

Statement made on behalf of: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis

Witness: Mark Richards

Statement No: 1

Exhibits Referred to:

Date Statement Made:

IN THE EAST LONDON CORONER'S COURT

IN THE MATTER OF THE INQUESTS INTO THE DEATHS OF ANTHONY WALGATE, GABRIEL KOVARI, DANIEL WHITWORTH AND JACK TAYLOR

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF DETECTIVE INSPECTOR
MARK RICHARDS**

I, Mark Richards of the Metropolitan Police Service, New Scotland Yard, Victoria Embankment, London, SW1A 2JL, will say as follows

1. I am a Detective Inspector (“DI”) within the Metropolitan Police Service (“MPS”).
2. I make this witness statement to:
 - (i) Provide a summary of what Operation Lilford was able to establish from the living victims about Stephen Port’s modus operandi;
 - (ii) Provide evidence of what Operation Lilford was able to establish about the movements of each of the deceased and Port from the time they met Port until their deaths;

Kovari on 28th August 2014 and Daniel Whitworth on 20th September 2014. MIT 1 took over the investigation on 15th October 2015.

Mobile phone use up to and throughout 2014

29. Upon his arrest on 26th June 2014, Stephen Port was in possession of a Samsung Pocket Neo using the number 07903 854105 (**#4105**) which was seized as **exhibit CSP/1** by DC Portsmouth.
30. From 2004 Port had used the mobile telephone number **#4105** but had interspersed its use with other numbers.
31. The number **#4105** was being utilised in handsets on both occasions of his arrests on 26th June 2014 for perverting the course of justice, and again on 15th October 2015 for murder.
32. Enquiries by PC Figg revealed that the handset **CSP/1** was activated on the network and used for the very first time with **#4105** on the afternoon of 19th June 2014, the day that Anthony Walgate was found deceased outside 62 Cooke Street.
33. Due to the passage of time Operation Lilford could not establish what the previous handset had been, nor could any of the call data usage for the period covering Anthony Walgate's death be recovered.
34. Port was released from custody at Barking Police Station on bail on 27th June 2014 with his mobile phone and SIM being retained by police for enquiries.
35. On the 1st July 2014 Port began using the telephone number 07773 964576 (**#4576**) which Port's sister, Sharon Port, referred to in her statement of 28th October 2014 as belonging to her father but loaned to Stephen Port as he had been "*mugged*" of his own⁹.
36. It was also established via examination of Ryan Edwards' mobile handset (**Exhibit RYE/1**) that Port had texted Edwards on 1st July 2014 providing him

⁹ IPC000954 (S75)

with the **#4576** number and saying “*Hey neighbour [sic]. My new number..Stephen x*”. This can be found at **line 296 of exhibit KMA/6**¹⁰.

37. On 26th August 2014 Port again changed his number to 07966 350558 (**#0558**). This was established from a text message again found on Ryan Edwards’ mobile phone (RYE/1) timed at 2:53pm with the content being “*My new number, delete other one..Stephen ur neighbour x [sic]*”, seen at **line 464 of KMA/6**¹¹.
38. Port changed his number back to **#4105** on 30th September 2014 which again comes from a message timed at 1:45pm found in Ryan Edwards’ handset (**RYE/1**) and can be seen at **line 551 of KMA/6** with the content “*Hey Neighbour. Delete other numbers save this one Stephen x*” [sic]¹².

Mobile phone through 2015 until arrest

39. There is then a considerable time period where it was established that Port was using **#4105** in a Black Samsung Galaxy handset however, on 5th September 2015, Port began using a newly activated SIM utilising the number 07757 **DPA**845 (**#7845**).
40. Port’s friend and flatmate, **X13** provided a statement. In this statement dated 17th October 2015, he details how Port was having issues with his **#4105** number and handset and so **X13** gave Port a SIM for the number **#7845** and another Samsung handset for him to use until his **#4105** was working correctly.
41. This is also confirmed in the call data obtained for **#4105** which shows that, over a period of approximately 2 weeks Port only used **#4105** for data sessions (accessing internet etc.) rather than calls or texts, for which he used **#7845**.
42. Upon his arrest at 62 Cooke Street on 15th October 2015, Port was in possession of both **#4105** in a black Samsung handset and **#7845** in a white Samsung handset.

Electronic Devices – Stephen Port

¹⁰ IPC000086 at p.32

¹¹ IPC000086 at p.33

¹² IPC000086 at p.35

which are not replied to, from X1 talking about them taking 'g' (GHB) and trying a needle rather than drinking it but being unsure about this. By January 2014, Port is telling someone that he has taken 'meph' (mephedrone).

