

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: EDWARDS, RYAN

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

Occupation: UNEMPLOYED

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

Signature:

Date: 19/10/2015

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

I am the above person and this statement will refer to my friendship with Stephen PORT. Other people I will be mentioning in this statement are Gabriel KOVARI who was an ex partner of Stephen Port, [X1] who was also an ex partner of Stephen, Stephen's mother (who I can't remember her surname), and another ex partner of Stephen's called [X10] I don't know [X10]'s surname.

The places I will be mentioning in this statement are Stephen's flat which is 62 Cooke Street, Barking, and my own flat which was Gateway House, St Anns. This block was pretty much opposite Stephen's flat on Cooke Street.

I was born and raised in Canvey Island and in April 2005 I moved to Gateway House in Barking. Shortly after I first moved into Gateway House, I met Stephen Port. I am a gay male and I quickly realized that there was not a lot of other gay males around the Barking area. One day I saw who I now know to be Stephen stood outside his flat on Cooke Street with some other males. The group of males looked like gay lads so I approached them all and started to engage in conversation. From then on I became friends with Stephen Port. I exchanged numbers with Stephen and we stayed in regular contact. This was by phone call or, more often text. We also met up every couple of weeks round each other's flat for a coffee. I never had any form of sexual relationship with Stephen. Our relationship was platonic.

I would also every so often go out socially with Stephen to various gay venues around London. Again nothing ever happened between us and we would always make our way home together at the end of the

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night. Whilst I always enjoyed Stephen’s company, I felt he was withdrawn a lot of the time and a quiet person. Conversations would be quite difficult with Stephen as he would often just give one word answers.

I remember once around five (5) years ago, I went to Stephen’s flat for a coffee and his mum was there. I can’t remember her name but remember she was a lovely lady. Stephen had to pop out for something and that is when I had a brief conversation with his mother. She told me that Stephen was a lovely, friendly, chatty child and then he changed as a teenager. I did not probe her about this and nor did she elaborate on it. The conversation then changed onto something else. This then made me think that something had happened to Stephen in his teenage years and that was why he was withdrawn a lot of the time. I also realized quite early on after meeting Stephen that he had what I would describe as an obsession with Transformer toys. I never questioned or asked Stephen about the toys and why he would still play with them at his age. He would have been in his mid thirties at the time.

Around 2012 Stephen met a young lad called [X1]. Stephen met [X1] online and it was not too long after that I met [X1]. I would describe this relationship between [X1] and Stephen as a bit crazy. [X1] was always in and out of hospital for something or other, and I also remember [X1] calling Police a couple of times. I don’t know why police were called but either [X1] or Stephen would tell me that they were called. Neither went into any detail about the police and I did not want to get involved. I would still visit Stephen every couple of weeks around his flat and quickly realized that [X1] had moved in.

[X1] was in his early twenties and very slim. I remember once going to McDonalds with Stephen and [X1] in Beckton. This was a couple of years ago. We ordered our food and then what was strange was that I sat down at a table, Stephen sat next to me and [X1] sat at a table at the back of the restaurant alone. I asked Stephen why [X1] was sat alone at a different table and Stephen said to me that he had arranged for him to meet a guy. I jokingly said to Stephen, “you’re not pimping him out are you” and then Stephen then said with a straight face that he was. I then nervously laughed. I can’t remember when I left the McDonalds if I left alone or with Stephen. What I do remember was that we did not all leave together.

Throughout Stephen’s relationship with [X1] they would often break up and get back together. I’m not sure when or how this relationship ended, but I remember another early twenties white male came on to the scene and begin a relationship with Stephen. This was in August 2014 and the lad’s name

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was Gabriel KOVARI. Again Stephen told me he had met him on the internet and very quickly Gabriel had moved in.

