

Spring 2024



RIPPEROLOGIST

The Journal of Jack the Ripper, East End and Victorian Studies

Montrouge 1886:
The Starting
Point of a
Bloody Career?

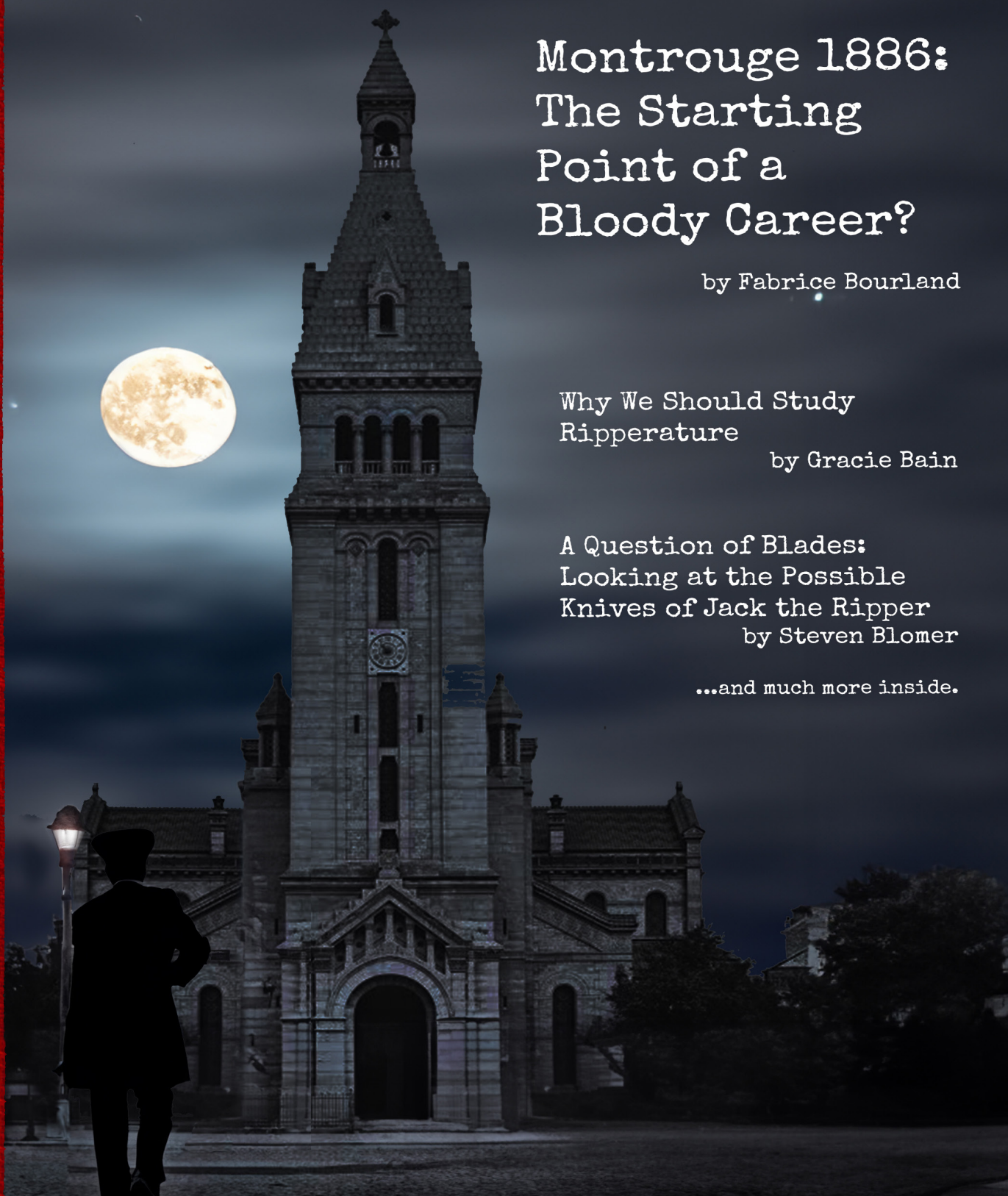
by Fabrice Bourland

Why We Should Study
Ripperature

by Gracie Bain

A Question of Blades:
Looking at the Possible
Knives of Jack the Ripper
by Steven Blomer

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Dear Readers,

Thirty years ago an idea was planted into the head of Mark Galloway: to start a club for people who were interested in the Whitechapel Murders. A place where they could meet up, socialize, discuss the case and perhaps listen to a guest speaker. A few others thought that this was a great idea. And so, after a few months of planning and finding a suitable venue in The Alma just off Hanbury Street, in January 1995 the Cloak & Dagger Club was born. Mark also had the nifty idea that if there's a club, certainly they'd need a newsletter



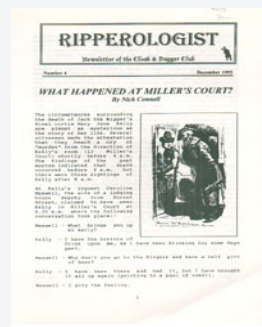
to pass around during the speaker's break. He stapled together 10 pages that contained three articles and a map on how to get to the Alma and called it simply *Cloak and Dagger Club Newsletter*. To his surprise, the first meeting of the Cloak & Dagger Club drew a packed house, and the crowds continued to come to the second and third. The size of the newsletter grew for each meeting. By the fourth, in December of 1995, Mark decided to rename the newsletter *Ripperologist*.

Welcome to Issue 171.

In those early years of the late 1990's, the newsletter gained a following of its own and quickly expanded into a fully fledged magazine. Volunteers were needed to help run it. People whose names are well known in the field of Ripperology-Andy Aliffe, Nick Connell, Paul Daniel, Eduardo Zinna, Christopher George, Paul Begg, and others-answered the call. By Issue #8 Mark Galloway, who would still contribute to the magazine, decided to step aside as editor and Paul Daniel took over.

At this point the magazine was still a photocopied affair and the quality left much to be desired. Images were too dark to make out. The text bled through to the other pages. Something had to be done.

Adam Wood had joined the message boards of a new website devoted to the Whitechapel murders called Casebook. It was on Casebook where he initially met many of those involved in the Cloak & Dagger Club and *Ripperologist* Magazine. He decided to attend the fourth meeting of the C&D club. Word got around that Adam was a graphic designer. He began helping out with bits and pieces of the magazine. But it wasn't until Paul Daniel handed over the reigns of *Ripperologist* to a new editor, Paul Begg, that Adam Wood took over as art director. If you check out the transition issues (28-29) Adam's talented design impact is glaringly apparent. The magazine had entered a new era.



Submissions: We welcome your contributions. To submit articles to *Ripperologist Magazine: The Journal of Jack the Ripper, East End and Victorian Studies* your subject must be relevant to the topics covered in Ripperologist Magazine. It must be on average 3,000-6,000 words in length, contain images, and in word format. Editors and Staff Writers will assist you when needed. Send your submissions to ripperologist@casebook.org.

Over time the readership of *Ripperologist* Magazine grew world-wide. It far exceeded the numbers of those who were attending meetings, or even those on the periphery, of the Cloak & Dagger Club and its members, so the two separated. The Cloak & Dagger Club became the Whitechapel Society and with it came a new magazine, *The Whitechapel Society Journal*, and *Ripperologist* continued into the digital age, becoming an electronic magazine in 2005. Paul Begg, who had been at the helm for 56 issues, passed the wheel to Adam Wood, who then led the magazine for the next 80 issues.

At around the same time that *Ripperologist* Magazine went digital, I was thinking about different ways to use the internet to bring Ripperologists from around the world together. I had in mind a 'virtual' gathering place not unlike Mark Galloway's vision for the Cloak & Dagger Club. The message boards were great, but also argumentative and at times hostile. It's well known that when someone posts on the internet, their message is often misunderstood since it loses everything that is present in the spoken word. People are actually nicer to each



other when they are talking instead of typing. So in February 2008 I started *Rippercast*, a podcast that simply set out to record a group of Ripperologists brought together online to talk to one another. And much like *Ripperologist* Magazine, *Rippercast* grew well beyond its intended scope, so much so that I'm still hosting it 15 years later.

While Adam Wood continued to publish *Ripperologist*, he embarked on a much larger project by starting Mango Books. Mango has published dozens of titles across a broad spectrum of topics in the true crime genre as well as police and social history. He also acquired the rights to the Notable British Trials series and under Mango Books has released several new volumes.

In 2017, Adam asked me to come on board *Ripperologist* as Editor-at-Large, which basically meant that I was to help solicit feature articles and other content from researchers and writers I happened to come across. Along with this, I also began submitting book reviews, and I remained Editor-at-Large until the final issue of the Adam Wood era of *Ripperologist* Magazine.

Online, Adam began sharing posts about and walking tours of historical true crimes-both Ripper related and not- via a project he's titled *Crime Through Time*. He also began to accept more speaking engagements that took him to history groups all across the UK. So with Mango Books, *Crime Through Time*, his walking tours and guest lectures keeping him very busy, *Ripperologist* went on hiatus. Adam's announcement in 2023 that *Crime Through Time* would launch as a magazine led me to approach him about the possibility of rebooting *Ripperologist*. He readily agreed.

I've never published a magazine, but I did know two things: it needed to be done, and I couldn't do it alone. The volunteer team assembled are some of the most talented individuals in the field of Ripperology today, and people whom I respect, admire, and can rely on to assist in bringing to you the best our field has to offer. And we'll be also relying on you, our readers, to contribute articles and items of interest- if you've got the time to spare and the interest in seeing this magazine succeed.

We're excited for the opportunity to be a part of the next chapter in *Ripperologist* Magazine's story.

Enjoy!

Note: While preparing for publication we were sadly informed of the passing of Paul Daniel. Paul Begg remembers him on Page 79.



Baroness Emma Leijonhjelm, Norman Lee, Sir Robert Anderson and Jack the Ripper

By Mark Ripper

We see her first on 20 March 1888, aged forty, marrying her sweetheart at the register office in St George in the East. ‘My husband was a sea captain and his family were noble and in attendance on King Oscar,’ she told one journalist, forty years later¹. ‘One day a tall bearded man saw me playing the harmonium for some sailors and we became friends. He wanted to marry me and then we found that he had been so long at sea that he had not kept his papers properly in order and we could not get married. So my husband said, “Let me take you in my ship to London. We will marry there and then we will return.” I said, “Very well, I will come, but we must return soon.” So we came to London and we married.’

But Emma Andersson – restyled as the Baroness Emma Leijonhjelm following her marriage to Baron Eric Leijonhjelm, a nobleman and the son of a Swedish Lord Chamberlain – found her *métier* in London, and in the East End in particular².

‘Sailormen, they are big silly fellows, a lot of them,’ she said. ‘They need someone to look after them.’³ She noticed that many sailors, pitched up on shore after weeks or months at sea, found the temptations of the city impossible to resist, and its traps and snares too difficult to avoid. ‘There used to be twelve public houses on this street,’ she told a journalist for the Daily Chronicle in 1930⁴. She had made her home at 7 West India Dock Road, in Limehouse, since about 1894, and ‘for seven years before that she had been in the Ratcliff Highway’. The initial culture shock bit her sharply. ‘What scenes! Hundreds of street-women fighting. Drunken louts, thieves, orgies, carousals. “This must be hell,” I said when I first saw these things. “It could not happen on earth.”’ Speaking to the Evening Standard, she alighted upon a suitably nautical metaphor. ‘There are sharks in the sea but more sharks, I thought, in this West India Dock Road.’⁵



And so the Baroness settled into a life of social work. Without her intervention, she thought, naïve sailors would continue to spend their money ‘in the public houses and on the women that preyed on them.’⁶ She would be their safety net. ‘Poor boys, they are just like children. They need a mother to look after them.’

