yes? 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. Before we get on to that, I want to just move away from 13 the schedule for a moment. It can stay on the screen 14 because we will be coming back to it but, as I mentioned 15 earlier, you have given evidence previously, it is in 16 your witness statement, that you can remember having 17 some further contact with Gabriel after that meeting at 18 Stephen Port's flat at 10.00 on the Sunday evening? 19 A. That's right. 20 Q. What is your memory now -- in fact let's do it this way. 21 I am just going to read out a section from your witness 22 statement. It is page 3 of that 2015 witness statement 23 you gave but let me read it out. You say: 24 "I remember once inviting Gabriel over to my place 25 for a friendly coffee. Gabriel told me that he was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 not the person you think he is, he is not a nice man" 2 and before we could elaborate on that further, Stephen 3 came back from the toilet. 4 So I was a bit concerned at that comment. 5 So at that point, we had discovered each other on 6 Grindr so I -- after the coffee had finished, I followed 7 up with Gabriel and messaged him and said, "Listen, if 8 you are not happy at Stephen's and you want to stay at 9 mine for a couple of days while you are finding 10 somewhere else, then feel free". He replied to say, 11 "Thanks very much, I will think about it". 12 So I was then surprised that the conversation 13 stopped. I would have expected a follow up to that. 14 Q. Let me just ask you this, Mr Edwards. As I indicated, 15 you gave this witness statement, a witness statement to 16 the police, Operation Lilford, in the autumn of 2015. 17 Although you mention in that witness statement this 18 conversation, or this exchange with Gabriel, you don't 19 actually mention him, Stephen Port, coming round to your 20 flat the next day. That is not a criticism, but I am 21 just asking you to think about whether that is something 22 that you remember happening or whether there is any 23 chance that could just be something that -- a sort of 24 distorted memory you have after all these years? 25 A. No, I do absolutely remember that.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

29 (Pages 113 to 116)

<p>1 Q. Right.</p> <p>2 A. As to why I didn't talk about it at the time, obviously</p> <p>3 it was a stressful time and I didn't actually think it</p> <p>4 was particularly pertinent when I was giving the</p> <p>5 evidence.</p> <p>6 Q. You have recorded the substance of what you and Gabriel</p> <p>7 said to each other, you just haven't mentioned the fact</p> <p>8 that part of it was said when he came over to your flat?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Going back to when this happened, you said that the time</p> <p>11 when Stephen Port and Gabriel came to your flat you</p> <p>12 think was on the next day, the Monday?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, it was daylight, obviously it wouldn't have been</p> <p>14 the evening in question, so I do believe it was the next</p> <p>15 day.</p> <p>16 Q. You then I think are talking about a subsequent exchange</p> <p>17 on Grindr with Gabriel, the way you followed up with him</p> <p>18 the possibility of him coming to your flat, is that</p> <p>19 right?</p> <p>20 A. Yes, I followed up that same day.</p> <p>21 Q. That is what I wanted to ask you. If you can remember</p> <p>22 when that might have taken place?</p> <p>23 A. Yes, it was the evening of that same day.</p> <p>24 Q. Right, and we are still then on the Monday after your</p> <p>25 visit to Stephen Port's flat on the Sunday evening?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 that coffee and effectively gave Gabriel an escape</p> <p>2 route, if it was an uncomfortable situation I wanted to</p> <p>3 give him an option to get out of that situation --</p> <p>4 Q. Okay.</p> <p>5 A. -- as quickly as possible potentially.</p> <p>6 Q. With the offer to come and stay with you?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Even though -- would you have found a way round the</p> <p>9 problem that you already had someone staying on your</p> <p>10 couch?</p> <p>11 A. I wasn't even thinking that far ahead, really. It</p> <p>12 was -- you know, if somebody expresses concern to you,</p> <p>13 then as a caring person you try to help them out in that</p> <p>14 situation.</p> <p>15 Q. All right.</p> <p>16 I think you have said, and just let me ask again</p> <p>17 then, what response did you get to that message that you</p> <p>18 sent to Gabriel on Grindr asking if he wanted to come</p> <p>19 and stay with you?</p> <p>20 A. He said, "Thanks very much, I will get back to you,</p> <p>21 I will let you know". So I expected further</p> <p>22 correspondence, so then in the subsequent days, I then</p> <p>23 messaged a few more times, asking Gabriel if, you know,</p> <p>24 is everything okay, how are you, and I was surprised</p> <p>25 that there was no correspondence coming back to me. So</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 A. That's correct.</p> <p>2 Q. Just taking a step back from the detail, the chronology,</p> <p>3 where and when, exactly where and when all of this</p> <p>4 happened, what you have described is rather concerning,</p> <p>5 isn't it? It must have struck you as concerning at the</p> <p>6 time, perhaps that is a better way of putting it?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, I mean, "Stephen is not a nice man, he is not the</p> <p>8 person you think he is", I clearly inferred at that time</p> <p>9 that Stephen was pressing, you know, romantic advances</p> <p>10 on Gabriel and Gabriel wasn't interested and actually,</p> <p>11 at the time I thought because of Gabriel's general</p> <p>12 demeanour and character that he wouldn't be interested</p> <p>13 in Stephen, so I thought that is an uncomfortable</p> <p>14 situation for Gabriel to be in.</p> <p>15 Q. I mean, let's put this into more context, Mr Edwards,</p> <p>16 because this was at a time when, already, you had been</p> <p>17 to the McDonald's and been slightly disconcerted by</p> <p>18 Stephen appearing to talk seriously about pimping out</p> <p>19 X1. You had already been round to his flat and seen the</p> <p>20 drugs on the table.</p> <p>21 Now, some months later, Gabriel is saying he is not</p> <p>22 the important you think he is, he is not a nice person.</p> <p>23 Did you put those other memories together in your mind</p> <p>24 with what Gabriel was telling you?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, insofar as that is why I quickly followed up after</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 that is why I then subsequently raised it with Stephen</p> <p>2 via text message.</p> <p>3 Q. I see. Just so we are clear, all the messages you were</p> <p>4 sending to Gabriel at this time were using Grindr</p> <p>5 because you didn't have his phone number, is that right?</p> <p>6 A. That's correct.</p> <p>7 Q. Let's look back at the schedule because, as I say,</p> <p>8 having left off in the early hours of Monday morning, we</p> <p>9 then go to the Tuesday afternoon, so the 26th, at 14.53.</p> <p>10 You get a message from Stephen Port using another new</p> <p>11 number, saying, "My new number, delete other one,</p> <p>12 Stephen, your neighbour", yes?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. We see over on the left-hand side that that number,</p> <p>15 which ends 558, has the word "evidence" after it. Why</p> <p>16 does it have "evidence" after it?</p> <p>17 A. Because at that point I was -- I had basically realised</p> <p>18 that, you know, the evidence on my phone was going to be</p> <p>19 of interest to the police and so I had then saved</p> <p>20 anything that I thought would be pertinent for the</p> <p>21 police under that evidence banner.</p> <p>22 Q. Just to be clear about this, when you say at that point,</p> <p>23 do you mean 26 August 2014?</p> <p>24 A. No. So once Stephen had been arrested and a neighbour</p> <p>25 of mine had alerted me to that fact via a BBC news link,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

