

## Stephen Port verdict: Serial killer convicted of murders of young men he met for sex

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Serial killer: Stephen Port was convicted at the Old Bailey ( )

**A serial killer who drugged and murdered four young gay men in pursuit of his twisted sexual fantasies is facing life in prison today.**

Stephen Port, 41, secretly gave date-rape drugs to his victims, knocking them out to satisfy his “insatiable appetite” for sex with men while they are unconscious.

He killed the three men during chemsex parties at his Barking flat, before dumping their bodies in a nearby graveyard to distance himself from the death and embarking on an elaborate cover-up.

Enjoying the idea of “playing God”, Port routinely drugged men for sex after meeting them through gay dating app Grindr. He was also convicted of a catalogue of sexual abuse of young male victims.

Police captured Port, a bus garage chef, when the body of Middlesex University fashion student Anthony Walgate was discovered in June 2014 outside his flat.

But he was only charged with lying about knowing Mr Walgate, eventually serving a short prison sentence before being let loose again.

Port murdered two young men with drug overdoses – even writing a fake suicide note for one - before going to prison, and killed another when he was set free again.

At the Old Bailey on Wednesday, Port was found guilty by a jury of drugging seven men including Mr Walgate, murdering three of them, raping two, and sexually assaulting another. He was also found guilty of sexually assaulting and raping an eighth man and sexually assaulting a ninth.



Victim: Slovakian-national Gabriel Kovari (Metropolitan Police)

Port offered no reaction as the jury delivered the verdicts, which condemn him to an automatic life sentence.

The jury remained undecided on whether Port murdered Mr Walgate and continue to deliberate on nine further charges of drugging and sexually abusing men.

They later returned a guilty verdict for the fourth count murder.

Prosecutor Jonathan Rees QC told the trial Port liked to "play God" by drugging his victims because he was "driven by his seemingly insatiable appetite for sex with twink [young gay men] while they were unconscious.

"He needed to find a way of raping them against their will. The obvious solution was drugs".

He enjoyed watching so-called rape pornography and made his fantasies come true by slipping GHB into his victims' drinks or applying the drug by pretending it was lubrication.

Port, who was bullied at school and shunned by his mother for being gay, described himself as "100 per cent gay" during the trial and said he fancied young-looking men in their 20s, known in the gay community as 'twinks'.

He used dating app Grindr to find his victims, inviting them for chemsex parties at his flat in Cooke Street, Barking.



Victim:

chef Daniel Whitworth, 21 (Metropolitan Police)

Balding and aged beyond his years, Port wore a blonde wig to dramatically alter his appearance and had a myriad of social media accounts with youthful-looking profile pictures.

Following Mr Walgate's death, Port phoned 999 but pretended he had just found the body outside his block of flats and claimed not to know the 23-year-old.

However, it soon emerged he had hired Mr Walgate as an escort through website Sleepyboys, offering to pay £800 for a night together.

Port eventually admitted he had lied to the police about knowing Mr Walgate, but detectives were convinced the death was unexplained rather than suspicious and only charged Port with perverting the course of justice for which he received an eight-month jail sentence.

Before Port could be sentenced, two more men were dead at his hands. Slovakian-national Gabriel Kovari, 22, and chef Daniel Whitworth, 21, both died from GHB overdoses and their bodies were found in St Margaret's churchyard in Abbey Green.



Mr Rees said Port left a bogus suicide note next to Mr Whitworth's body, in a “wicked attempt” to pin the blame for Mr Kovari's death on to him.

“I took the life of my friend Gabriel Kline, we was just having some fun at a mate's place and I got carried away and gave him another shot of G”, he wrote.

“I didn't notice while we was having sex that he had stopped breathing. I tried everything to get him to breathe again but it was too late, it was an accident, but I blame myself for what happened and I didn't tell my family I went out.”

The note added: “BTW Please do not blame the guy I was with last night, we only had sex then I left, he knows nothing of what I have done.”

Mr Rees told jurors: “The police at that stage accepted the apparent suicide note at face value and did not investigate further. In particular, Daniel’s movements prior to his death were not checked and no attempt was made to trace the person referred to in the note as ‘the guy I was with last night’.”



Found dead in churchyard: Jack Taylor (Metropolitan Police)

It was not until Port killed again, in September 2015, that detectives finally joined the dots. Forklift truck driver Jack Taylor, 25, was found dead in the same churchyard, and CCTV then emerged of him with Port just before he died.

Port maintained throughout his trial that he had not killed or sexually assaulted any of the victims.

Asked why he had lied to police, he said: “The truth sounded like a lie, so I lied to make it sound like the truth.”

Port was found guilty by the jury of four counts of murder, seven counts of administering a substance with intent, three counts of rape, and three counts of sexual assault by penetration.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/stephen-port-verdict-serial-killer-who-met-victims-on-gay-dating-app-is-convicted-of-three-murders-a3395226.html>