1 Evening Standard, 4 September 1928.

2 Daily Telegraph, 6 March 1937.

3 Evening Standard, 4 September 1928.

4 Daily Chronicle, 15 February 1930.

5 Evening Standard, 4 September 1928.

6 The People, 9 February 1930.

Her objective was to ensure that no sailor who wanted for food, clothes or shelter was left unassisted. 'I have not very much money,' she said. 'Sometimes I have very, very little. But I have never had to turn anyone away. Sometimes it's only tea and bread and margarine I can offer ... but when you're starving that's something.' She had seen penniless sailors sleeping rough; she had seen them pawn their clothes and anything else of value. But 'a suit of clothes in which to sail, a few shillings to send the wife in Liverpool pending receipt of his signing-on note, a meal for a hungry man' – all were made available to the extent permitted by the Baroness's abilities and funds.⁷ One admirer, the Reverend George H. Mitchell, mentioned that she had 'impoverished herself to penury in this way.'⁸ She became known, it was said, 'from Rotherhithe to Peru,' 'from Rio to Archangel,' and 'from New York to Yokohama.'⁹ She claimed to be 'snowed under' with appreciative letters from all around the world.¹⁰

Some clients stood out. Two men with 'rough seamen's clothes' but 'white hands' impressed her with their refined manners. 'After they had been with me a week or so they told me their story. They were members of an organisation in Russia for helping the poor, and they offended the Tsar. They had to flee from the country.' Two weeks on, and 'a beautiful carriage drew up at my door and a gentleman in a big fur coat got out. My two boarders ran out to meet him and they all kissed each other. The newcomer had brought clothes for the two men and they changed into them. Then before they went they poured a handful of gold into my hands and said: "Help others as you have helped us". A month or two later I got a letter from South America, saying they had arrived there. It was only then I learned that one of the men was a prince and the other a count.' Another of the Baroness's Russian visitors worked as a doctor at Charing Cross Hospital before departing for America. She also remembered an Indian rajah – 'the son of a maharajah. What a fine man he was!' – who had converted to Christianity at Eton, and who, for that reason, felt nervous about returning to India. He apparently became a tea merchant, lost his money during the First World War, and was then given a stipend of 30 shillings a week by 'a famous lady, who lives in the West End' to serve as a missionary. 'Think of that,' said the Baroness. 'If he had not converted he would have been living as a millionaire.' She recalled that 'he was always a mystery round about here,' but she considered herself 'one of the few people who know the truth about him.'

'Colour,' she said, 'makes no difference.' The correspondent of the Evening Standard found 'a big Lascar and a big Irishman ... doing something to a harmonium' in the parlour of the Baroness's house, before 'a Chinese sailor's thumb directed me over his shoulder up the stairs. I waited at the top to let a mulatto pass by.'¹¹ Nor, according to Mitchell, did she cross-examine those who came to her seeking help: 'Imposed upon? Always and ever, but she is adamant against all warnings – crooks, criminals, and impostors have found in her a friend.'¹² At Christmas time, she prepared the fish for 'the Swedish Minister and Legation and all the Scandinavian nobility in London with their Christmas Eve dinners.'¹³ The excess was given away 'to the Scandinavian colony in the East End.'

Baron Eric Leijonhjelms died in 1914. 'Twelve times he rounded the Cape. While we were in London the fevers came back on him. He was very ill. He did not recover.'¹⁴ Still, the widowed Baroness pressed on at her work. 'The doors of my house have never been closed any day. And often at night I hear a knock downstairs. I say, "Come you, Prince," and I and my dog, we go downstairs and open the door. I say, "What can I do for you, sailorman?"' Her twice-a-decade trips back to Gothenburg had ceased with the advent of war and the death of her husband, but, even as late as 1928, she hoped, one day, to return there. 'I have been away a long time already,' she told the Evening Standard. 'I am more than eighty.' Senility apparently set in towards the end, which came on 5 May 1937. Sailors 'on the pavements raised their hats and women bowed' as the hearse pulled away from

7 Daily Chronicle, 15 February 1930.

8 Mitchell, George H., *Down in Limehouse* (Stanley Martin & Co. Ltd.; London, 1925), 39.

9 Evening Standard, 4 September 1928; Daily Chronicle, 15 February 1930.

10 The People, 9 February 1930.

11 Evening Standard, 4 September 1928.

12 Mitchell, 39.

13 Dundee Evening Telegraph, 27 December 1929.

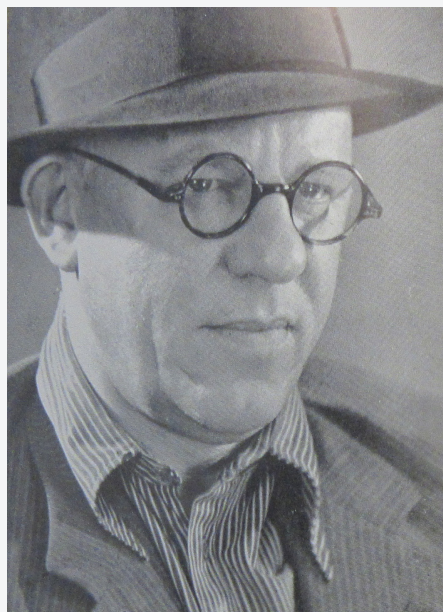
14 Evening Standard, 4 September 1928.

the Baroness's home; one Indian visitor to her home on the day of her death, said, simply, 'She was like a mother to me.'¹⁵

Entering shot, now, is Norman Lee. Lee was, by his own account – and with his own capitalisation – 'a Man with a Past'.¹⁶ In one of his books, he describes his 'miserable' early days, not in the bubbling cauldron of Limehouse, but in the typically more sedate environs of London's suburbs and the rural counties of south-east England.¹⁷ 'My mother drank,' he recalled, and 'my father threw up a lucrative living on the Corn Exchange to become a pioneer of Sussex water-colour painting, which gained him much glory and depleted his finances to nil. He died in poverty, while struggling to live on a few shillings a week.' There is little evidence of this. Lee was born in 1898; his father, John James Lee, was recorded as a wholesale drapery assistant in the 1891 census, and a warehouseman in a hosiery business in 1901, each time in Croydon. By 1911, the family were living in Leatherhead, Surrey, creeping a little closer to Sussex all the time, but, it seems, never quite reaching it. When John James Lee died, in 1955, he was buried in Epsom Cemetery. Norman thought that his father had been 'a friend of Von Herkomer, Millais, and noted painters of the Victorian-Edwardian period'; but he may only have had this at second-hand: John Everett Millais, for example, died in 1896, two years before Norman was born.

All this – let us say – detail emerges from Lee's first attempt at autobiography: *My Personal Log* was published in 1947, and it is little surprise to find that it exhibits the sort of narrative unreliability typical of other texts of its period. To be fair to its author, however, it did so openly, and by design. Lee set out his prospectus for the book in its preface:

*This book is an odd mixture of my wartime wanderings, at sea and ashore, with some fanciful journeys into Yesterday. You will find a lot of facts, a good deal of reminiscence and (the privilege of an author) some imaginings, in the interest of discretion. I am content to be a light-hearted gossiper.*¹⁸



It is impossible, now, to know whether Lee's other stories of his childhood – 'packed off to live with a relative' at the age of eleven 'and told to get a job'; dismissed from that job (as a grocer's shop boy on the Balls Pond Road) because he allowed a 'poor artist' with 'a sick wife and half a dozen infants' to run up a debt; sworn into the army at fourteen, sent to Ireland and bullied by a sadistic colonel before 'a sympathetic aunt bought me out for £12' – were simply imaginings or not.¹⁹ But his early experiments in comic illustration – which eventually led to an appointment on the *London Magazine* – were probably genuine, and his love of the theatre was probably authentic. By his own account, he 'migrated from the provincial theatres,' where he had trod the boards to little acclaim, 'to the halls overnight'.²⁰ Working as 'a lightning cartoons act' became tiresome after six hundred appearances, and Lee 'chucked it to become a writer and producer of vaudeville playlets'.

The timeline is never less than vague, but it seems that we are, by now, looking at a Lee in his very early twenties. As early as November 1920, *The Stage* was reporting on *Back to Earth*, which had opened to 'much success' at the Euston Theatre. Lee had apparently written it with Frank Lalor, and John Barton and Anne Ashley were the star turns. A brief synopsis of the piece captures both its silliness and its opportunism, just as England was launching into another of its periodic

¹⁵ Manchester Evening News, 6 May 1937; Daily Herald, 6 May 1937.

¹⁶ Lee, N., *My Personal Log* (Quality Press Ltd.; London, 1947), 9.

¹⁷ Lee, *My Personal Log*, 15.

¹⁸ Lee, *My Personal Log*, 9.

¹⁹ Lee, *My Personal Log*, 16.

²⁰ Lee, *My Personal Log*, 30.

obsessions with Ancient Egypt:

*John Barton, made up in his familiar guise as an American tramp, or hobo, enters the study of a crazy old Egyptologist whose chief treasure is a mummy case containing the remains of an Egyptian princess. The tramp has found a jewel, which he offers to sell to the old gentleman, who nearly falls dead when he sees it. It is none other than the scarab of the Pharaohs, and by its token the tramp is a prince and the husband of the lady in the mummy case.*²¹

Other farces followed: *House Full*, *Filmstruck*, and *Oh, Mabel!*, in which two bookmakers, already in debt to their customers, lose a large amount of money on a horse in an attempt to balance the books, and then spend two hours keeping their clients at arm's length. *The Hampshire Telegraph*, looking forward to a production at – appropriately – the Portsmouth Hippodrome, described *Oh, Mabel!* as 'one of the greatest laughing successes from Mr Lee's prolific pen.'²² (At the same time, *A Butterfly on the Wheel* was expected to open at the Portsmouth's Theatre Royal; the play was 'written many years ago by Mr E.G. Hemmerde, K.C.', who had appeared for the prosecution in the case of Florence Maybrick.)

Lee tells his readers that he 'left the music halls in 1926.'²³ In fact, he seems to have pressed on until 1928, when his play, *Danger*, met with the displeasure of the Lord Chamberlain: the Lord Chamberlain's office was, at that time, responsible for ensuring that theatre's reputation for moral purity, which it never had, remained untarnished in the public eye. In one scene, for reasons which I have absolutely no desire to explore, one *Danger*'s characters, Ruth, is branded with an electric iron. This, together with 'the method of exposing the back and shoulders' were eventually approved by officialdom; however, following, as it did, fast upon a string of knock-about vaudeville hits concerning Egyptian mummies and lethargic racehorses, such intense drama must have felt like an unlikely detour for Lee.²⁴ Perhaps it was one that he did not handle as well as he may have wished. Little was more likely to excite public curiosity than the disapproval of the Lord Chamberlain, but one had to know how to exploit the opportunity. Lee fell out with the company underwriting the first performance of the play (in Inverness), accusing them of giving in to their commercial fears about the controversy of the branding scene too readily, and stating that he 'would never write another play nor submit one to the censor, as he thought he had been made a victim. He hoped to find another job where censorship did not exist.'²⁵ He went immediately into films.

★

His exact oeuvre is difficult to pin down precisely, not least because of the presence in London, at similar times, of another film director going by the name of Norman Lee (this gentleman had been born under the name of Conrad Maris Sachse). Wikipedia, for what it is worth, attributes thirty-three films to him over the course of twenty-one years; the British Film Institute counts forty-four over twenty years, and the difficulty of knowing which Norman Lee was which is hardly resolved by either of these sources.²⁶ By his own account, Lee was spotted on the set of a Hitchcock movie at Elstree by a gossip columnist to whom he refers discreetly as 'Miss X', and, following her printed advice – which was that, as an 'up-and-coming producer and writer of stage-shows', a production company ought to consider putting him behind the camera – he found himself with 'an Elstree contract, with Walter Mycroft', and subsequently 'remained in the same job eleven years.'²⁷

Mycroft was a principal figure at British International Pictures, and some of Lee's early films for the studio can be ascertained with a degree of certainty. Who else, given his history of farce, would have made a thirty-six min-

²¹ *The Stage*, 18 November 1920.

²² *Hampshire Telegraph*, 13 July 1923.

²³ Lee, *My Personal Log*, 89.

²⁴ *Daily News* (London), 28 April 1928.

²⁵ *Perthshire Advertiser*, 28 April 1928.

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_Lee; <https://collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web> [search term: Norman Lee].