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<p>1 then I immediately thought Stephen is guilty and I've</p> <p>2 got to get to the police as soon as possible.</p> <p>3 Q. We will come to that, but just so there is no doubt</p> <p>4 about it, the use of the word "evidence" there is</p> <p>5 something that happened much later?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Let's carry on then, Stephen Port contacts you, gives</p> <p>8 you the new number and you said okay, it had happened</p> <p>9 before.</p> <p>10 Then, as part of the same exchange, this is now, as</p> <p>11 we have said, the Tuesday afternoon, you say "How is</p> <p>12 Gabriel?"</p> <p>13 A. That's right.</p> <p>14 Q. Was that, as you have described, part of your concern</p> <p>15 about him, given the lack of response to your Grindr</p> <p>16 message, or lack of follow up to your Grindr message?</p> <p>17 A. Yes. And minor point, but you notice I didn't put an X</p> <p>18 there, so I think I was slightly concerned at that</p> <p>19 point.</p> <p>20 Q. The response you get is, "He has gone to stay with</p> <p>21 another local guy. He gets around LOL. X1 back</p> <p>22 tomorrow, so probably for the best that he left".</p> <p>23 You said, "Oh blimey, who did he stay with, do you</p> <p>24 know?"</p> <p>25 Answer:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 121</p>	<p>1 days. He has probably just lost his phone so please if</p> <p>2 you see him ask him to pop round as I miss him, shame he</p> <p>3 went off with the other guy."</p> <p>4 You reply:</p> <p>5 "No, he hasn't got back to me."</p> <p>6 That's a reference to your attempts to contact him?</p> <p>7 A. That is right.</p> <p>8 Q. Then the reply back from Stephen Port:</p> <p>9 "Okay, you swapped numbers. That's good, please</p> <p>10 keep trying to contact him as not sure if he is blocking</p> <p>11 me because X1 had a go at me for letting him stay, so</p> <p>12 think that is why he left so fast to meet that guy from</p> <p>13 Grindr."</p> <p>14 Obviously, Mr Edwards, knowing what we know now,</p> <p>15 casts these messages from Stephen Port in a very</p> <p>16 different light?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. How did you react to them at the time, do you remember?</p> <p>19 A. Well, we haven't got up to the bit that really made me</p> <p>20 suspicious but, obviously, yes, you know, people don't</p> <p>21 normally just disappear, so I was viewing it all</p> <p>22 a little bit sceptically.</p> <p>23 Q. Let's read on, because you correct Stephen Port, you</p> <p>24 say:</p> <p>25 "No, I didn't stop numbers with him unfortunately</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 123</p>
<p>1 "No, some soldier guy he fancied. He has been</p> <p>2 chatting to him online. Shame as really liked him."</p> <p>3 Then you say:</p> <p>4 "Damn it. These young ones."</p> <p>5 That is the end of that part of the conversation on</p> <p>6 Tuesday, the 26th, yes?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>8 Q. No doubt you cannot remember the exact times and dates,</p> <p>9 Mr Edwards, but do you think that you were carrying on</p> <p>10 trying to contact Gabriel after that, let's say on the</p> <p>11 Wednesday, and going through the days after that?</p> <p>12 A. I was. Because obviously I had been, you know, he had</p> <p>13 said something a bit concerning to me, so obviously it</p> <p>14 was playing in the back of my mind, somewhat.</p> <p>15 Q. We then move on though. Having been on Tuesday, the</p> <p>16 26th, we then go forward, if we can see, some days now</p> <p>17 to the 30th, so if my calculations are right, that is in</p> <p>18 fact the Saturday, so we have now passed the date on</p> <p>19 which Gabriel's body was found in St Margaret's Church,</p> <p>20 and we are now looking at 30 August, the Saturday, and</p> <p>21 at 2.00 in the afternoon.</p> <p>22 Stephen Port, using that number which you later</p> <p>23 marked as evidence, texted you and says:</p> <p>24 "Have you seen Gab around Barking at all. Been</p> <p>25 trying to contact him but his phone been off a couple of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 122</p>	<p>1 just messaged on Grindr a couple of times."</p> <p>2 Stephen Port says:</p> <p>3 "Okay, see if he is online, please, as I am at work.</p> <p>4 Just ask him to get in touch with me. I was worried</p> <p>5 about him."</p> <p>6 You say:</p> <p>7 "No, he is not online."</p> <p>8 Stephen Port says:</p> <p>9 "Okay, thanks, let me know if he does get in touch.</p> <p>10 Have you had any luck with your Polish boy?"</p> <p>11 And you say, "No."</p> <p>12 That is Saturday, 30 August.</p> <p>13 Then on Sunday, 1 September, so a day later, in the</p> <p>14 evening, you yourself initiate another exchange and you</p> <p>15 just say to Stephen Port:</p> <p>16 "So it seems just Gab just disappeared? Strange?"</p> <p>17 What was in your mind then?</p> <p>18 A. It was irritating me a little bit, frankly, because</p> <p>19 obviously there had been the concern raised to me and</p> <p>20 then him just disappearing and, yes, it was just</p> <p>21 irritating me slightly, so that is why I was kind of</p> <p>22 following up on it.</p> <p>23 Q. There is then an exchange that follows. Stephen Port</p> <p>24 says to you:</p> <p>25 "Yes, I haven't heard anything from him. He did</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 124</p>

<p>1 mention going to Spain, as that is where he is meant to</p> <p>2 be studying, but odd he has not messaged at all.</p> <p>3 I would check in the police station but, to be honest,</p> <p>4 I don't even know his surname what do you think I should</p> <p>5 do?"</p> <p>6 You say:</p> <p>7 "Well that X1 went crazy and pretty much disappeared</p> <p>8 I think it is just what the young ones do. I wouldn't</p> <p>9 worry. Shame though."</p> <p>10 What did the first sentence of that message mean,</p> <p>11 Mr Edwards?</p> <p>12 A. It is not very good English, is it?</p> <p>13 Q. Are you referring to a time when X1 had disappeared from</p> <p>14 the scene?</p> <p>15 A. So yes, this particular partner of Stephen's was -- they</p> <p>16 were always getting together, breaking up, the police</p> <p>17 had been called, different stories were going on, it was</p> <p>18 a very crazy situation. So on occasions Stephen had</p> <p>19 told me this partner had just disappeared, so I was</p> <p>20 referencing the link between that partner and Gabriel's</p> <p>21 disappearance.</p> <p>22 Q. I see. Stephen Port replies:</p> <p>23 "Okay, I hope you are right, he is such a nice</p> <p>24 beautiful boy. I hope you are all right. If you see</p> <p>25 him around, just let me know. Unless you stole him and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 "Hey neighbour, have just heard some sad news from</p> <p>2 one of Gabriel's friends that Gab did return to Spain to</p> <p>3 be with his BF [best friend or boyfriend] (I didn't know</p> <p>4 either) and he died on arrival from an infection. Is</p> <p>5 unknown what type killed him till after [presumably</p> <p>6 autopsy] he is being buried in Slovakia. Please don't</p> <p>7 put on Facebook or mention to anyone else as his family</p> <p>8 are in bits and his [boyfriend/best friend] he was with</p> <p>9 for three years, is devastated, feel so sad, he was our</p> <p>10 friend. By the way, I am not with X1 anymore. He has</p> <p>11 got a new boyfriend now. Hope all is going well."</p> <p>12 You reply:</p> <p>13 "Oh my god, that is shocking. Thanks for letting me</p> <p>14 know."</p> <p>15 As you say, at the time that must have been very</p> <p>16 surprising and shocking news, Mr Edwards?</p> <p>17 A. Very much so. I had every so often as seen here asked</p> <p>18 after Gabriel, so I felt this was Stephen trying to stop</p> <p>19 me asking about him, obviously. But at the time,</p> <p>20 I didn't -- it didn't sit well with me because why would</p> <p>21 a young seemingly healthy person just die, so I thought</p> <p>22 Stephen's story was suspicious. But at that time, I had</p> <p>23 no reason to think that that wasn't the truth.</p> <p>24 Q. Suspicious that a young seemingly healthy boy would just</p> <p>25 die. Suspicious also that Stephen Port, who after all</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p>
<p>1 hid him with your chickens."</p> <p>2 And you say:</p> <p>3 "Ha ha, I wish.</p> <p>4 Then you also say:</p> <p>5 "I am going to Leeds for a month anyhow."</p> <p>6 What was that about, Mr Edwards?</p> <p>7 A. So at that time I was also -- when I was not working,</p> <p>8 I was doing paid medical trials, actually, so on this</p> <p>9 occasion there was a long trial that I was doing up in</p> <p>10 Leeds.</p> <p>11 Q. Stephen Port replies:</p> <p>12 "Lucky you. Take us with you please. LOL. Will</p> <p>13 send X1 over to give you a goodbye kiss, have fun."</p> <p>14 The same exchange, you say:</p> <p>15 "It's for a paid medical so hardly fun."</p> <p>16 Stephen Port asks if you are testing an Ebola cure,</p> <p>17 by the look of it, he says he hopes they pay you well,</p> <p>18 you say, "Not quite but, yes, it is okay, I have to get</p> <p>19 a proper job".</p> <p>20 That is the end of that conversation on that.</p> <p>21 I think we got to Sunday, 1 September. Did you go to</p> <p>22 Leeds?</p> <p>23 A. I did.</p> <p>24 Q. Perhaps you were there when you got the next message 10</p> <p>25 days later from Mr Port saying:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 he had only stayed with for a day or so and who as far</p> <p>2 as you knew Gabriel didn't like very much anyway was</p> <p>3 asking you not to tell other people about his death?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, I did think that was particularly strange. I mean</p> <p>5 I didn't know any of Gabriel's friends or family, so it</p> <p>6 was not as if I was thinking of putting anything on</p> <p>7 social media, so it did feel like Stephen was trying to</p> <p>8 sort of shut me down on that conversation.</p> <p>9 But on occasion in the past, Stephen had -- Stephen</p> <p>10 and I occasionally had had differences of opinion, you</p> <p>11 know, as you do with someone over the years, so I just</p> <p>12 got the impression that Stephen didn't want to talk</p> <p>13 about it anymore.</p> <p>14 Q. Putting it bluntly, Mr Edwards, did you get the sense</p> <p>15 that there was more to this episode than Stephen Port</p> <p>16 was sharing with you?</p> <p>17 A. At the time I thought he is not telling me the entire</p> <p>18 truth here, I thought the story didn't really add up.</p> <p>19 So I sort of banked that in my mind as suspicious, yes,</p> <p>20 it didn't sit well with me.</p> <p>21 Q. Did you bank it in your mind with the previous episode</p> <p>22 in McDonald's, the time you went round to see Stephen</p> <p>23 and saw the drugs and the time when Gabriel told you he</p> <p>24 didn't like Stephen Port, wanted to move out and he</p> <p>25 wasn't what he seemed?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p>