48. A short summary is provided below, setting out what was established as to communications between Port and each of the deceased (see: Walgate at paragraphs 101 - 105, Kovari at paragraphs 163 - 165, Whitworth at 207 and 225 - 229 and Taylor at 268 - 273)

Searches

49. During the course of Operation Lilford, an extensive number of hours were spent utilising specialist search officers to fingertip search residential properties, public areas, drains, bins and open water in an attempt to secure further evidence in the investigation. I have set out the main locations that were searched below.

62 Cooke Street

50. It became clear during the course of the investigation that all of Port's victims that had been identified had been inside his home address at 62 Cooke Street and, as such, there may be items of their belongings still present, but that forensic opportunities could not be jeopardised by disturbance of the crime scene.
51. As a result of this I was present when the SIO held a forensic/search strategy meeting with Crime Scene Examiner ("CSM") Patricia Larrigan and the dedicated exhibits officer for the inquiry, DC Sarah Wild, to establish and map out the best way forward for forensic retrieval and evidential search and seizure.
52. This meeting was held on 16th October 2015 and the strategy document set out by the SIO can be found at **D4/6**.
53. In summary, the methodology was for the entirety of the address to be filmed and photographed to maintain the integrity of the scene as found. The next step was for two exhibit trained officers to be present in the address wearing forensic personal protective attire including scene suits, gloves and masks and to seize and remove any items of obvious relevance from within.

an infection. Port went on to ask Ryan Edwards not to mention it to anyone else as the deceased's family were extremely upset, as was he himself as Mr Kovari was his friend.

203. Ryan Edwards replied thanking Port for letting him know and expressing his shock.

Social Media

204. John Pape outlined in his evidence that Gabriel Kovari had an account with the gay dating site Bender and enquiries were conducted by Operation Lilford into this account. These enquiries discovered that the company owning Bender went into liquidation in January 2015 and a company from New Zealand purchased the assets and transferred over some of the historic user profile data. Accounts with Bender were not held under email addresses as is the norm, but under the username of the user, making it incredibly difficult to identify accounts⁶⁵.

205. The username provided by Gabriel Kovari's associates for him on Bender was 'New3oy' and an account was located in that name. No information was held on Bender's servers other than that the profile was created on 25th June 2014 and that the last usage was on 24th August 2014.

206. No further social media accounts or usage for Gabriel Kovari relevant to this time period were located by Operation Lilford.

207. Operation Lilford was able to establish that during the time period covering the death of Gabriel Kovari, Port had already made contact with Daniel Whitworth and the two were exchanging a long series of messages which began on 18th August 2014 with a further few messages over the coming weeks then frequency and volume of messages stepping up considerably between 2nd and 15th September 2014 (detailed below in 'Investigation into Daniel Whitworth death' section).

'Jon Luck'

⁶⁵ See MPS000028

208. An unidentified individual going by the name of 'Jon Luck' had exchanged nearly 1,000 messages with Thierry Amodio, the former boyfriend of Gabriel Kovari, and was indicating to Mr Amodio that he had information relating to Mr Kovari's death and his last movements⁶⁶.

209. On 13th September 2016 as part of preparation for the forthcoming criminal trial, I was reviewing MIT 1 officers' submissions regarding lines of enquiry which had not proved fruitful, and in particular the tracing of people who had not been spoken to in person by the inquiry team.

210. It was whilst reviewing another officer's work around tracing Jon Luck that I noticed significant similarities in the use of slang terms, peculiar spellings and general conversational style between 'Jon Luck' and Stephen Port. I also noted that detail within 'Jon Luck's' messaging around Gabriel Kovari staying at his flat matched with detail within Stephen Port's defence case statement.

211. Over the following days I instructed officers to conduct several enquiries including:

- (i) Open source internet enquiries on the 'Jon Luck' Facebook account.
- (ii) Internet Protocol ("IP") address history in relation to the 'Jon Luck' Facebook account to establish the IP address being used to access the 'Jon Luck' Facebook account at the relevant messaging times.
- (iii) Comparison of this data against IP address history from Stephen Port's Fitlads account, which was in use at the same times.
- (iv) Comparison of information provided by 'Jon Luck' in the conversation with Thierry Amodio and the circumstances of Stephen Port at the time.
- (v) Identification of specific words used in 'Jon Luck's' Facebook conversation with Thierry Amodio.

⁶⁶ MPS000561 (CRT/32)