When I first met Gabriel he seemed like a nice lad but almost verging on unhealthy slim. Gabriel seemed level headed and we would exchange messages on 'Grindr'. I don't remember his user name and I believe he is now off the system. The messages between me and Gabriel on Grindr were friendly and certainly not sexual. I would not make a move on a partner of Stephen's. I remember once inviting Gabriel over to my place for a friendly coffee. Gabriel told me that he was unhappy living with Stephen and that he wanted to move on. I can't remember why Gabriel said he was unhappy. I offered to put Gabriel up for a few days until he found somewhere else to live and he said he would think about it. This chat was around the end of August 2014. I did not hear anything again from Gabriel on Grindr. I would have sent him a message but never had a response.

Around this time, Stephen's mobile number was 07966 350 558. Looking through my old messages this morning after hearing about Stephen being charged, I saved this mobile number as 'Evidence'.

On the 26th August 2014 Stephen texts me this number saying it was a new number. I texted him back saying "OK how is Gabriel?" and Stephen text me back saying "his gone to stay with another local guy, he gets around lol.. **X1** bk 2morrow so prob 4 best he left x".

On the 30th August 2014 Stephen texts me again asking if I had seen 'Gab' around Barking as he had been trying to get hold of him and that he had probably lost his phone. He went on to say in the same text that if I saw him to tell him to come around and that it was a shame he went off with another guy. This was at 1410hrs. I text back saying that he had not been in contact with me.

On the 1st September 2014 at 2247hrs I text Stephen saying that it was strange that 'Gabriel' had disappeared and a few minutes later Stephen texts me back saying that he had not heard anything from Gabriel but he did mention going to Spain to study. In the same text, Stephen said that he thought about going to the Police but he did not know Gabriel's surname.

We continued to exchange a few more texts that evening about general stuff and then I do not hear from Stephen until the 11th September 2014 at 1932hrs when he texts me on my mobile again. My mobile number is **DPA** 305. In this text Stephen wrote, 'hey neighbour, have just heard sad news from one of Gabriels friends that Gab did return to Spain to be with his bf (I didn't know either) and he died on arrival from an infection, is unknown what type killed him til after altopsi, his being buried in (Slovakia), please don't put on fb or mention to anyone else as his family are in bits

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and his bf he was with for 3 years is devastated., feel so sad he was our friend.. Btw am not with **X1** anymore his got a new bf now.. Hope all is going well x.”

I text back saying this was shocking and Stephen did not text me back. I still kept in contact with Stephen after this and would go round for coffee. Stephen would not talk about Gabriel but I put this down to him being a man of not many words.

At some point in the first half of 2014, I remember Stephen getting in touch with me asking if I wanted to come round to his flat to meet a new boyfriend. I agreed to come round at 1PM. When I got there Stephen opens the door wearing a dressing gown. Stephen said he had forgotten I was coming round but still invited me in. Once inside Stephen introduced me to his boyfriend as **X10**. I don't remember his surname. Once in the living room I noticed a Tupperware box on the coffee table with what looked like drugs inside. There were small bags of white powder. Both Stephen and **X10** looked 'out of it' so I did not stay long and left. I am really anti drugs so at this point I started to distance myself from Stephen. I started to see him and text him less and less.

I would describe Stephen PORT as a white male, a/a 40 years old, about F602, slim muscular build with blond/brown coloured short hair. Stephen was a quiet guy who I found difficult to engage in conversation. He also had a certain childlike quality to him with the way he played with toys and how he would jump into situations without thought. He always appeared to me to be laid back and calm. I never saw him angry.

I would describe **X1** as a white male, ginger short hair, very slim, a/a 19-20 years old, about F511 and manic. He was and had this wild unpredictability about him. He would think about random things and then tell me he wanted to act it out. For example, he once told me that he wanted a catheter and was going to ask his doctor for one. I kept my distance from him due to his unpredictability.

I would describe Gabriel KOVARI as a Slovakian white male, a/a early twenties, very slim, about F601 to F602, light brown hair which was short, and he had an accent when he spoke English.

I have seen pictures this morning on various websites regarding the murders and I recognized Gabriel KOVARI straight away as Stephen PORT's ex partner.

I would describe **X10** as a white male, a/a early twenties, very slim, about F5011 and British origin. I would describe **X10** as a nice guy with his heart in the right place.

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