²⁷ Lee, N., *Log of a Film Director* (Quality Press Ltd.; London, 1949), 16.

ute short entitled *Strip! Strip! Hooray!!!* in which – according to Wikipedia; I haven't seen it myself – ‘a specialist sunbathing camp is threatened by a campaign by the leader of the “Wear More Clothes League”’?²⁸

One wonders whether Hitchcock could have been a meaningful influence upon such trivial work – but one also wonders whether this was Lee's abstract reflection on his experiences of censorship in the theatre. Mycroft's name, and that of the retitled Associated British Pictures Corporation, remain attached to works helmed by Lee until 1941's *The Farmer's Wife* (co-directed with Leslie Arliss, and a remake of a story which had originally been brought to film by Hitchcock): whether 1941 was precisely eleven years since Lee had signed his contract is not easy to tell, and one never knows quite how accurate Lee wishes to be about these sorts of eminently measurable facts. Either way, he spent much of the war out of the studio and in the Merchant Navy, and returned briefly to the cinema when peace was restored, coming to grips with *The Monkey's Paw*, based on the story by W.W. Jacobs (and parodied by *The Simpsons* in ‘Treehouse of Horror II’); and then, in 1949, looking into *The Case of Charles Peace* for Monarch Films – a movie which is freely available on YouTube (at least in the UK, and at the time of writing) and, generally, not to be taken too seriously, sometimes stagey and sometimes silly, but better than might otherwise have been expected. 1950's *The Girl Who Couldn't Quite*, featuring a young Bill Owen, appears to have been Lee's last film.

A gallant and very thoroughgoing attempt to summarise Lee's subsequent career – churning out pulpy fiction under a variety of pseudonyms – is available online (<https://bearalley.blogspot.com/2013/05/norman-lee.html>), but here we need only to concern ourselves with his 1949 exercise in autobiography, *Log of a Film Director*. In this book, Lee returns to the hybrid style of recollection and imagination upon which he leaned in *My Personal Log*, dedicating the book to his former collaborator Arliss, and saying, in his dedication, both that ‘the episodes I have related about our visit to France do not appear exactly as they happened’, and that ‘it was yourself who always insisted that the first duty of a biographer was to be truthful’.²⁹

In *Log of a Film Director*, Lee takes a holiday in France with his friends Christine and Larry, ostensibly because he and Larry had been ‘working too hard’.³⁰ He worries about money, an unfinished screenplay, French food (‘the bread is uneatable,’ Christine tells him, and ‘the coffee some horrible extract of acorns’), French cigarettes (‘acid’), and his own limited knowledge of the French language.³¹ He gossips with curious locals – whose command of English compensates for his lack of French – about film stars, including James Mason. He visits the tourist attractions in Paris, and views Marlene Dietrich's ‘million dollar legs’.³² Eventually, the party sets off for Monte Carlo; Lee, by now ‘days behind with my work’ and troubled by ‘frantic wires’ from his collaborator R.J. Minney (which indicates that he was working on the script of the box-office disaster *The Idol of Paris*), stops off at Marseilles.³³ ‘I have heard,’ he writes, ‘that the dockside district was the toughest to be met with in any part of the world. I want to sample it.’³⁴ In the company of a Greek tour guide named Nicky, who has been hastily assigned to the project by Lee's hotel manager, he descends upon Smokey Joe's bar. Smokey Joe, the proprietor, is impressed when Nicky tells him that Lee is writing a book and hoping therein to capture the spirit of the real Marseilles, but he gets the wrong end of the stick, and spends two hours ‘persuading me that Marseilles is one of the most respectable cities in the world!’³⁵ Deflated, Lee and Nicky return to the hotel, where – one wonders whether Nicky had any say in this – Lee ‘entertained him until dawn with tales of a really tough and notorious district – Limehouse. I tell him stories of the horrific events of earlier years; all about the Baroness Leijonhjelm, who fought vice along the West India Dock Road with Christian carols and an umbrella.’

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strip!_Strip!_Hooray!!!

²⁹ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 7.

³⁰ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 23.

³¹ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 25, 29.

³² Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 49.

³³ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 60.

³⁴ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 61-62.

³⁵ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 62.

The story takes up the next thirty-eight pages of his book.

★

By Lee's account, he first became familiar with Limehouse in the company of Thomas Burke, through whose popular fictional works the district was brought to wider public attention in the years between the outbreak of the first and second world wars. As ever with Lee, the dates are all askew: he tells the Baroness, whose acquaintance he makes, that he had his first experience of Limehouse in 1921, but he also tells the reader that he 'visited Limehouse weekly' for 'ten years' after his stroll with Burke, 'except for a period of nine months in 1937-38'.³⁶ She initially declines to sensationalise her endeavours, knowing that Lee was an author and storyteller, but gradually warms to him. He records that she was a 'shoemaker's daughter', and that, despite her lowly origins, she had been uninterested in marriage to the Baron whenever he raised the question in Gothenburg.³⁷ She had 'founded a mission' there, and thought that family life would prove to be an impediment. Only after the Baron's health foundered in London did she change her mind: Lee says that Emma found the Baron in 'an East End hospital'. He was penniless, having been unable to work, and had burned through his savings. 'While waiting for him to recover,' Lee says, 'Emma earned her living by dressmaking in the East End'. They married 'six months later and took a small house on the Ratcliffe Highway, letting off a couple of rooms to ease the rent. After the Mary Nicholls murder they moved to 7 West India Dock Road.'

Here, of course, Lee's account deviates from that given in other sources. *The Daily Chronicle* of 15 February 1930 had told its readers that the Baroness had been in West India Dock Road for 'thirty-six years', and had spent 'seven years' before that 'in the Ratcliff Highway'.³⁸ So who was right?



Presuming that the Baroness arrived in England in 1887, a few months before her March 1888 marriage, then the *Daily Chronicle's* seven years add up, and she goes to Limehouse in 1894. If Lee's alternative timeline is correct, then the Baroness left the Ratcliff Highway for Limehouse six or seven months after her marriage. The 1891 census is not in Lee's favour. There, the Baroness is visible at 26 Princes Square, between Cable Street and the Highway, and in the immediate vicinity of the Swedish chapel. She is a married dressmaker, born in Sweden; the Baron is absent, and possibly at sea. The property itself seems to be in the possession, or at least under the management, of George H. Wells, a police constable, and two lodgers – also police constables – whose names will be familiar to readers appear at the same address: Benjamin Leeson and Frederick Wensley (misnamed on the census return as 'Densley'). Leeson recalled that, when he was posted to Whitechapel, he was escorted to Princes Square by a constable who promised that 'there'll be plenty of room for you,' because 'out of the four chaps who used to stay there, two got murdered last week'.³⁹ Leeson correctly identified this as hazing, and settled into his room,

'somewhere about ten foot by nine', awaiting the arrival of 'P.C. Fred Wensley, who afterwards rose to the rank of Chief Constable of the C.I.D., and as such was destined to become world famous'.⁴⁰

Lee's story continued with accounts of the Baroness's activities in the West India Dock Road: leading a procession of 'Scandinavian, Maltese, American and British sailors' out of Charley Brown's pub; appearing in court and stoutly defending her tactics; clearing brothels both of their customers and their staff; taking a dim view of gambling, theatrical séances, confidence tricks and substance misuse.⁴¹ She continued her mission selflessly,

³⁶ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 70.

³⁷ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 77.

³⁸ *Daily Chronicle*, 15 February 1930.

³⁹ Leeson, B., *Lost London* (Stanley Paul & Co.; London, 1938), 29-30.

⁴⁰ Leeson, 30.

⁴¹ Lee, *Log of a Film Director*, 79-80.

almost to a fault: 'she wore the same black dress for ten years, till it had faded almost to green, and was rotten.'⁴² She survived on a meagre of diet of 'fish pickled in some Swedish way', supplemented by tea, coffee and biscuits, so long as there was money for food at all. She insisted that 'the needs of the Mission' preceded her own.⁴³ And eventually, his own awfully unreliable way, Norman Lee makes an important and overlooked contribution to the history of social services in the East End. Perhaps the Baroness Leijonhjelm should be considered in the perspective of some of the other, more lauded, social reformers in the East End at the time – Barnett, Barnardo, and so on.

But he has one more story to tell about her.

✱

*'London was in the grip of a ghastly terror,' Lee tells his readers, 'the mystery of which has lasted for fifty years. ... Jack the Ripper was writing his name in blood across the East End of London.'*⁴⁴ For good measure, he goes on to say that *'James Munro [sic], Chief of the C.I.D., had resigned because the mystery of the Killer who made street-women his only victims grew deeper with each crime.'*

Emma Leijonhjelm, however, was 'unafraid of man, beast or devil'. After she had been in London 'nearly a year', she decided that she would devote herself to confronting the social forces which drew sailors towards their ruin.⁴⁵ 'You'll be murdered the first night you butt in,' cautioned her husband. 'What are you going to fight 'em with – your umbrella?'

'Remember this,' she replied. 'When I came to London to marry you it was on one understanding – that you allowed me to go on working for God.'⁴⁶

'But you didn't say He was going to send you down the Ratcliffe Highway waving a broly and calling on seamen to reform,' said the Baron, rubbing his chin. 'I thought He would just find you some homework to do.'

I have compressed this exchange between the Baroness and her husband, but it serves as a taster of Lee's method. The conversation, which occurred – if ever it did – in 1888, and very probably in Swedish, is here brought vividly to life for Lee's post-war English readership. Even the Baron's rubbing of his chin is in Lee's text. One cannot help but wonder whether, in providing this florid account, Lee had ventured into the territory of his 'imaginings', even if there is a grain of truth somewhere within it. Perhaps it would have been true enough to say: 'The Baroness told me that her husband expressed distinct reservations about the safety of her chosen path.' But that is not Lee's style.

Unable to persuade her to abandon her project, the Baron decided to follow her about the streets. He confessed his anxieties in letters 'to a friend in Sweden', Lee remarks. 'Emma has got a crazy notion into her head that she can go along the London streets picking quarrels with any whore and mobsman and reform them on the spot,' one of the letters states. (The word 'mobsman' is rarely found without the qualifying adjective 'swell' – as in 'swell mobsman' – in English before 1900; but perhaps Lee is offering us a contemporary translation of the Swedish word used in the letter.) A second letter to the same correspondent described the disdain with which the Baroness was treated, as well as the danger that she encountered:

Last night I followed Emma along the Highway. In a distance of three-quarters of a mile she accosted four lots of people. In each party there were seafaring men. The seamen gave her a kindly pat on the cheek and told her to go home to bed, the gangsters glared at her, the women gave her glances of contempt. One of them gave her ten shillings with the words: 'Here are ten reasons why you should now mind your own business.'

⁴² Lee, Log of a Film Director, 99.

⁴³ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 100.

⁴⁴ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 63

⁴⁵ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 64.

⁴⁶ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 65.

*Two boys from the 'Sealion' were being towed along the Highway by two coloured girls, and Emma, looking like an avenging angel, followed them along a street. By the time I caught up with her she had met trouble. Two buck n****s were flashing razors and threatening Emma. The girls were screaming. My little wife stood her ground and hit one of the blacks on the nose with her broolly. I dragged her away, loudly protesting as she was.⁴⁷*

For what it is worth, 'gangster' is another word that is scarcely used in English before 1900; and the racist content here was unmistakably Lee's. He uses the same racial epithet, for example, in an interview of 1921, discussing his experiences in South Africa ('The n****s are born actors').⁴⁸ The Baron, by contrast, seems to have been a peaceful, forgiving man, much in the spirit of his wife: he gave evidence at the Old Bailey after being mugged on Cable Street in June 1903, and insisted that he did not want the perpetrator of the crime to be punished.⁴⁹ The Baron's letters to his Swedish correspondent do not, therefore, ring completely true. During his testimony at the Old Bailey, he admitted that he had been given impartial encouragement by a detective at the identification parade, but he had not been told to point out anybody in particular. 'I was slow in operation,' he told the court. This somewhat awkward and formal construction, perhaps characteristic of someone for whom English was a late-acquired language, makes the Baron's supposed use of the informal word 'broolly' – deployed twice by Lee, once in the Baron's reported speech and once in his reported writing – sound rather implausible.