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<p>1 A. No, actually, because this was in the context of Stephen 2 having -- it was like a revolving door, boys coming and 3 going, different fantastical stories, you know, boys 4 that he is telling me about, that he is going to get 5 engaged, then we never hear from again. So it was a bit 6 more unusual, because he had never told me that one of 7 his partners had, you know, died but in the wider 8 context of Stephen's continually revolving love life, it 9 was not as outlandish as it would be for a lot of 10 people.</p> <p>11 Q. As you can see, we are almost at the end of this 12 schedule. But did you, in fact, ask Stephen Port about 13 Gabriel, did you press him for any more information, did 14 you come back to this subject with Stephen, either when 15 you met him on another occasion or in text messages or 16 WhatsApp messages or whatever else?</p> <p>17 A. I don't believe I did. 18 I mean he kind of was fairly comprehensive in 19 shutting me down from that message, so I didn't really 20 have anything further to probe him on.</p> <p>21 Q. I said we are almost at the end, there is one more 22 entry, and that is another, I think probably the third 23 occasion in this series, where Stephen Port sends you 24 a message telling you that he has another new number and 25 to delete a previous one, yes?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 to neighbours about why there was police helicopters. 2 It seemed very strange.</p> <p>3 And I woke up the next morning and my neighbour had 4 sent me a link to the BBC news website where there was 5 the story that Stephen had been arrested and I found it 6 absolutely chilling because, in my mind at that point 7 I knew he was guilty, because where I had -- it is 8 a little upsetting, sorry, but where I had harboured 9 long-harboured suspicions around Gabriel, then I knew he 10 was lying to me and I thought this is really important, 11 and I have to go to the police as soon as possible.</p> <p>12 Q. I just have a few more questions.</p> <p>13 A. Sure.</p> <p>14 Q. Can we have a look, please, tab 48 in the large bundle. 15 For the screen, it is IPC71. We are going back to 2014, 16 and this is 29 September 2014.</p> <p>17 This is a newspaper article that the jury will be 18 hearing some more about in due course, but do you see, 19 well, we see the picture of the police officer on the 20 right-hand side. And if you follow across to the left, 21 next to the name of the reporter, you can see a date, 22 which I think this is the date when this article is 23 published, 29 September 2014?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Let's just look at the content, it is an article, we see</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p>
<p>1 A. That's right.</p> <p>2 Q. That was on 30 September. As we know, that was 10 days 3 after the body of Daniel Whitworth was found in 4 St Margaret's Churchyard.</p> <p>5 Did you know anything about Daniel's body being 6 discovered?</p> <p>7 A. No.</p> <p>8 Q. Do you think you might have still been in Leeds at that 9 time or can you not remember?</p> <p>10 A. Looking at the dates, I was either still in Leeds or 11 just coming back from Leeds.</p> <p>12 Q. Just to draw this together, Mr Edwards, you have 13 referred to the fact you went to the police and we can 14 see you made a statement in October 2015. It is right 15 to say, isn't it, that you didn't know that Gabriel's 16 body had been found on that day, on Thursday, 17 28 August 2014 until over a year later, when, as you 18 have said, Stephen Port was arrested following 19 Jack Taylor's death?</p> <p>20 A. That's right.</p> <p>21 Q. Just tell us, what did you do when you did find out 22 about Stephen Port's arrest?</p> <p>23 A. So I remember it vividly, because the night before 24 Stephen's arrest I so discovered that there were police 25 helicopters going around. So on WhatsApp I was chatting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p>	<p>1 the headline, "Unusual but not suspicious, says Met 2 detective about three Barking bodies".</p> <p>3 There is a reference to three deaths within a mile 4 of each other and if we go over the page, we see that in 5 fact this is an article -- this is the three deaths in 6 question are not Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari and 7 Daniel Whitworth but rather, if you look, Gabriel Kovari 8 and Daniel Whitworth and then a third death which we 9 have not heard evidence about, and which as far as we 10 know was not linked to this case.</p> <p>11 We see that at the top of the page there is very 12 clear reference both to Daniel Whitworth but also to 13 Gabriel Kovari having been found on 28 August, do you 14 see that?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Obvious question really, but presumably you didn't see 17 the Barking and Dagenham Post on 29 September 2014?</p> <p>18 A. No. I was not a regular -- I didn't regularly go to 19 that website, the Barking and Dagenham Post, so no, 20 I was not aware of that.</p> <p>21 Q. As far as the hard copy of the newspaper is concerned, 22 just going back to the evidence you gave a moment ago, 23 that would seem to be at a time you said you were either 24 still in Leeds or just coming back. I don't know 25 whether you ever looked at a hard copy of the Barking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p>