By the time the Whitechapel Murders began, the Baron had begun to see the benefits of his wife's crusade, but he remained worried. In 'further letters to Sweden,' he said that she was 'really getting results':

A dozen boys have been undoubtedly saved from rough handling and the loss of their money, and have taken the lessons to heart. Of course, I would not let her know I thought these things. I want to prevent her if I can, for I fear that one night she will be killed or worse. There are no more unscrupulous gangs than those which use the Highway and its districts and they will not tolerate her interferences for long. I have no great sympathies for the sailormen because I think that they should look out for themselves and not expect a girl to act as protector. Besides, I hate the idea of people seeing Emma as a Mother Grundy. My greatest concern is that the Ripper is abroad.⁵⁰

I cannot say whether 'Mother Grundy' was a stereotype that made sense in Swedish, but, like 'broolly,' it feels as if it must have derived from Lee's English idiolect, rather than the Baron. Perhaps most notable of all, though, is the Baron's purported mention of 'the Ripper.' In theory, this dates the Baron's letter to some time after the publication of the 'Dear Boss' letter (in which the 'trade name' originated) in the newspapers of 1 October 1888. Let us follow Lee's account of what happened next:

During the past months many brutal murders of women had been committed in the East End of London and the district of the Ratcliffe Highway. The police decided that four of these crimes could definitely be placed to the credit of the Ripper, but the public went further, they blamed Jack for all of them. (Later one murder, that of Emma Smith, was proved to be the work of a gang of toughs.)

An outstanding feature marked all of these murders, whether committed by the Ripper or not – the victims were prostitutes. It became increasingly clear that the elusive Killer favoured only this type of victim. But still the Baron was not appeased and sought the advice of Sir Robert Anderson, then Chief of the C.I.D. Sir Robert's advice was: 'I have no power to prevent your wife patrolling the London streets intent upon her Christian duties, providing she creates no disturbances.'

'But she darn well does,' the Baron stated. 'The police are always taking her to the Station.'

'In that case,' Sir Robert went on, 'the matter is dealt with on the spot and she is then free to parade again

⁴⁷ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 66-67.

⁴⁸ Movie-Land, 17 January 1921.

⁴⁹ Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0, 31 July 2023), July 1903, trial of William Grant (t19030720-591).

⁵⁰ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 67.

if she wants to. There is only one way to prevent your wife carrying out her nightly patrols and that is to lock her up, to which extremity my powers do not extend.' He added: 'Unless, of course, she murders one of the undesirables with her umbrella, in which case matters will be simplified.'

The Baron was disappointed. Could Sir Robert give him no more useful advice than that?

The C.I.D. Chief observed: 'Your good lady means well. I am not sure that she will not ultimately do some good. I think I should risk it if I were you. Women like that rarely come to any harm. As for Jack the Ripper, I don't think even he will harm your good wife.'⁵¹

Anderson, of course, was not knighted until 1901, so Lee is wrong to refer to him as 'Sir Robert' at this point. He would also have been more accurate if he had referred to Anderson as the Assistant Commissioner for Crime, rather than the 'C.I.D. Chief' (a vague designation that Lee had already attached to James Monro). Moreover, Anderson was out of the country on sick leave between 8 September 1888 and 6 October 1888, resting in the Alps, and perhaps not in a position to make real assurances to the Baron by mail, even supposing that some form of association – one capable of supporting an exchange of letters – existed between them. Anderson's off-colour joke about the Baroness murdering 'one of the undesirables with her umbrella' would seem to suggest the sort of friendship in which such levity could be entertained and understood, rather than just a passing acquaintance. The Baron, in his usual way, lapses easily into the sort of improbably casual English vocabulary ('she darn well does') that typified his letters to Sweden.

Lee again:

One night, engaged on her mission, she wandered further afield than usual. Ratcliffe Highway, later to be known as George Street, ran from East Smithfield to Shadwell High Street, north of the London docks. Close by was the church of St George's-in-the-East; behind the church a court of shabby houses.

The Baroness followed two Scandinavian seamen, who were accompanied by two street-walking women, to this court; they were about thirty yards ahead of her but by the time she reached the court they had vanished.

The faces of the half-a-dozen sombre houses facing her were expressionless; no light or sign of life appeared on any of them. The yard was deserted and looked eerie in the flickering yellow gaslight of the lamp at the entrance.

She turned to retrace her steps in the direction of the Highway; at that moment the Shape appeared. It loomed up from the blackness of the street beyond the archway that covered the entrance. Trying to reconstruct the scene afterwards, the Baroness said: 'I saw a black figure that seemed to have no face; it was crouching and moved with a slithering walk; I could not say whether it was a man or a woman; I do not know what clothes it wore. I was not frightened. I called out: "What do you want? Who are you?" because it stood in my path. Then I saw something gleam in the gaslight and I thought the figure was holding a knife. I thought it was a man in disguise who was trying to frighten me – some bad person who didn't agree with me – and I was raising my umbrella to strike him when there was the rattle of van wheels in the street and the figure vanished into the darkness.'

The early editions of the morning papers carried the news that the Ripper had struck again. This time the victim was Mary Kelly of Whitechapel.

It might have been the Little Baroness of Limehouse.'⁵²

★

It is, I think, very tempting to regard this encounter as another of Lee's 'imaginings'. The Baroness sounds like George Hutchinson, following prostitutes and their clients around; the archway has something of Miller's Court about it – albeit that the location given is quite different (much closer to Princes Square, in fact, than Spitalfields); and the interruption of the passing van has the ring of Berner Street. Perhaps this incident was little more than Lee's filmic fantasy. But taking everything literally, just for the sake of argument, one could reasonably expect the Baron to have mentioned it in his letters to Robert Anderson, presuming that he knew of it and

⁵¹ Lee, Log of a Film Director, 67-68.

⁵² Lee, Log of a Film Director, 69-70.

it had already taken place at the time of the correspondence. A statement such as ‘My wife was confronted by a mysterious figure with a knife on the night of the murder of Mary Jane Kelly’ would have had an impact, and even an evidential value, that the Baron’s letters otherwise lacked. Perhaps, following this line of reasoning, we are expected to infer that the Baron’s communication with Robert Anderson occurred after 6 October 1888 and before 9 November 1888.

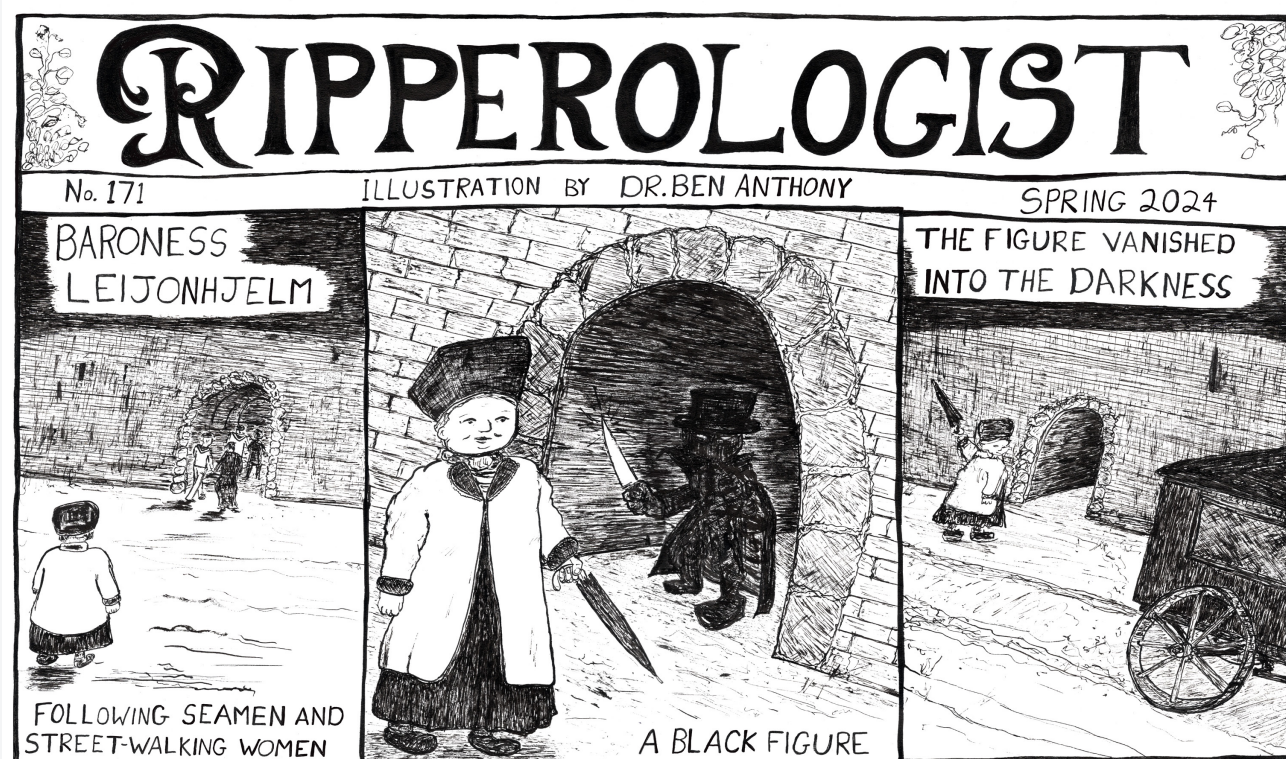
If so, and if any of this ever happened in real life, then Robert Anderson is probably the first police official known to have referred to the Whitechapel Murderer by his ‘trade name’ in writing. Judging by the incomparable *Sourcebook*, the earliest ‘official’ reference to the murderer as ‘Jack the Ripper’ was made by Charles Murdoch, a clerk at the Home Office, in his note of 12 February 1889: ‘Mr Darling says that a constituent of his, named as above [Edward Knight Larkins], sent suggestions to the HO on Jan 10th 89 as to the identity of “Jack the Ripper”, and “has never heard anything since”. Was his letter ever ackd [acknowledged]?’⁵³ The first ‘official’ *police* reference to the murderer as ‘Jack the Ripper’ was made by James Monro, in his report of 11 September 1889, following the discovery of the torso at Pinchin Street: ‘If this is a fresh outrage by the Whitechapel murderer known by the horribly familiar nickname of Jack the Ripper ...’⁵⁴ Anderson’s purported letter to the Baron precedes both of these examples.

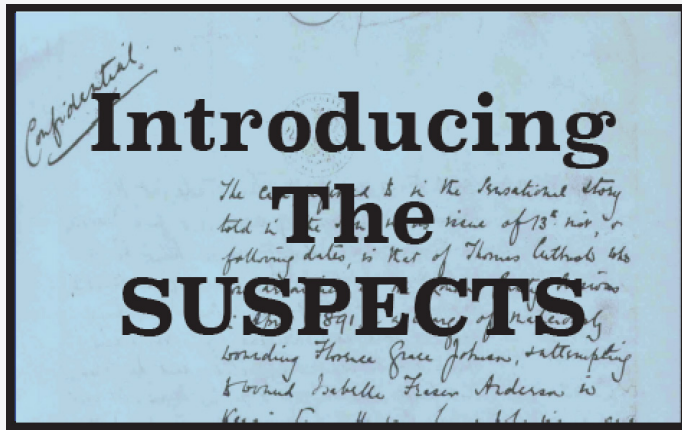
The ‘trade name’ has passed into immortality now, whether we like it or not. It is just possible – perhaps not likely, but at least possible – that here we see it beginning to take hold in the first six weeks or so of its existence, entering the vernacular, and gripping the imagination.

53 Evans, S.P. & Skinner, K., *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook* (Constable & Robinson Ltd; London, 2000), 414. In the *Sourcebook*, Murdoch’s initials are read ‘C.W.S.[?]’. The reading ‘ever ackd?’ has been preferred to the *Sourcebook*’s ‘even ackd?’ The reference to Murdoch’s notes is incorrectly given in the *Sourcebook* as ‘HO 144/221/A49301C, f70’; the correct reference is HO 144/221/A49301D, f70’.

54 Evans and Skinner, 492; HO 144/221/A49301K, f

Mark Ripper is the author of several books about historical crime (under the name of M.W. Oldridge). He is one of the organisers of the East End Conference, and one of the editors of the Notable British Trials series.





Jacob Levy

In my humble opinion, Ripperology suffers from a severe case of assumed-knowledge-itis. This ensures interested parties keep schtum about their lack of awareness on any given aspect of the case for fear of being exposed as someone who doesn't know everything. The sheer horror of admitting you get confused between your Reids and Abberlines, or White's and Buck's Row creates a tension throughout the online community whereby comments or reactions are held back in the hope that others who do understand will clarify matters first so you may follow and thus avoid the shame of a public humiliation.

At Ripperologist HQ we don't stand for that sort of nonsense and we're happy to embrace the fact that it's okay to not know, so stand with us and shout for all to hear 'I'm not the font of all knowledge, I'm learning and I'm proud!'. Feel better now? Need to lie down? No? Good, because we're going to fill in these gaps in your knowledge with a regular feature designed to get you up to speed with the suspects in the case by means of an unbiased synopsis of a randomly selected theory. We have no vested interest in these hypotheses, and it is entirely your choice whether you feel the theory has merit (or not). These will not be massive tomes where we delve into the minutiae of a thesis, instead, they're aimed at providing you with sufficient information to garner an informed overview from which, if you choose to do so, you may take a deeper dive.

Let us therefore begin with a relatively new kid on the block Jacob Levy. Although he had been mooted as a suspect in the late 1990s by Mark King, it wasn't until 2012 that interest really took hold, with the main proponents of the theory being Neil and Tracy l'Anson.

Jacob was born in Aldgate in 1856, the second-to-last son of Jacob and Caroline Levy (nee Solomon). Caroline had been married before and brought two children to her marriage, Rebecca and Jane. Together they had five more children, Hannah, Elizabeth, Isaac, Abraham and Moss as well as Jacob.

The family's profession was butchery with Jacob's father, grandfather, uncles, cousins and brother all in the trade as well as Jacob himself.

Until his marriage to Sarah Abrahams, Jacob lived around Middlesex Street, but following his wedding on the 23rd of April 1879 he moved to 11 Fieldgate Street south of Whitechapel High Street. By 1886 he had returned to Middlesex Street, living at number 36, a butchers shop previously owned by his aunt, Frances Levy.

This is where we start to see a deterioration in Jacob's mental health. In March of that year, he stole a joint of meat worth seven shillings in somewhat bizarre circumstances. The victim of his crime was his neighbouring business, Hyman Sampson, at 35 Middlesex Street and when caught with two co-conspirators (and employees of Hyman Sampson) Jacob stated he was taking the meat 'for a lark'. Given he had £32 10s 9d on his person at the time of his arrest (an equivalent to over £2,000 in today's money), it seems unlikely his motive was financial gain and we can only speculate on his reasons for doing so. He was sentenced to twelve months hard labour on the 5th of April 1886 and was initially sent to Holloway Prison. On the 19th April 1886 he was sent to Chelmsford Prison but on the 21st of May he attempted suicide and was transferred to the Essex County Asylum. On the 26th May 1886 he was certified insane by their medical officer E H Carter. The asylum records state the cause of the insanity as "fretting about business and family".

And that Jacob was:

rambling and incoherent talking, restlessness and insomnia".

The episode lasted about three weeks. In addition to these comments Temporary Warder Wade stated he had attempted suicide by strangling himself and that he was: "shouting, restless and talking at night. Violence. Incessantly talking of imaginary people.

And it's reported on the 3rd June 1886 that:

He is in a state of melancholia, cries without adequate cause — is very despondent from the fact that he attempted suicide by strangulation at Gaol and that a brother committed suicide and insanity is hereditary is in his family. I consider him suicidal and insane. He is in fair health and condition.

The suicide the notes refer to was that of his brother, Abraham, who committed suicide on the 28th of May 1875. Abraham had initially attempted to slit his own throat but had died from hanging, with Jacob discovering the body.

After his health improved Jacob was released two months early on the 3rd February 1887 and returned to the family business at 36 Middlesex Street. There he continued living until he was removed to the Stone Asylum on the 14th August 1890. The Stone Asylum was the City of London Lunatic Asylum and as an aside his committal papers were signed by Dr H J Sequeira, who was the brother of George William Sequeira, the first doctor to arrive at Mitre Square following the murder of Catherine Eddowes. Dr Sequeira reported:

Known patient several years, formerly shrewd businessman, now quite incapable of earning on same. Giving wrong change and money back for things bought. Says he feels a something within him, impelling him to take everything he sees. Feels that if he is not restrained he will do some violence to someone. Complains of hearing strange noises. Facts communicated by others' viz.:- Sarah Levy 36 Middlesex Street, wife, deposes — That he has nearly ruined her business, being quite incapable of taking care of money, making away with every penny he can put his hands on. Orders goods indiscriminately and is continually taking other people's goods, carrying them off. Wanders away from home for hours without any purpose. Does not sleep at night, raves he is continually fancying someone is going to do him bodily harm. The said Jacob Levy appeared to me to be in a fit condition of bodily health to be removed to an asylum, hospital or licensed house.

Further notes reveal that Jacob was 5' 3" and weighed 129lbs (9 stone 3lbs) upon his committal. His body condition is described as good, but he had numerous, deeply stained scratches with copper discolouration which indicated he was suffering from syphilis. From his entry into the asylum to his death nearly a year later on the 29th July 1891 we have the following account (which I have paraphrased for ease of reading):

21st August 1890 - felt compelled to do acts contrary to the dictates of his conscience by a power which he cannot withstand.

27th August - well-behaved and now sleeping

4th September - slight improvement, Jacob is asking if he can go home

26th October - depressed and crying without reason. Left pupil was larger than right

8th November - suffered an epileptic seizure, but the convulsions were only on his left side. His left pupil being also much enlarged

15th July 1891 - losing weight now 8 stone 7lb and pupils now a very different in size

22nd July - help needed to dress himself, is unable to feed himself

29th July - suffered another epileptic attack, became very weak and died just before 8pm this evening. Cause of death given as 'general paralysis of the insane' that he'd had for some years

There are several high-level facets to the Levy suspect theory, all of which are circumstantial. We have his family background, his experience with the use of a knife and the fact that his brother Abraham attempted to slit his own throat which has been suggested as the inspiration for the methodology of the murders. Indeed, Jacob himself described his brother's death as 'cut-throat' to the doctors at the asylum. The timing of the murders also followed the death of Jacob's mother Caroline in May 1888, which suggests this may have been a catalyst.

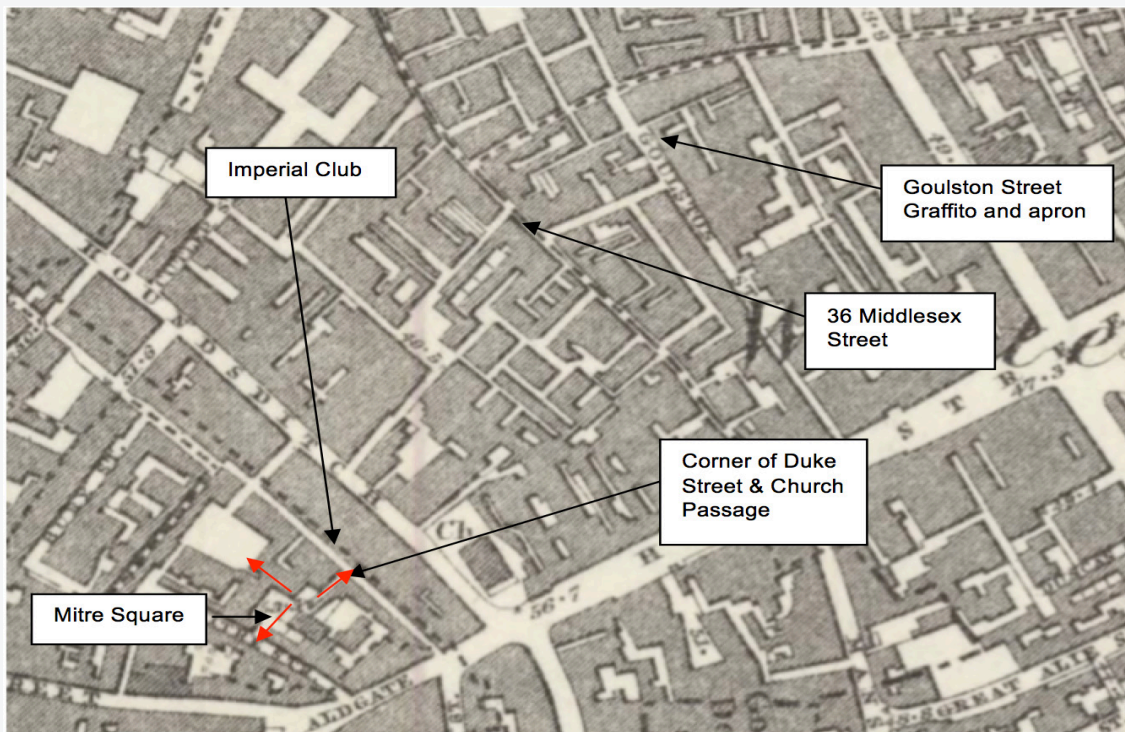
More nuanced arguments come from the circumstances surrounding the death of Catherine Eddowes in Mitre Square on the 30th September 1888. Three men, Joseph Hyam Levy (a butcher), Joseph Lawende (a cigarette maker) and Harry Harris (a furniture dealer) were returning home from a night out at the Imperial Club on Duke's Place at around 01.35am. When they passed the corner of Duke Street and Church Passage (which led to Mitre Square) they saw a man and a woman through the darkness. Following Catherine's murder, the police made house-to-house enquiries and the three men disclosed what they had seen. The Press subsequently found out and on the 9th October 1888 the *Evening News* stated:

"Mr. Joseph Levy is absolutely obstinate and refuses to give us the slightest information. He leaves one to infer that he knows something, but that he is afraid to be called on the inquest. Hence he assumes a knowing air."

Levy was however called as a witness at the inquest on the 11th October 1888. He was unable to give the court a description of either person other than to say that he estimated the man was around three inches taller than the woman. He is also recorded as saying:

"Look there, I don't like going home by myself when I see those characters about."

The seeming reluctance on the part of Joseph and the ambiguity of his reported statement has created intrigue following Neil and Tracy l'Anson's confirmation that Joseph and Jacob were in fact cousins. Jacob's father Joseph and Joseph's father Hyam were brothers, both sons of a Hyam Levy. Joseph's mother was Frances Levy, who had owned the butcher's shop prior to Jacob at 36 Middlesex Street. At the time of the murder Joseph ran a butcher's shop at 1 Hutchinson Street around sixty yards away from 36 Middlesex Street. It therefore seems entirely possible that Joseph and Jacob knew one another, and if the man on the corner was Jacob this would explain why Joseph was reluctant to identify him – which in itself then opens a can of worms with regard to the potential of Jacob being Sir Robert Anderson's suspect and the person identified at the



Seaside Home in accordance with the account of Donald Swanson.

The Goulston Street Graffito then comes into play. At some point between 02.20am and 02.55am a piece of apron worn by Catherine Eddowes was found near the stairwell of 108-119 Wentworth Buildings in Goulston Street below chalked writing on a wall:

“The Juwes are the men that will not be blamed for nothing”

This is viewed as significant by theorists because Goulston Street is only a few minutes walk from Mitre Square. It is estimated Catherine Eddowes was murdered between 01.30am and 01.45am although this timing is approximate. There were three exit routes from Mitre Square: through Church Passage to Duke Street, through an enclosed walkway to St James’s Place and out onto Mitre Street (these are highlighted in red above):

As you can see, two of the routes would most probably pass 36 Middlesex Street should they be going towards Goulston Street. This is viewed as significant as Jacob’s brother Isaac lived in the Wentworth Buildings where the apron was found.

There are additional points to the theory, such as Jacob’s wife confirming he was a night-owl and Detective Inspector Robert Sagar stating the perpetrator was an insane butcher from Aldgate, but these aspects are essentially ornamentation. Little is made of the other murders and whilst the

theory drew considerable interest following publication of the I’Anson’s book, interest has waned. There have been few developments since that point, which is I think in part due to the lack of online proponents who could push the theory any further.

Suzanne Huntington is a writer and researcher based in Shropshire, England. She is the author of the soon-to-be published book ‘Thames Torso Murders-Fact or Fiction?’