<p>1 and Dagenham Post but if you did, that might be a reason 2 why you did? 3 A. No, I would normally get the free paper rather than the 4 Dagenham Post, which you have to pay for. 5 Q. In any event, that was some publicity about the death 6 which you didn't see? 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. Do you think that, looking back on it, there are ways 9 that the police might have done more to reach out to the 10 local LGBT community following the discovery of 11 Gabriel's body and then Daniel's body in August and 12 September 2014? 13 A. Absolutely. 14 Q. How might they have done that? 15 A. So they -- an area of bitter contention really between 16 me and the police when I was LGBT chair was around the 17 provision of LGBT liaison officers. I always felt that 18 this was a non-existent service and the police always 19 told me that it was a service absolutely. 20 So if indeed there had been an LGBT liaison officer 21 provision, then it would not have been an unreasonable 22 expectation for them to have reached out and they could 23 have done that via a variety of different means. 24 Certainly I was probably the most high-profile 25 member of the LGBT the community in the borough. They</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 133</p>	<p>1 Q. Perhaps it is obvious, given what you have told us 2 happened in 2015, Mr Edwards, but had the fact of 3 Gabriel or Daniel's death come to your attention if 4 2014, what would you have done? 5 A. I mean even putting aside the fact that the reputation 6 of the local police in terms of dealing with LGBT+ 7 matters was not great, and I think there was an evidence 8 of massive under-reporting of LGBT hate crimes -- there 9 is evidence of that. However, as I did do as soon as 10 I was aware of the fact, I absolutely would have gone to 11 the police. 12 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you very much, Mr Edwards, those are all 13 the questions I had for you. 14 A. Thank you. 15 16 MR O'CONNOR: Madam, we have been going for nearly an hour. 17 I wonder if we might have a break. 18 THE CORONER: Certainly. 19 We will take a short break, members of the jury. 20 (2.47 pm) 21 (A short adjournment) 22 (3.05 pm) 23 (In the presence of the jury) 24 MR O'CONNOR: Madam, I know that Ms Hill has no questions, 25 so I think it is Mr Davies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 135</p>
<p>1 had obviously had dealings with me in terms of when 2 I was doing the network capacity building, so they 3 certainly had my email address, it would have been easy 4 for them to have reached out and contacted me 5 personally. 6 However, there were a variety of other means at 7 their disposal, including the Facebook page that I had 8 referenced earlier on -- 9 Q. Just pause, there we did hear about it and you have told 10 us, I think you told us when it was set up a year 11 earlier it had, what, something in the order of 80 or 12 100 people who were members of that page? 13 A. That's right. 14 Q. Were there still a similar number a year later? 15 A. If anything, it would have been more, because, 16 obviously, you know, these pages tend to grow over time 17 and so the Council for Voluntary Sector was continually 18 posting things and it was very much an active page, yes. 19 Q. You haven't quite said this, but presumably that 20 included you? 21 A. Yes. 22 Q. A single message on to that Facebook page would have 23 potentially brought these incidents to the attention of 24 80, 100 or more members of the local LGBT community? 25 A. Absolutely.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 134</p>	<p>1 Questions from MR DAVIES 2 MR DAVIES: Mr Edwards, I am asking questions on behalf of 3 a number of the Barking borough police officers at the 4 relevant time. 5 A. Okay. 6 Q. You concluded your evidence in terms of Mr O'Connor's 7 questioning with a comment directed at the failure, to 8 use that word, of Barking borough to provide to the LGBT 9 leads information that may have made possible engagement 10 by you at the time. 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. We are going to explore that question in terms of what 13 the police did when you return to give evidence, to make 14 that quite clear. 15 I just want to explore with you, if I may, the other 16 half of that equation, which is the provision 17 proactively by members of gay community in Barking of 18 intelligence to Barking police, all right? 19 A. Okay. 20 Q. More specifically, and you styled yourself in this way, 21 at the time a leading member of the Barking gay 22 community? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Your provision or lack of it of intelligence to police 25 during these events, all right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 136</p>

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<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Just to go back in context, if I may, you first met</p> <p>3 Stephen Port in 2005?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. It is obvious that, at least up to and beyond the date</p> <p>6 of Gabriel Kovari's disappearance and reported death,</p> <p>7 you appeared to still be friendly with him.</p> <p>8 A. To a degree. So as soon as I had seen the drugs, the</p> <p>9 drugs incident that I talked about earlier on, I found</p> <p>10 that very distasteful, and so I distanced myself from</p> <p>11 him. So the frequency of meeting for coffee decreased</p> <p>12 right down, our frequency of text messaging decreased</p> <p>13 down, so I minimised my contact with him after that</p> <p>14 point.</p> <p>15 Q. But you were still being invited round to meet his</p> <p>16 latest boyfriend --</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. -- as late as the end of August 2014.</p> <p>19 A. That's correct.</p> <p>20 Q. So you hadn't distanced yourself that much, had you?</p> <p>21 A. Certainly we had not terminated the friendship to any</p> <p>22 degree, no.</p> <p>23 Q. By that date, 2014, he was, give or take, 39 years of</p> <p>24 age. how old were you?</p> <p>25 A. I am 42 now, so I would have been about 35, I think.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 Q. "... so diagonally opposite to Stephen's flat here. So</p> <p>2 I had a good view actually there, of wherever he was out</p> <p>3 with, normally young men on the ground floor. Stephen's</p> <p>4 appetite for men was extremely high. It was almost like</p> <p>5 an insatiable thirst because it was literally one after</p> <p>6 another, after another, after another."</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. You have used the word "romantic" a couple of times in</p> <p>9 your evidence today.</p> <p>10 Do you stand by the word romantic for this type of</p> <p>11 sexual engagement?</p> <p>12 A. I do, insofar as Stephen was strangely childlike in</p> <p>13 certain ways, for example I have referenced about him</p> <p>14 playing with toys but he was also childlike in the way</p> <p>15 that he approached meeting guys, because quite</p> <p>16 frequently he would meet someone and then I would get</p> <p>17 a message a couple of days later that we would get</p> <p>18 engaged. So there was a sort of childlike romanticism,</p> <p>19 he had, like a fantasy, whereas I saw it as a fling,</p> <p>20 this is a conquest, this will not last.</p> <p>21 On some element, I think Stephen perhaps hoped it</p> <p>22 would, because I lost count of the number of times I was</p> <p>23 invited round to engagements. In fact I got so fed up</p> <p>24 with it I wouldn't attend in the end. That is I think</p> <p>25 why I dropped the word "romantic" in in that context.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 139</p>
<p>1 Q. You had known him since 2005, when he was 30. You said</p> <p>2 to the jury that the things you talked about were men,</p> <p>3 weather and work.</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Was there a dominant topic of conversation from amongst</p> <p>6 those three?</p> <p>7 A. Probably it would be men, of the three topics.</p> <p>8 Q. Men.</p> <p>9 You took part in, didn't you, a BBC documentary in</p> <p>10 2017.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Could we have that up, please, INQ8, page 8. There is</p> <p>13 a transcript of it, Mr Edwards. If we could have the</p> <p>14 lower half -- no, let's start with what we can read on</p> <p>15 here. Do you remember this, Mr Edwards?</p> <p>16 A. I do.</p> <p>17 Q. The narrator, about six lines down, says:</p> <p>18 "In 2005, Ryan Edwards got to know Stephen Port as</p> <p>19 a neighbour."</p> <p>20 Then you said:</p> <p>21 "So I used to live there, where the blue chairs are</p> <p>22 on the first floor ..."</p> <p>23 I think you are indicating you can see his flat or</p> <p>24 outside of it from where you lived?</p> <p>25 A. That's right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 Q. You then said this -- the narrator says:</p> <p>2 "Port was regularly meeting young men on gay dating</p> <p>3 escort sites. He had multiple profiles and used</p> <p>4 a variety of fake names."</p> <p>5 Did you know that at the time?</p> <p>6 A. I knew he was often on dating websites on his laptop and</p> <p>7 I think he mentioned a couple of the sites he was on to</p> <p>8 me. Fitlads being one of the ones.</p> <p>9 Q. Using fake names?</p> <p>10 A. I was not aware of that.</p> <p>11 Q. Then you are reported as saying:</p> <p>12 "Stephen's type was in gay terms a 'twink', which</p> <p>13 is, you know, a young slim gay guy, sometimes</p> <p>14 effeminate. The chaps that Stephen would date would be</p> <p>15 sort of 16, 17, 18 and almost a bit vulnerable types."</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Were young men of 16 to 18 years of age his type up</p> <p>18 until he was 39 years of age?</p> <p>19 A. Yes, he had said to me actually that he wouldn't date or</p> <p>20 be interested in anyone over the age of 23. I remember</p> <p>21 that particularly. So, you know, anyone younger than</p> <p>22 23, over 16 obviously.</p> <p>23 Q. They are over the age of consent, let's be clear about</p> <p>24 that?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 140</p>