Rippercast: 2018 East End Conference talk by Tracy I’Anson
<https://www.casebook.org/podcast/listen.html?id=211>

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<http://www.ripperologist.co.uk>

‘Jacob the Ripper: The Case Against Jacob Levy’ by Tracy and Neil I’Anson.
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<https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/persons-of-interest-or-actual-suspects/jacob-levy>

Jacob Levy: Profiler Pat Brown’s Jack the Ripper Top Suspect
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ2mYsvoHGM&t=71s>

House of Mystery Radio Show: Jacob The Ripper–Tracy I’Anson
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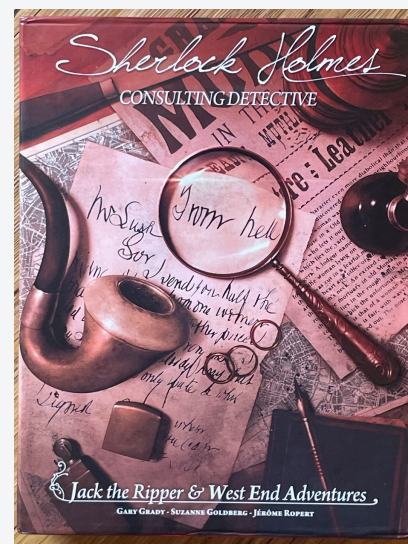
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 OS London - London VII.66 Revised: 1894, Published: 1896.

Why We Should Study

RIPPERATURE

By Gracie Bain

A couple of years ago, I visited a family member in Colorado. During the trip, we went to a local game store, and amongst the diverse selection, I saw the 1-8 player game called *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective: Jack the Ripper & the West End Murders*. On the back of the box, the blurb stated, “Women of dubious virtue have been murdered in the Whitechapel district, and the authorities are on edge. The mysterious killer has been dubbed Jack the Ripper by the newspapers. Will you unmask him before Sherlock Holmes does? Discover four cases playable as a full story.” The game contained clues, newspapers, and other facsimiles. Fascinated, I made room in my suitcase for the game (read: I may have left some clothes in Colorado) and took it home. After playing all four cases (they grouped the murders of Catherine Eddowes and Elizabeth Stride into one case) and about ten hours of gameplay, I am sad to say I did not solve the crime. However, the game did make me think. As I read through the detailed descriptions of the five women’s murders and watched my family reenact one of the murders to decide which dominant hand someone would need to use to perform the mutilations, I thought about what it meant that my family and I spent so much time on this game.



Ripperature, or fictionalizations of the Whitechapel murders, has been a genre since 1888 and continues today. These are texts like “The Whitechapel Murders: Or, On the Track of the Fiend,” published on December 31, 1888, where the American detective Clint West follows the murderer based on Nicolai Wassili. Ripperature also includes more contemporary media like the video “Jack the Ripper vs. Hannibal Lecter” (2015) by the Epic Rap Battles of History YouTube channel, where the consensus in the comment section is that Hannibal Lecter had the more impressive rhymes. It also includes novels like *Stalking Jack the Ripper* (2016) by Kerri Maniscalco, where a teenage forensic scientist unofficially hunts the killer while growing up as a Victorian woman. Ripperature is also interactive texts, such as video games like *Jack the Ripper* (2004), a point-and-click game where you try to solve the murders, the board game *Letters from Whitechapel* (2011), where one player plays as Jack the Ripper, and the London walking tours one can take even now. Ripperature is everywhere.

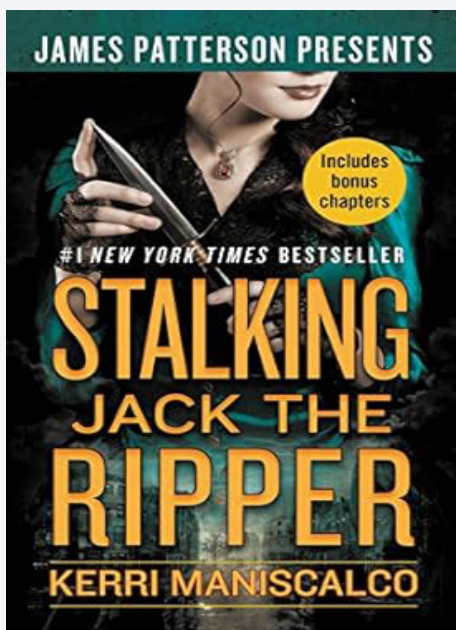
There are many reasons why such a large number of adaptations exist: we don’t know the identity of the killer for certain, and the murders of the five women occurred at a specific cultural moment where newspaper reporting, women’s rights, and many other social factors were evolving rapidly. Additionally, the pervasiveness of the figure of Jack the Ripper is equally evident when we think about the legacy of this story on contemporary true crime. When a violent murder against women happens, the crime is sometimes described as “ripper-like.” Additionally, contemporary serial killers have been named after Jack the Ripper, such as Peter Sutcliffe, known as the Yorkshire Ripper.

The story of Jack the Ripper and the murders of Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly have gained an almost mythlike status in popular cultural media. Anyone can find a plethora of available adaptations. Wikipedia has a long list, including movies, books, music, and sports.

Presumably, everyone reading this is familiar with the story of Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly and their murderer. We know that their deaths were sensationalized. Within academic spaces, Ripperature could be easily dismissed as a genre that panders to the popular. However, I would argue that fiction about the Whitechapel murders is an important avenue of study because popular media’s fascination with the story reflects the way we digest narratives of violence today.

There are too many examples of Ripperature to get into in this short article. However, we can briefly look at one recent example: *Stalking Jack the Ripper*. In the book, Audrey Rose plays the part of a forensic detective who tries to solve the Whitechapel murders. Though the book is in the Ripperature genre, it is mostly a young adult romance between Audrey Rose and the witty but frustrating Thomas Cresswell. I won't spoil the end, but Audrey Rose realizes Jack the Ripper is someone she loves, as the book's blurb explains. Audrey Rose is frustrating at times, though she seems to mean well. She is genuinely concerned for the women of Whitechapel, though it is difficult for her to reconcile that concern with the desire to protect the people she loves.

For this article, I have other goals besides analyzing the intricacies of the book. Instead, I am interested in what the popularity of this novel means. The book has 145,963 ratings on Goodreads, with an average of 3.96. It has an average of 4.4 on Amazon, with 5,757 reviews. The hashtag #stalkingjacktheripper has 31.8 million views on TikTok. Young people are reading this book. Even more, they are using these platforms to comment on the novel's themes and have real conversations about important topics like gender, class, and science.



Stalking Jack the Ripper is a bildungsroman set against the backdrop of the murders of the five victims. Their murders and mutilations are an odd event to pair with a novel that arguably focuses more on flirtation between two teenagers than the victims. We could dismiss this novel because it participates in the YA genre. Indeed, I think any discussion about *Stalking Jack the Ripper* should be framed within the ethical implications of this. However, like Ripperature, its success is precisely the reason to study it. The novel has started many conversations about the treatment of the victims and how we talk about women and true crime. The evidence can be seen in its popularity on various social media platforms and the comment sections. I can also speak to this from my own experience. I had a group of students read this novel for a detective fiction class. I can't overstate the amount of discussion it generated about the crimes, the cultural context, and how we fictionalize violence against women today.

The story of the Whitechapel murders has continuously been reproduced in film, novels, video games, and other transmedia channels. Using *Stalking Jack the Ripper* as an example, we can see that these texts are incredibly popular. We should be studying texts that combine the narrative myth of the Whitechapel murders with genres like YA or mediums like board games because it can tell us about the process of combining fact, fiction, and form. As popular culture, Jack the Ripper fictionalizations are often important sites for analysis and should be studied as such.

Gracie Bain is a PhD candidate studying literature at the University of Arkansas, USA. Her research explores the intersections between Neo-Victorian literature, gender, and the monstrous, as well as fictional adaptations of the Whitechapel murders and its influence on contemporary culture. She is the writer and host of the podcast Ripperature: Building the Myth.

SIX QUESTIONS WITH... GRACIE BAIN

Interview by Madeleine Keane



1. What drew you to your chosen dissertation topic?

I'll be honest, I fought against the topic for a while. I began my academic career as someone who looked at Victorian novels only. But I've always been interested in the weirder parts of Victorian literature—the monstrous, the criminal, and the deviant—and how people are gendered in those stories. This led me to read about some of my favorite Victorian villains in neo-Victorian literature (contemporary texts set in the Victorian period), like *Edwin Drood* and *Dracula*. I simultaneously began researching Victorian criminals like Maria Manning and Constance Kent and how they are fictionalized for a class. I became fascinated with neo-Victorian crime literature and how historical figures are fictionalized. At first, I refused to write about the most obvious example of a historical Victorian villain—Jack the Ripper—because, frankly, I didn't think I had the stomach to write about the brutal murder and mutilation of Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly. After reading and watching many examples of neo-Victorian crime fiction, I couldn't ignore the number of times the Whitechapel murders and murderer appeared. So, I started thinking about why we were fascinated with this story, why we keep fictionalizing this story, and what those answers mean for our current true crime climate. And I think the answers to those questions can tell us a lot about how we think about victims, specifically female victims, today.

2. What's your research/creative process like?

I look at my process as going under two major headings: research/writing and recording/editing. The research/writing part mirrors traditional dissertation writing. I decide what text I want to write about, then start researching. Typically, I consult a file with all the notes I've ever taken on academic texts with Scrivener and search by the keywords I've tagged each set of notes with. Then, I look for newer academic or popular sources to incorporate. Once I've outlined and decided the direction I want the script to take, I make a draft (usually 25-30 pages long). That draft then receives feedback from my director, then I make the required edits and revisions to be reread by my director. This process is repeated however many necessary times, then I start recording.

The recording is the fun part! I have an unused closet in my home that I have poorly macgyvered into a "podcasting studio." Incidentally, there is no light in there, so I use a desk lamp on the floor, and the door will lock if you close it the wrong way. I can't tell you how much audio I have of me cursing as I spent ten minutes trying to open the door. After I record in one take, I edit my audio, then add the miscellaneous stuff like transitions, voice actors, etc.

Then I start the process over again with each episode!

3. Based on what I gathered, your podcast is part of your dissertation. What made you choose that medium, and what do you like and/or dislike most about it?

Good question! Jack the Ripper fiction has saturated mass media in numerous forms. When I type "Jack the Ripper" into Goodreads, the site shows over 1,000 results. When I use the same search parameters in Google, the search engine shows articles ranging from claims of the identity of the unknown killer, sketches of the crime and the suspected killer, and numerous links to YouTube videos about the case. Our obsession with the actual case and fictionalizing it is not new. Fictionalizations began in 1888 with dime novels like *The Whitechapel Murders; Or, on the Track of the Fiend*, and to an extent, even the newspaper reports were sensationalized. The narrative of Jack the Ripper has continually been reproduced today, such as the video game *Sherlock Holmes vs. Jack the Ripper* (2009) and the German film *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1929).

So, we know people are talking, reading about, and researching Jack the Ripper outside the academy in droves. Traditionally, PhD dissertations are not read by many people, which is probably not that surprising. Mostly because paywalls usually hide them, and they are not written for the general public.

However, we know the public participates in Ripperature from the number of popular adaptations. The university system is increasingly being asked to reconsider what counts as scholarship and the best practices for keeping visible and reaching the public. I chose the podcast format because that was the best way to have conversations about this cultural phenomenon for people who

specialize in neo-Victorian literature in the university system and people who may have just heard of Jack the Ripper from a random television show. Also, I really wanted my family to read my work; honestly, they would not read a dissertation manuscript. But they would listen to a podcast. Well, my least favorite part is having to listen to my own voice and my Southern accent repeatedly, but my favorite part of the podcasting process has been the public nature of it. I've met so many people! I also really appreciate the creative process of making a podcast. I love research and writing, but podcasting requires a different set of creative skills.

4. What is your favorite part of what you're working on?

What is really cool about studying true crime and adaptation in general is that almost everyone I talk to about this project has heard the name "Jack the Ripper," which wouldn't necessarily happen with other dissertation projects. Once we start talking about what they know about the crime, it quickly becomes a conversation about what they think they know and how most of that information comes from the fictionalizations they've read or watched. This then inevitably leads to a conversation about gender and fictionalizing the five murdered women. What/who do we focus on when creating or adapting this story? The question has really become my focus.

5. What are your future plans for this project?

My first plan is to take a very long nap after graduation, but after that, I'd love to continue the podcast. I already have other episodes mapped out! Additionally, I'd love to expand the content to interviews with other people researching the subject or even creators of some of the texts I study. Eventually, I'd like to create episodes focusing on other texts that fictionalize female historical criminals like Amelia Dyer and Constance Kent.

I'd also like to write a manuscript inspired by my dissertation that expands the two main "subjects" of my podcast, Jill the Ripper and the detective figure, to other chapters that focus on other aspects of Ripperature, like interactive texts or Ripperature monsters like zombies and vampires.

But first, nap!

6. Anything else you want people to know about you?

I am an avid coffee drinker, and as cool as I think it sounds, I can't drink black coffee (sugar-free vanilla latte with oat milk every time). I am also a huge baker. I started in quarantine, like a lot of the world, and have continued it. I even made my friend's wedding cake! I do still require my partner to be there for me during tense moments, like stacking a cake or making meringue, for emotional support. My goal is to one day make a three-tiered cake that I don't immediately want to throw away because it isn't perfect.

Ripper items once belonging to Inspector Joseph Helson sell at auction for £15,500

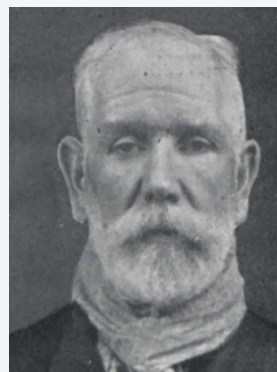
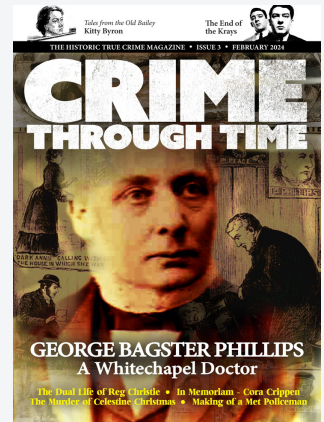
This past March, Whitten & Laing, an estate agency in Exeter, sold at auction Jack the Ripper related items donated by the great grandson of Joseph Helson for the astonishing amount of £15,500. Helson, the local inspector for J Division's CID, took charge of the investigation into the murder of Mary Ann Nichols on 31 August, 1888. After arriving at the mortuary that morning, he watched as Nichols body was undressed and noticed the words "Lambeth Workhouse, P.R." labeled on her petticoat. This he cut off, hoping it would aid in the identification of the then unknown victim. He was also likely present when Nichols' body was next covered with a sheet, leaving only her face exposed, and photographed by Joseph Martin. We now know that Martin took at least two photographs of Nichols, each at slightly different angle, as the auction lot includes a never before seen duplicate print of Nichols captured a little to her left. Other items in the small collection are Helson's handcuffs, his walking stick, newspaper clippings, and copies of the 'Dear Boss' letter and 'Saucy Jack' postcard. These last items, along with the Nichols photograph, were reproduced and widely distributed to police stations and their officers. Interestingly, while Helson is most associated with the hunt for the suspect 'Leather Apron', the collection includes two photographs of Michael Ostrog, a petty thief and con artist, who also happened to be insane. Although his name does appear in the Macnaghten memoranda, later it was established that Ostrog was incarcerated in France during the period of the Whitechapel Murders. While no new victim photographs have emerged in decades, this latest print appears to be much faded, which is unfortunate. But that certainly didn't stop deep pocketed bidders from throwing a massive amount of money at what, outside of the Nichols photograph, is to this onlooker a rather unexciting collection. One hopes that even more interesting items from the time of the Whitechapel murders will emerge out of dusty attics for us to dream of purchasing for an ungodly sum. - *Jonathan Menges*





Looking back at past editions of Ripperologist for inspiration, I was surprised to learn the last 'I Beg To Report' column appeared in Issue 145 in August 2015. Why it ceased to be I cannot say, but henceforth the column will once again become a regular feature. For those of you unfamiliar with the format, 'I Beg To Report' essentially analyses all the key developments and trends in Ripperology since the previous edition. Given the length of time which has passed since Ripperologist last landed on your doorsteps, this article will be more of a generic overview from the previous six months or so, an acknowledgement of the people and stories that have impacted on our hallowed subject matter.

Ironically, my first juncture is the Ripperologist journal itself. After a gap of nearly two and a half years Ripperologist is re-launching and having a bit of a revamp. Few of us would disagree Ripperologist is Ripperology's flagship title and it's good to have it back. It's also worthy of note that Adam Wood, Ripperologist's previous editor-in-chief and owner of Mango Books, upon hanging up his Ripperologist boots has launched his own True Crime magazine; Crime Through Time with the specific aim of bringing fresh insight into historic cases. We wish him every success in his new endeavour.



Our community, like any community, has joiners and leavers. Some last a few days or even hours, others are in it for the long haul. A few are so intertwined with the subject that they have become part of the story itself, but for all there is one commonality of experience; all were newbies once. It is therefore encouraging to report that a small but dedicated group of New Kids on the Block emerged from the shadows in 2023. Although already part of Ripperology, Jose Oranto, Jurriaan Maessen and Jonathan Tye stepped into the spotlight with aplomb. Of note was their collaboration on the life of Edward Buckley but we should also acknowledge their individual efforts in researching Mary Jane Kelly, gang-related violence and the location of key players throughout the period we are interested in.

The East End Conference, held in October 2023, admirably demonstrated how our community functions. The conference has now clearly established itself as the de facto go-to event of the year, with an eclectic mix of speakers and topics including Mark Ripper, Susan Parry, Sarah Wise, Jonathan Tye and Sarah Bax-Horton. The one thing however that everyone came away with agog, was a superb Q&A with Donald Rumbelow, whose insight into the fledgling days of modern Ripperology left the audience in want of so much more.



Research in general seems to be on the up after a few dull years (let's be honest here) and there's a distinct re-emergence of enthusiasm, particularly where the forums are concerned, I'm heartened to see new avenues opening up and the breath of new life given to older topics. As I sit here and type there's a considerable amount of activity on jtrforums.com by Debra Arif and Jurriaan Maessen on the Morgesterns, whilst over on Casebook.org 'Charlie' is leading the way investigating the Paris Torso of 1892. The level of anticipation in these and other topics is gathering momentum and I suspect 2024 will become a real researchers delight.

Whilst these sources have been considerably more active of late, the same cannot be said for other mediums, Sarah Bax-Horton's 'One-Armed Jack: Uncovering the Real Jack the Ripper' being the only publication of note in recent months. No new documentaries or TV series to whet your whistle, in fact little has been mentioned on television or the newspapers apart from the rather bizarre re-emergence of Frederick Abberline's walking stick along with the theory that the topper is an image of Jack. Personally, I think it looks more like the Chinese Emperor Gaozu of Han but there you go...

The Great American Doctor and Anatomical Knowledge

Part 1 – Canada West and the Seismic Event

By Michael Hawley

A common question asked when discussing the Whitechapel murders is, “Did Jack the Ripper have anatomical knowledge?” The more pertinent issue is why this question was asked in the first place. What should be asked is, “Was Jack the Ripper’s primary motive the desire to possess specific organs?” The killer not only extracted internal organs out of three of his victims, i.e., he eviscerated them, he also took these organs from the crime scene. After the Whitechapel fiend took Chapman’s uterus and police surgeon Dr. George Bagster Phillips concluded that Chapman’s killer had anatomical knowledge, and after hearing rumors about “*an American*” requesting uterus specimens from the sub-curator of a pathological museum, Coroner Wynne Baxter publicly proposed at the inquest the possibility that the object of the murder was to acquire a uterus. Baxter did not suggest that the rumors were true, but that the demand for this organ “*may have incited some abandoned wretch to possess*” them. In order to find and extract the uterus from a female body “*with no meaningless cuts*,” and do so with lightning speed, Phillips and Baxter were convinced the fiend must have had anatomical knowledge. Jack the Ripper wanted the uterus.

This revised question is actually quite significant. Nearly all proposed Jack the Ripper suspects had no reason to possess any particular internal organ. In view of this, a killer having an agenda to obtain a specific organ from “*the almost living body*,” as journalist George R. Sims phrased it in the *Sunday Referee* in 1907 after receiving information from his Scotland Yard sources, does not support the prospects of these suspects having been the killer.

Still, there is the possibility that the killer had no interest in taking any particular organ, as concluded by esteemed police surgeon Dr. Thomas Bond. Bond stated in his report to Assistant Commissioner Anderson dated November 10, 1888, “*in all the murders, the object was mutilation*,” which was, “*due to homicidal and erotic mania*.” Evisceration was merely part of the mutilation experience and seeking out a specific organ had nothing to do with gaining homicidal and erotic gratification. It is not a surprise that Bond concluded this, because he had just completed the post mortem on the excessively mutilated body of Mary Kelly where her intestines were cut in an “*unprofessional manner*.” Since he concluded that Mary Kelly’s killer also killed Nichols, Chapman, and Eddowes, by extension mutilation was the object of those murders, as well. This may possibly have been the reason why Dr. Bond stated in his post mortem report that Kelly’s heart was “*absent*,” as opposed to being “*missing*.” The focus should be on the mutilation and not the taking of the heart.

While some experts are convinced Bond was correct, there are problems with his conclusion. First, positioning the intestines over the right shoulder of the bodies of both Chapman and Eddowes suggests the offender was not in an elevated emotional state of mania mutilating his victim, but was deliberate and controlled in his actions. He was purposely seeking out the uterus, which was positioned underneath those very intestines. Second, Dr. Frederick “Gordon” Brown, police surgeon for the City of London Police and involved with the Eddowes murder, was convinced the killer “*must have had a good deal of [anatomical] knowledge*,” because the kidney was taken. If a killer was just ripping out organs in a state of mania, the kidney was “*apt to be overlooked*,” because it was covered by a membrane. Third, Catherine Eddowes was eviscerated in just minutes in near-total darkness. The killer would likely have experienced little to no homicidal and erotic gratification in mutilation, especially when his mind was on completing the task before a police constable arrived. Even taking

an organ as a trophy to later re-live the hurried event would have been nearly pointless. Fourth, Jack the Ripper escaped through the streets holding onto irrefutable evidence of his guilt, knowing full well that he may encounter -and be stopped by- one of the many ever-present police constables walking his beat. Why chance being caught on the street with unimportant, yet overly damning evidence? This is especially the case, since law enforcement was on high-alert for such a killer. Jack the Ripper discarded the piece of bloody apron in his haste as he left the Eddowes crime scene, but he kept the organs.

What Dr. Bond, and for that matter Dr. Phillips, Coroner Baxter, and Dr. Brown, was completely ignorant about is the results of exhaustive research on serial offender motives today. This includes the study of actual serial killers and, in this case, those who extract internal organs from their victims. There are two relevant facts. First, the usual motive for serial offenders of this type is what modern experts call hedonism, specifically, necrophilia. Professor of forensic medicine Anil Aggrawal classified serial offenders with the sexually-motivated necrophilia into eight distinct categories, although he explains there are also nonsexually-motivated necrophiliacs.¹ According to Aggrawal, the taking of the organs fits into a category involving cannibalism, since organ extraction almost always involves the offender ingesting human tissue and/or organs. The New Orleans serial killer and cannibal Sean Vincent Gillis had files on Russian necrophilia. Cannibalism does indeed have a connection with the Whitechapel murders. Of the hundreds of letters claimed to have come from Jack the Ripper, the letter taken most seriously by experts is the From hell letter, especially since it came with a kidney preserved in wine. The author of the letter stated that he fried a piece of the kidney and ate it.

Second, necrophiles show they frequently have more than one serial offender motive, such as psychological gratification from necrophilia plus power and control.² The sexually-motivated necrophiliac and cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer ate his victims' organs to possess them and control them by making them part of him. Dr. Bond was so convinced the psychological gratification of mutilation was the only motive that the offender could not have been after specific organs.

If one of the motives for Jack the Ripper was the desire to obtain specific organs, the only major suspect who was connected to this is Dr. Francis Tumblety, known in England at the time as the great doctor or great American doctor. This is especially the case, since this extreme misogynist is connected to the very internal organs Jack the Ripper took, the uterus, the kidney, and the heart. In January 1888, the year of the murders, Tumblety told a Toronto reporter that he was constantly in dread of sudden death because of kidney and heart disease. When George Sims claimed in 1907 that some in Scotland Yard still believed this theory, they may very well have been thinking it was Tumblety. A study into how and why he gained anatomical knowledge may assist in evaluating his candidacy as having been Jack the Ripper.