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<p>1 Q. But I think you have implied, at least, that the young 2 men we are talking about were vulnerable? 3 A. Yes, they struck me as not particularly bright and 4 intelligent, in the main coming from troubled 5 backgrounds, perhaps needing somewhere to stay. So 6 vulnerable in that sense, yes. 7 Q. Didn't it concern you that they were at risk of 8 exploitation by Mr Port? 9 A. No. Insofar as it is very common on the gay scene for 10 men to be very promiscuous and to have many, many 11 partners and if that is what Stephen wanted to do and it 12 was over the age of consent, then so be it. 13 Q. If they are under 18 years of age, they are still 14 children in law, Mr Edwards, do you understand that? 15 My question was, were you not concerned that they 16 were at risk of exploitation? 17 A. No. Because my view was that they were over the age of 18 consent, so I don't -- I didn't particularly go along or 19 like what Stephen was doing but certainly I was not 20 an arbiter to say, "Stephen, you can't meet guys over 21 the age of consent". No, you know, if he wanted to do 22 that, then, as far as I was concerned, he wasn't forcing 23 them to do anything against their will, it was 24 consensual. 25 Q. There is a big age difference, isn't there?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 times and I found that to be -- I think I referenced 2 earlier -- a pretty unsatisfying affair. You know, 3 I had to do all the talking, he would just stand there. 4 Q. He was somewhat socially dysfunctional, you are 5 implying? 6 A. Yes, that's right. 7 Q. Monosyllabic? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. So why were you friends with him? 10 A. It is a good question, looking back, I think -- 11 Q. You were friends with him for nine years, Mr Edwards. 12 A. Yes, I have always wanted to nurture and help people. 13 I think it is like the broken wing mentality. And that 14 is evidenced in some of ex-partners, it is evidenced in 15 some of my friends that I keep. I try not to be 16 judgmental and I try to keep friends of a wide variety. 17 Gay people that I knew in Barking were very limited, so 18 yes, Stephen had questionable quirks but I didn't feel 19 that was a reason to cut him out of my life entirely. 20 But I did feel a bit sorry for him. 21 Q. Okay. 22 Let's look at some incidents that may be thought to 23 be not that childlike in his behaviour. 24 Can we start with the incident with X1, please, 25 which is at MPSS23, on screen. If we could go to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, there is. And, again, it is quite common on the 2 gay scene for there to be quite an age difference, 3 sometimes 20 years plus is not that unusual on the gay 4 scene. 5 Q. And there is a big difference in terms of their economic 6 power? 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. But you still see no risk of exploitation in what he was 9 doing? 10 A. I, for example, have dated someone about 15 years 11 younger than me on a much lower financial model than me 12 and, no, I didn't think it was unusual in terms of the 13 gay scene. 14 Q. If there was this level of turnaround of his partners, 15 Mr Edwards, why would he introduce you to them? 16 A. I think one of our main topics was talking about, you 17 know, boyfriends, partners, so -- and I think there was 18 a childlike essence to Stephen, as in almost like, you 19 know, come and see my new car, come and see my new 20 Transformer, come and see my new partner. 21 So it was something that Stephen liked to show off. 22 Almost in that context. 23 Q. I think in a statement you said you used to go clubbing 24 with him pretty regularly? 25 A. No, I tried going out pub/clubbing with him a couple of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 page 2, please, I believe. 2 Mr O'Connor has taken you to much of this. You are 3 describing here the relationship from around 2012 with 4 X1 and Port. 5 Just in parenthesis, on 1 September, when you are 6 going to Leeds, he is still sending you messages saying, 7 "Shall I send X1 round to give you a goodbye kiss?" 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. How do we interpret that? 10 A. So I don't really know why -- well, actually, my 11 suspicion is a lot of Stephen's partners often liked me. 12 Perhaps I was some stability that they were not getting 13 from Stephen. So it was almost a running joke between 14 me and him that his partners were interested in me, so 15 that is why he had said that. 16 Q. Right. You describe in the middle of the page X1 here 17 as the relationship: 18 "I would describe this relationship between X1 and 19 Stephen as a bit crazy. X1 was always in and out of 20 hospital for something or other and I also remember X1 21 calling the police a couple of times." 22 X1 was considerably younger than Port, wasn't he? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. He was somebody who was always in and out of hospital? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

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<p>1 Q. With mental health difficulties?</p> <p>2 A. I was not aware of that.</p> <p>3 Q. Did you consider him vulnerable and liable to</p> <p>4 exploitation by Port?</p> <p>5 A. He was of the character that Port went for, so yes.</p> <p>6 Q. So he was?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. In the penultimate full paragraph on this statement you</p> <p>9 refer to the incident in McDonald's:</p> <p>10 "I asked Stephen why X1 was sat alone at a different</p> <p>11 table and Stephen said to me that he had arranged for</p> <p>12 him to meet a guy. I jokingly said to Stephen, "You are</p> <p>13 not pimping him out, are you?" And then Stephen said</p> <p>14 with a straight face that he was. I then nervously</p> <p>15 laughed. I can't remember when I left the McDonald's,</p> <p>16 if I left alone or with Stephen. What I do remember was</p> <p>17 that we did not all leave together."</p> <p>18 Other than pimping X1 out in McDonald's, was there</p> <p>19 any other reason for them to be sitting apart?</p> <p>20 A. Not that I could think of.</p> <p>21 Q. When you left McDonald's yourself, was it a real</p> <p>22 possibility in your mind that that is what Port was</p> <p>23 doing with X1, this vulnerable young man?</p> <p>24 A. I recall it as -- it was a very unusual comment for</p> <p>25 Stephen to make, and I remember speaking to friends</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 to his neighbour when he dropped into Port's flat one</p> <p>2 afternoon for coffee a little unexpectedly."</p> <p>3 You:</p> <p>4 "Stephen took ages to get to the door and he sort of</p> <p>5 shuffled up and opened the door. He looked absolutely</p> <p>6 dreadful, like he hadn't slept a wink. His eyes were</p> <p>7 red raw and he was very -- almost slurring his speech."</p> <p>8 Then this:</p> <p>9 "As I sat down, I was completely shocked because on</p> <p>10 the coffee table was a massive clear plastic container</p> <p>11 that actually filled the whole circumference of the</p> <p>12 coffee table and it was full of vials of clear liquid</p> <p>13 and sachets of white powder. I was completely taken</p> <p>14 aback. There were dozens and dozens of clear bags of</p> <p>15 white powder and again dozens of these vials of clear</p> <p>16 liquid. It really disturbed me because it was a huge --</p> <p>17 it was obviously a huge amount of drugs, far, far beyond</p> <p>18 personal use for someone. So, you know, what on earth</p> <p>19 was he doing with them?"</p> <p>20 What did you do with that information, Mr Edwards?</p> <p>21 A. So I followed up with Stephen and asked him about the</p> <p>22 incident. And he then replied to me and said, "Don't</p> <p>23 worry, it is all under control, it is my own personal</p> <p>24 use".</p> <p>25 Q. In your own words, it was "far, far beyond personal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>
<p>1 about that comment that same day.</p> <p>2 Q. So in your mind it was a real possibility that Port was</p> <p>3 "pimping out" his much younger and vulnerable boyfriend,</p> <p>4 and you stayed friends with him?</p> <p>5 A. At this time, yes, it certainly was a possibility.</p> <p>6 Q. And you stayed friends with him?</p> <p>7 A. As I referenced earlier, I had distanced myself to him</p> <p>8 but was still in contact with him, yes.</p> <p>9 Q. You hadn't distanced yourself, Mr Edwards, you are</p> <p>10 demonstrably not distant, even when Gabriel Kovari goes</p> <p>11 missing.</p> <p>12 A. Distanced in terms of the frequency of contact, so the</p> <p>13 frequency of coffee mornings decreased, because of my</p> <p>14 intent, and the number of times we exchanged text</p> <p>15 messages decreased.</p> <p>16 Q. Right.</p> <p>17 Let's go to a further incident -- but there is</p> <p>18 nothing childlike, is there, about pimping out your</p> <p>19 younger vulnerable boyfriend?</p> <p>20 A. No.</p> <p>21 Q. Can we go back to the transcript of the BBC documentary,</p> <p>22 please, INQ8, at page 9. We are coming on here to the</p> <p>23 incident where you found Port with someone else with</p> <p>24 considerable quantities of drugs in his flat.</p> <p>25 "Narrator: Ryan [that's you] detected a darker side</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>	<p>1 use", so why did you accept that explanation?</p> <p>2 A. I didn't entirely accept the explanation, but as</p> <p>3 a libertarian, if someone says, you know, that they want</p> <p>4 to -- the gay scene, it is very common, drugs on the gay</p> <p>5 scene, and if it is for their own personal use, then</p> <p>6 I am not going to intervene.</p> <p>7 Q. The person he was with that day was also, you have told</p> <p>8 us, visibly and seriously under the influence of drugs.</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. That was a very young person wasn't it?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. You say you are a caring person, Mr Edwards, but what</p> <p>13 did you do to think about their interests?</p> <p>14 A. I mean, all I would say is that, you know, when I have</p> <p>15 concrete evidence, as I did against an ex-partner,</p> <p>16 I would go to the police and have done, and I did in</p> <p>17 2002.</p> <p>18 That was affecting me and I had absolute evidence.</p> <p>19 This is an issue with someone who it is the way that</p> <p>20 they are living their life and, quite frankly, if I went</p> <p>21 to the police over every concern I had around drug use</p> <p>22 in the gay scene, then I would have very few friends</p> <p>23 probably, because it is very, very prevalent on the gay</p> <p>24 scene. I think it is very unfortunate as well.</p> <p>25 Q. Absolutely, but this was a huge amount, to use your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

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<p>1 words.</p> <p>2 A. Yes which is why I distanced myself in terms of the</p> <p>3 frequency of contact with Stephen, because I found it</p> <p>4 highly distasteful but I was not at that stage going to</p> <p>5 intervene.</p> <p>6 Q. Right. You then go on, in the transcript here, to say</p> <p>7 this. The narrator says:</p> <p>8 "When Ryan met some of Port's boyfriends, they</p> <p>9 revealed a violent and abusive character."</p> <p>10 You are quoted as saying:</p> <p>11 "On this one occasion I asked why, what had happened</p> <p>12 and he said "Stephen had pushed me into a TV and I had</p> <p>13 cut my head. There was another time where one of the</p> <p>14 boyfriends said that Stephen had actually been violent</p> <p>15 to him. I did see a trend towards the later years. The</p> <p>16 issues the boyfriends were describing to me seemed more</p> <p>17 sinister."</p> <p>18 Is there any reference in that in your witness</p> <p>19 statement to the police in 2015?</p> <p>20 A. I can't recall.</p> <p>21 Q. What violence had you seen or had reported to you,</p> <p>22 Mr Edwards?</p> <p>23 A. I had not seen any violence. But because the boyfriends</p> <p>24 often took me as, I think, someone who has had some</p> <p>25 stability to offer they would often moan about Stephen</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 stayed on my phone. Had the police even made any kind</p> <p>2 of outreach to the LGBT community then local people like</p> <p>3 myself would have been aware. And we could have gone</p> <p>4 straight to the police with the information we knew and</p> <p>5 people's lives could have been saved."</p> <p>6 When you heard that Gabriel had, so to speak,</p> <p>7 suddenly gone missing, Mr Edwards --</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. -- I think you are telling the jury that you were and</p> <p>10 remained suspicious about the circumstances?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. You knew by then that Port for nine years had had</p> <p>13 multiple very young men as sexual partners?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. You knew that many of those were vulnerable young men?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. You knew that in McDonald's, he had said he was pimping</p> <p>18 out X1?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. You had seen on his table a huge quantity of drugs?</p> <p>21 THE CORONER: Mr Davies, can I just interrupt you for</p> <p>22 a moment.</p> <p>23 Mr Edwards, can I just tell you this, you don't have</p> <p>24 to answer any question that might tend to incriminate</p> <p>25 you, do you understand that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>
<p>1 to me. And it was very hard to discern what was to be</p> <p>2 taken seriously from their moaning and what was to be</p> <p>3 taken as fantasy, because I have often moaned about</p> <p>4 boyfriends to friends and I would offer them support, so</p> <p>5 when they wanted to speak to me, I would always be</p> <p>6 an ear to listen.</p> <p>7 Q. You appear to be telling the documentary that you had</p> <p>8 had multiple reports from different partners of violence</p> <p>9 by Port. That is what you appear to be saying?</p> <p>10 A. Yes, and some of these incidences I raised with Stephen</p> <p>11 and he would give me a different version of events to</p> <p>12 the partner. Sometimes Stephen would say that I had --</p> <p>13 Stephen I had called police on the partner, sometimes</p> <p>14 the partners were saying they had called police on</p> <p>15 Stephen, so it was very difficult for me, having not</p> <p>16 witnessed any of the events, to ascertain who was</p> <p>17 telling the truth, if anyone.</p> <p>18 Q. Did it not concern you that it was multiple of his</p> <p>19 partners reporting violence rather than simply one?</p> <p>20 A. Yes, it did concern me.</p> <p>21 Q. If we go to page 13 of the same document, please. There</p> <p>22 is a comment in the middle where you say:</p> <p>23 "At the time of Gabriel's death, I didn't hear</p> <p>24 anything about it in the local community. So the</p> <p>25 information I had on my phone, the crucial evidence,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>	<p>1 A. Sure.</p> <p>2 THE CORONER: Right, thank you.</p> <p>3 MR DAVIES: You had seen at his house a huge quantity of</p> <p>4 drugs and vials, correct?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. You had had multiple reports of violence from his</p> <p>7 partners?</p> <p>8 A. And Stephen, equally, telling me.</p> <p>9 Q. And you were doubting the truthfulness of his account</p> <p>10 about Gabriel's disappearance?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. You were somebody who, until you gave up the post, had</p> <p>13 a liaison role with Barking police.</p> <p>14 A. It was not a liaison role, but obviously I had had</p> <p>15 contact with them, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. You had personal contacts, if needed, within Barking</p> <p>17 police?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Did you not see the potential value as intelligence to</p> <p>20 the local police of this information you had about Port?</p> <p>21 A. No, because, on the incidents of violence, for example,</p> <p>22 the police had been called, so the police were aware of</p> <p>23 those.</p> <p>24 Q. To all of them?</p> <p>25 A. As far as I was aware.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

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<p>1 Q. How did you know that?</p> <p>2 A. Because Stephen had told me about police incidents and</p> <p>3 the partners had told me about police incidents.</p> <p>4 As for the drug use, that was -- I had been told it</p> <p>5 was of personal use, so, you know, I had no evidence to</p> <p>6 say it wasn't.</p> <p>7 Of the vulnerability, even though I found it a bit</p> <p>8 distasteful, it was all over the age of consent, so</p> <p>9 I had no evidence to say anything to the police there.</p> <p>10 Q. Why didn't you at least raise it informally, if you</p> <p>11 didn't wish to raise it formally with your contacts at</p> <p>12 Barking police?</p> <p>13 A. To say?</p> <p>14 Q. "I've got concern about Port, for reasons A, B, C, D and</p> <p>15 E."</p> <p>16 A. In what context would it have been a reasonable</p> <p>17 assumption to have made that, I struggle to think. If</p> <p>18 I said I have a friend who is gay, who likes younger</p> <p>19 men, who is known to take drugs, they would have said,</p> <p>20 "Yes, that is what gay people do".</p> <p>21 Q. The context is that Gabriel has suddenly gone missing</p> <p>22 and you are not trusting what Port is telling you.</p> <p>23 A. I am finding it unusual and suspicious, yes.</p> <p>24 And of course these things are much easier to look</p> <p>25 back at with hindsight, aren't they?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 A. No.</p> <p>2 Q. Even though it is highly unusual event in the middle of</p> <p>3 a town?</p> <p>4 A. Unfortunately, Stephen was pretty much my only gay</p> <p>5 friend in the borough. So he would have been -- so in</p> <p>6 terms of people I knew and would chat to, I would chat</p> <p>7 to my neighbours where I currently resided, I wouldn't</p> <p>8 chat to people where I used to live. So I had no point</p> <p>9 of reference. This was before WhatsApp for example, and</p> <p>10 where communities tended to be a lot more active</p> <p>11 nowadays in terms of what is happening.</p> <p>12 Q. Presumably you were unaware of the media reporting about</p> <p>13 it, which started the very same day. In fact there were</p> <p>14 three articles over a period of about a week where they</p> <p>15 mentioned a young man had died and they appealed for</p> <p>16 witnesses and information. Were you unaware of that as</p> <p>17 well?</p> <p>18 A. Yes, I was unaware of that.</p> <p>19 Q. You didn't read the Barking and Dagenham Post?</p> <p>20 A. It could possibly have been when I was away in Leeds for</p> <p>21 a paid medical trial.</p> <p>22 Q. When did you go away to Leeds?</p> <p>23 A. It was discussed in evidence, I think it was possibly</p> <p>24 around the September time.</p> <p>25 Q. The articles that I am referring to are around the 19th,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 155</p>
<p>1 MR DAVIES: Thank you, Mr Edwards.</p> <p>2 Questions from MR SKELTON</p> <p>3 MR SKELTON: Mr Edwards, I ask questions on behalf of the</p> <p>4 Metropolitan Police.</p> <p>5 Can I first just clarify how often you were in</p> <p>6 contact with Stephen Port in 2014 and 2015.</p> <p>7 A. So, as I have mentioned earlier, so it was after the</p> <p>8 drug incident on the table I reduced the contact, so the</p> <p>9 text messages were less frequent and the meetings, the</p> <p>10 coffee mornings, were much less frequent. As to the</p> <p>11 exact frequency, there would be phone evidence to sort</p> <p>12 of show the frequency of text messages, but I can't</p> <p>13 remember to what frequency it reduced.</p> <p>14 Q. Every month or so, having contact with him?</p> <p>15 A. Yes, and then he went away for a period of time, that at</p> <p>16 the time I didn't know why, so obviously there was no</p> <p>17 contact for a period of time.</p> <p>18 Q. I will come on to his disappearance in due course.</p> <p>19 Anthony's body was found on 19 June 2014 and you</p> <p>20 lived very nearby. I think you said earlier that</p> <p>21 although you lived nearby, you were unaware that the</p> <p>22 body had been found on Cooke Street?</p> <p>23 A. That's right.</p> <p>24 Q. Did you not speak to anyone in the locality who said</p> <p>25 that a young man has been found dead on the street?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 154</p>	<p>1 23rd and 26th June. In which the Post featured the</p> <p>2 unexplained death of a young man and Superintendent</p> <p>3 Hamer appealed for witnesses.</p> <p>4 A. So I would have been around at that time, but I didn't</p> <p>5 read the Barking and Dagenham Post.</p> <p>6 Q. Did Stephen mention that he had found a dead body</p> <p>7 outside his flat?</p> <p>8 A. No.</p> <p>9 Q. You were completely unaware from him that he had been</p> <p>10 arrested and charged with perverting the course of</p> <p>11 justice in respect of Anthony?</p> <p>12 A. That's right.</p> <p>13 Q. He was on bail subsequently for several months, and</p> <p>14 eventually went to prison in March 2015 for about two</p> <p>15 and a half months.</p> <p>16 Were you unaware that he had gone to prison?</p> <p>17 A. So I remember -- when Stephen went away, I remember</p> <p>18 asking his friend in Dagenham, his best friend</p> <p>19 effectively, you know, where has Stephen gone? And</p> <p>20 I didn't get a very clear response from his friend, so</p> <p>21 I was unsure of where he had gone. I think from</p> <p>22 recollection, that the friend from Dagenham did tell me</p> <p>23 that Stephen has done something wrong, but it is a bit</p> <p>24 of a sort of miscarriage of justice and Stephen is going</p> <p>25 to be back soon, kind of thing. It was a bit vague,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 156</p>

<p>1 frustratingly so.</p> <p>2 Q. It sounds from what the friend was saying that he was</p> <p>3 implying that Stephen had gone to prison?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, there was that implication, I think.</p> <p>5 Q. Were you in communication with Stephen at all in the run</p> <p>6 up to his imprisonment in March?</p> <p>7 A. From memory, I think we were sporadic contact. I, for</p> <p>8 example, remember when he was released, he then messaged</p> <p>9 me, "Hey neighbour, I am back" kind of thing.</p> <p>10 Q. This would have been on about 4 June 2015, around that</p> <p>11 time?</p> <p>12 A. I guess it would have been.</p> <p>13 Q. Did he tell you where he had been?</p> <p>14 A. I remember receiving a text message from him saying</p> <p>15 something like it was a mistake over a few seconds that</p> <p>16 cost me a few months of my time, of my life, something</p> <p>17 like that.</p> <p>18 Q. Did you think to query whether he had actually been in</p> <p>19 prison and if so what for?</p> <p>20 A. So I did ask Stephen and I didn't get a very clear</p> <p>21 response from him.</p> <p>22 Q. Did that worry you, given the context of all the things</p> <p>23 that you have discussed today about pimping the</p> <p>24 boyfriend, the drug use, the vulnerable boyfriends,</p> <p>25 et cetera?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 157</p>	<p>1 later.</p> <p>2 Could you try and specify when you were in contact</p> <p>3 with Gabriel during that period of time, from the 25th,</p> <p>4 which is the day after you met him, to his body being</p> <p>5 found on the 28th?</p> <p>6 A. To the best recollection of my memory, was there was</p> <p>7 when I went to -- with my friend Paul, to Stephen's flat</p> <p>8 to meet Gabriel. The day after, during the morning, or</p> <p>9 during the day anyway, my recollection is that he,</p> <p>10 Stephen bought Gabriel to mine to meet the chickens.</p> <p>11 Then, after that, I swapped a couple of messages with</p> <p>12 Gabriel saying that if he wanted somewhere else to say</p> <p>13 while he looked for somewhere permanently he could stay</p> <p>14 at mine and that was the last correspondence, and then</p> <p>15 I followed that up subsequently a few days later with</p> <p>16 a couple of follow-up messages, because I didn't have</p> <p>17 a response from Gabriel and then I heard nothing more.</p> <p>18 Q. I appreciate this is difficult. So you met him again on</p> <p>19 the 25th, you exchanged not numbers but you did exchange</p> <p>20 sort of Grindr handles so you could communicate with</p> <p>21 each other that way?</p> <p>22 A. That's right, the app means that you can see other gay</p> <p>23 people in your locality and you can message them on</p> <p>24 that.</p> <p>25 Q. Over what period of time were the messages between you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 159</p>
<p>1 A. My suspicion at that time was, having seen the quantity</p> <p>2 of drugs, my suspicion was that he had been charged for</p> <p>3 some sort of drug offence, given the quantity of drugs</p> <p>4 that had been found. That was my suspicion, which he or</p> <p>5 the friend in Dagenham didn't confirm to me.</p> <p>6 Q. You remained friends with him during this period?</p> <p>7 A. I would say more neighbours, but you could say friends.</p> <p>8 Q. As far as your contact with Gabriel Kovari goes, I think</p> <p>9 you had met him, we have seen from the text messages on</p> <p>10 I think 24 August 2014, at Stephen's flat.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Then I think you were taken by Mr O'Connor to the text</p> <p>13 message which you sent just exchanging pleasantries in</p> <p>14 the very early hours of 25 August?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. According to Operation Lilford, the last messages sent</p> <p>17 from Gabriel's phone were in the early hours, around</p> <p>18 5.51 am on 25 August. So a few hours after you had sent</p> <p>19 a text message to Stephen, though it was not clear they</p> <p>20 were actually from Gabriel, so Gabriel's phone was still</p> <p>21 being used in the very early hours of the 25th, but it</p> <p>22 is unclear if he of course is the person sending the</p> <p>23 actual text messages?</p> <p>24 A. Right.</p> <p>25 Q. Gabriel's body was found on 28 August, so three days</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 158</p>	<p>1 and Gabriel after the 25th?</p> <p>2 A. So after we had had the coffee where he had met my</p> <p>3 chickens, then we swapped a couple of messages, so it</p> <p>4 was very soon after that time. And then I heard nothing</p> <p>5 more.</p> <p>6 Q. What, the 26th or the 27th?</p> <p>7 A. No, it would have been -- I believe the day after I had</p> <p>8 met Gabriel at Stephen's.</p> <p>9 Q. Sorry, the same day then, you were messaging on the</p> <p>10 25th, later that day?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, that's right, after we had -- after he had had</p> <p>12 coffee at mine, yes.</p> <p>13 Q. That was it, was it, until you tried to send some</p> <p>14 messages after the 28th, to which you received no</p> <p>15 response?</p> <p>16 A. So then I had sent a couple of messages on Grindr to</p> <p>17 Gabriel and had no response, and that is when I then</p> <p>18 picked up with Stephen to ask as to where Gabriel was.</p> <p>19 Q. You were asked about this earlier but may I just revisit</p> <p>20 it. The Post, the Barking and Dagenham Post, again,</p> <p>21 publicised the deaths of two young men in Barking on</p> <p>22 29 September 2014 and mentioned their names, in fact</p> <p>23 mentioned Gabriel's name in full and Daniel's name in</p> <p>24 full. Again, were you unaware of that media publicity</p> <p>25 about the deaths?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 160</p>

40 (Pages 157 to 160)

<p>1 A. So in September, that is when I was in Leeds. But 2 regardless of that, I never had access to a physical 3 copy of the Barking and Dagenham Post and I didn't go on 4 to the website to look at the Dagenham Post online 5 either. 6 Q. I think you said that it was Stephen really that 7 communicated Gabriel's death to you? 8 A. That's right. 9 Q. There was no other person or no other media by which you 10 came to know about his death in that period of time? 11 A. That's right. 12 Q. Given your suspicions about his disappearance and death, 13 did you think to Google him? 14 A. No. 15 Q. Was there anyone within the LGBT community, as far as 16 you were aware, that brought to your attention that 17 three young men had been found dead within the space of 18 a few weeks, in the same area of the town where you 19 lived? 20 A. No. 21 Q. As far as your knowledge of Gabriel was concerned, 22 I think by this stage you had ceased to be the chair of 23 the local liaison community for many months, if not -- 24 well, since I think about October 2013, is that right? 25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 161</p>	<p>1 which I think had occurred three times in a period of 2 three months. Did you not put all these things together 3 and think this is a very unusual situation that 4 a homeless young man has disappeared and the only person 5 that seems to know anything about it is this person, 6 this very odd character, Stephen Port? 7 A. It is an emotional question you say really, because, 8 obviously, with the benefit of hindsight, I wish I had, 9 I wish I had connected the dots with my neighbour. At 10 worst I thought he was a borderline paedophile. At 11 worst I thought he had gone to prison for drug use. 12 Never in my wildest years had I imagined that the 13 tragedy that had happened actually happened. If I had 14 been able to connect the dots, if only, if only ... then 15 I would have intervened earlier. 16 MR SKELTON: Thank you. 17 MR O'CONNOR: Madam, I don't have any more questions for 18 Mr Edwards. 19 I don't know whether you or the jury do? 20 THE CORONER: Yes, there are a few from the jury, some of 21 which have been answered. 22 Questions from THE JURY 23 THE CORONER: There is a question in relation to the 24 incident involving XI in McDonald's and the question is 25 would you have reported Mr Port to the police if he had</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 163</p>
<p>1 Q. So nearly a year? 2 A. Yes. 3 Q. There was no real reason for the police to think to 4 contact you directly about these matters? 5 A. I would say that in terms of prominent members of the 6 LGBT+ community, I was one of a very select few, so 7 I would have still expected, you know, given that the 8 people that had dealt with me during that time were 9 still present in Barking and Dagenham police, that if 10 they had had any concerns in terms of LGBT+ matters, 11 I would have been a relevant person to have contacted. 12 Q. You had no formal role and hadn't done for many months; 13 is that correct? 14 A. That's correct, no formal role at that time. 15 Q. Someone else presumably had taken over your position, 16 had they? 17 A. I believe the Council for Voluntary Services was then 18 running the LGBT forum as kind of keeping it going 19 without necessarily having a chair in position at that 20 time. 21 Q. Just going back to your suspicions about Gabriel, 22 Mr Davies has put to you all the various things that you 23 knew about Stephen Port by late 2014, the exploitation 24 of vulnerable young men, the drug use, the violence, the 25 sinisterness of his activities, the change of phones,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 162</p>	<p>1 been a young maybe just over 16 year old schoolgirl as 2 opposed to not a member of the gay scene, would that 3 have made a difference? 4 A. Unfortunately the gay scene has its quirks and, you 5 know, there is a lot of talk that is quite confusing, 6 a lot of language and terminology that is confusing, so, 7 for example, "a boy" is often used to reference a man. 8 The pimping incident at best could have just been 9 a really poor taste joke from Stephen, so ... 10 So I think in the context of outside of the gay 11 arena, it is very hard to compare and contrast, and 12 obviously we are in a different society now to what it 13 was back then. I have always been -- if I have clear 14 evidence, I would always go to the police. So, for 15 example, when I had a partner in 2002 and I detected 16 underage images of boys, I then reported that to the 17 police. 18 Out of circumstance, if somebody uses a throwaway 19 line, "I am pimping my girlfriend", then without 20 anything further to back that up in the context of 21 a service that doesn't seem to respond well to the LGBT 22 community, unfortunately, I think we as members of the 23 community feel that we need robust evidence before the 24 police will even listen to us. 25 So I'm sorry it is a bit of a meandering answer but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 164</p>

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<p>1 if I had had a friend and they had given a throwaway</p> <p>2 comment on pimping my girlfriend out, look how beautiful</p> <p>3 she is, I wouldn't have liked it, I would have found the</p> <p>4 comment distasteful, but I wouldn't have marched to</p> <p>5 police. And I think if my friends -- if I went to the</p> <p>6 police every time a friend said something questionable</p> <p>7 to me, I quite frankly wouldn't have many friends.</p> <p>8 THE CORONER: Can I just understand how your memory of that</p> <p>9 was left. The three of you had driven to Beckton in</p> <p>10 Stephen Port's new car?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 THE CORONER: Inside McDonald's X1 was both standing and</p> <p>13 sitting apart from you and Stephen Port?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 THE CORONER: When you left, your recollection is you either</p> <p>16 left on your own or you and Stephen Port left together,</p> <p>17 leaving X1 there?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 THE CORONER: The next question relates to Glen Aldwinckle,</p> <p>20 did you know him?</p> <p>21 A. I met him when he was living at Stephen's on a couple of</p> <p>22 occasions I believe. I think he was a Scottish</p> <p>23 gentleman.</p> <p>24 THE CORONER: Did you have any interactions with him</p> <p>25 regarding Stephen Port? Is the question.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 matters today. We will break off there now until 10.00</p> <p>2 tomorrow morning.</p> <p>3 Thank you.</p> <p>4 (3.52 pm)</p> <p>5 (The inquests adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p>
<p>1 A. I seem to remember bumping into him a few -- a couple</p> <p>2 of -- I think after Stephen had been arrested and we had</p> <p>3 a brief conversation about it.</p> <p>4 THE CORONER: After Stephen had been arrested which time?</p> <p>5 A. The final time. I think he was also living at Stephen's</p> <p>6 after he had been away for a while, so I think I went</p> <p>7 routine to Stephen's for a coffee and that gentleman was</p> <p>8 there at the time.</p> <p>9 THE CORONER: I think you have answered this, but just to be</p> <p>10 clear: did you ever meet Anthony Walgate?</p> <p>11 A. No.</p> <p>12 THE CORONER: Finally, in relation to his changing his</p> <p>13 telephone number, did you ever either find that</p> <p>14 suspicious or ask him why he kept changing his phone</p> <p>15 number?</p> <p>16 A. Some people just do. I have had the same mobile phone</p> <p>17 number since about 1997 now, and yet I know other people</p> <p>18 who seem to change their phone numbers like the wind.</p> <p>19 So no, as in changing numbers, I found that not unusual.</p> <p>20 MR O'CONNOR: Madam, may I just turn my back for one moment?</p> <p>21 THE CORONER: Certainly.</p> <p>22 MR O'CONNOR: Thank you, no further questions.</p> <p>23 THE CORONER: All right.</p> <p>24 Thank you, Mr Edwards.</p> <p>25 Members of the jury, that is as far as we can take</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p>	

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