The very first time Tumblety was associated with human organs specific to the Whitechapel murders was in mid-November 1888. In the Sunday edition of the *New York Sun*, London correspondent Arthur Brisbane authored extensive multi-column articles sent weekly to New York headquarters via steamship. In the November 25, 1888, Sunday edition, the article was on the Whitechapel murders titled, *Astounding Murders*, with stories he collected the week before. One of them was on Dr. Francis Tumblety's arrest and reasons why Scotland Yard suspected him,

"...is now being held because he is an erratic character, and because one theory is that some American

¹ Aggrawal, A., A new classification of necrophilia, *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 2009, v. 16, pp. 310-20.

² Nucleus, Herta Oberheuser "horrific operations", The True Crime Database, <https://www.thetruecrimedatabase.com/case_file/herta-oberheuser/>.

medical institution wants specimens of the female uterus, which it happens that Jack the Ripper often takes from the bodies of his victims.”

Arthur Brisbane’s article predates the famous December 2, 1888, *New York World* article where eyewitness Charles Dunham claimed to have seen Tumblety’s anatomical collection of human organs, notably, his favored uterus specimens, during an illustrated medical lecture in 1861. Brisbane was finishing up his 3-year tenure as the London correspondent, being replaced just weeks later by Frank White. Brisbane was well-respected by his British counterparts and had many connections. In fact, one week earlier Brisbane personally interviewed Assistant Commissioner Anderson in his office at Scotland Yard, stating in their November 14, 1888, edition, “*Though extremely busy, Dr. Anderson, the head of the hour of the Metropolitan Police, has been kind enough, on knowing that I was a representative of The Sun, to give me a few minutes of his just now priceless time...*” Either Brisbane connected Tumblety to collecting uterus specimens out of the blue or he spoke with someone as he walked the halls of Scotland Yard. It certainly does corroborate George Sims’ 1907 claim.

Tumblety’s first reported link to actual human organs occurred twenty eight years earlier in 1860. In December 1888, a St. John newspaper reporter hired by the *San Francisco Call* interviewed elderly residents about the now infamous Jack the Ripper suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety operating a quack doctor office in their New Brunswick town in 1860. The reporter also searched the archives of old newspapers and discovered the following peculiar event, which occurred just hours before Tumblety sneaked across the border to the US under the cover of darkness successfully avoiding manslaughter charges. The reporter stated,

“During the inquest, and before the Doctor [Francis Tumblety] fled, those present at the hearing were horrified at the nearly successful attempt to abstract the heart and liver of the dead man from the receptacle in which they lay.” [Author emphasis added] ³

Dr. Francis Tumblety was caught attempting to steal organs from a deceased St. John patient he treated just days earlier. The patient’s name was James Portmore, a carpenter who came to Tumblety’s Indian Herb Doctor office in late September 1860 for medical treatment.⁴ Tumblety diagnosed his illness and prescribed to him expensive medicine. Portmore obediently took the medicine that evening, became extremely ill, and then died. This automatically prompted a coroner’s inquest in order to determine the cause of his death. In order to see what Portmore ingested, a postmortem examination was performed on the morning of September 27, 1860. This explains why the heart and liver had already been extracted from the body. The jurors determined Tumblety was indeed responsible for Portmore’s death and recommended he be charged with manslaughter.⁵ His exit across the border had significant financial consequences abruptly ended a highly lucrative five-year Canadian business venture, which started in April 1856.

Although attempting to steal the organs taken out of a man he had just treated to improve his health seems like deviant and senseless behavior, Tumblety’s actions throughout the five years of his Canadian travels from 1856 to 1860 actually point to this organ-acquisition behavior as being a strategic business decision; albeit a callous one. Tumblety’s ignorance in the practice of medicine in the Province of Upper Canada in 1856 may have sparked a trajectory that eventually caused Scotland Yard to suspect him as Jack the Ripper in 1888.

According to the *Rochester Union*, May 9, 1965, Tumblety began working for Indian Herb Doctor Rudolph J. Lyons while in Rochester. Lyons was first listed in a Rochester City Directory in 1853, so Tumblety likely worked under him from around 1853 to early 1856. R. J. Lyons did not operate out of just one office, but main-

³ St. Louis Globe-Democrat, January 5, 1889.

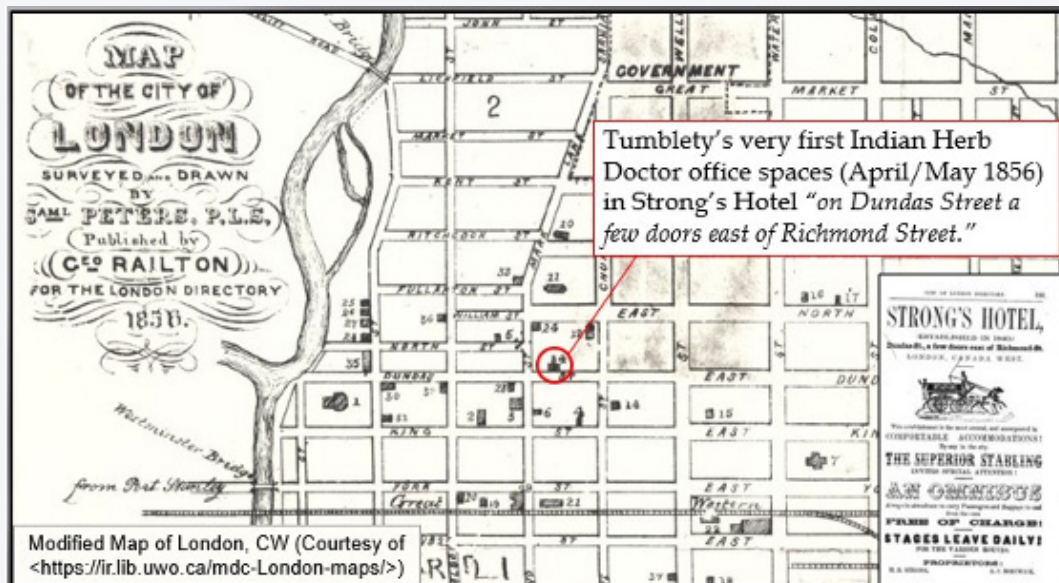
⁴ American Medical Times, November 3, 1860.

⁵ The Morning Freeman, September 29, 1860.

tained a home office in Rochester and traveled throughout the month in small towns and cities throughout Western New York opening up a temporary office in a hotel for a day or two. It was an area of operation, or business territory. In the *Westfield Republican*, August 20, 1856, he stated, “Dr. Lyons will be absent from his office in Rochester, in order to attend to his country patients, at the following dates of each and every month: 1st, 2nd, 15th, 16th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th.”

Tumblety placed his first ever ad in the *Troy Daily Times*, March 9, 1856, a city in eastern New York next to Albany. The personal stated, “A Dr. Tumblety (*what a name!*) is performing marvelous cures in Rochester. He cures scrofula in fifteen minutes, and small pox before it breaks out!”

Tumblety was still in Rochester, but was about to separate from Lyons. Since the city of Troy was outside of Lyons’ business territory, Tumblety may have been planning to start up his own business in a separate area of operation, thus, would not compete with his mentor. He did indeed set off on his own two months later, but instead of east of Lyons’ territory he selected west across the border into what was known as the Province of Upper Canada, more commonly known as Canada West (CW). It is today’s Ontario, Canada, Province. In early April 1856, an extremely motivated 25-year-old Francis Tumblety walked off the train at the London, CW, Great Western Railway train depot and gazed around at the city he chose to begin his lucrative profession as an advertising Indian herb doctor selling his “vegetable medicines.”⁶



After renting out office rooms at Mr. Strong’s Hotel in London, Tumblety eventually made his way to their three local newspapers, the *London Atlas*, *Free Press*, and *Prototype*, where he spent liberally on advertisements.⁷ In his first advertisements, Tumblety also attempted to hook readers with the following statement:

*“Invalids, and all those suffering under lingering diseases, will find it to their interest to give the Indian Doctor a call. If he can do you no good, he will frankly tell you so, and not charge you for advice.”*⁸ [Author emphasis added]

An important revelation in this statement is that Tumblety did indeed charge for advice. Further along in John Magee’s testimonial, he stated that Tumblety charged “five dollars for a cure.” This means that Tumblety en-

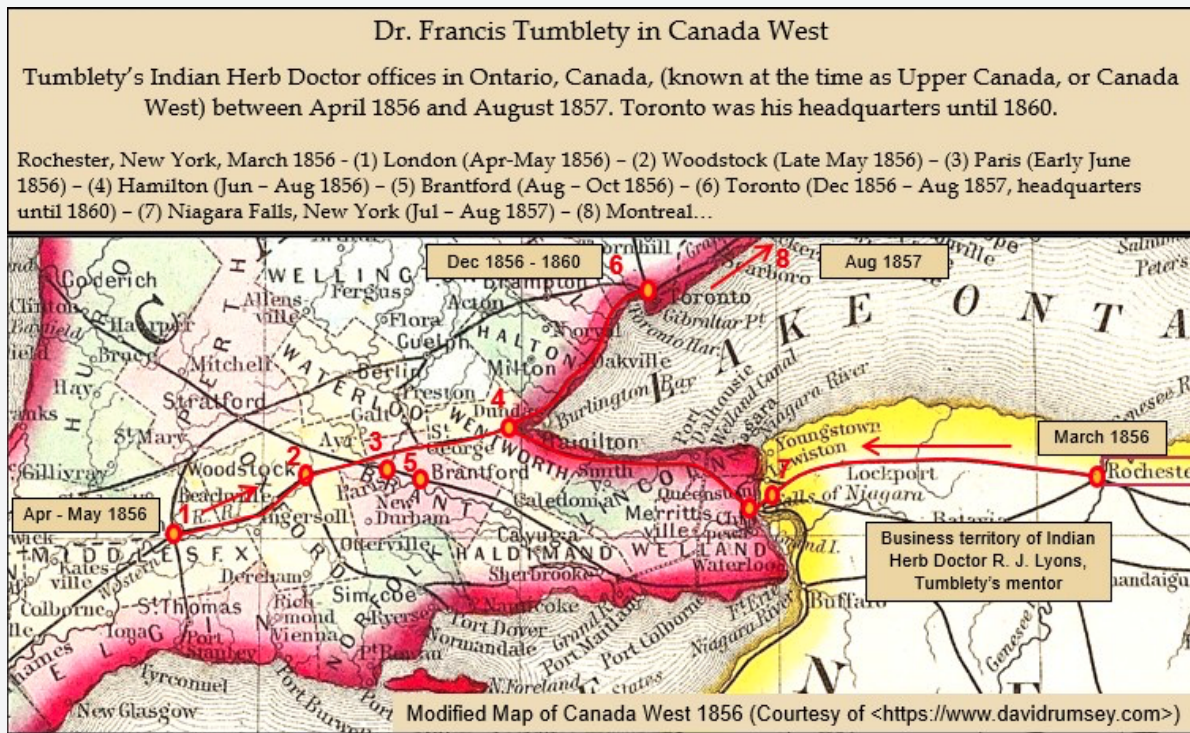
6 Tumblety, F., *A Few Passages in the Live of Dr. Francis Tumblety*, 1866, Cincinnati.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

gaged in the practice of physic, i.e., medicine, meaning, he acted as a doctor diagnosing and treating patients. This also means he was not acting as a pharmacist, or druggist, by merely selling patented “vegetable medicines” and giving free advice.

Tumblety stayed in London, CW, for just over a month; leaving on or about May 19, 1856, right after an unwanted incident occurred at his office when he insulted a female patient, Mrs. Carden. Because of it, Tumblety found himself in front of the London mayor, William Barker, in order to answer to his inappropriate behavior.⁹



Tumblety left London a wealthier man, then traveled east temporarily opening up offices in small towns, a practice very similar to how his mentor R.J. Lyons operated in Western New York. In each town, he placed his “Voice of Truth and Reason” ads.

 <p style="text-align: center;">Listen to the Voice of Truth and Reason and be Profited by it.</p> <p>The time has come that all who will, can escape the iron grasp of Mercury, and other mineral poisons, by calling without delay to see the well known and justly celebrated Indian Herb Doctor, F. TUMBLETY, who will remain at the Brantford House, opposite Market Square, Brantford from August 21st to October 1st, to administer those only true and safe medicines from nature's garden, which has for its author the great and all-wise Physician above!</p> <p>The following diseases can be cured by Dr. T. in the most obstinate state of their existence, viz: Disease of the Lungs, Heart, Liver, and Throat. Also, Dyspepsia, Dropsy and all diseases of the blood, such as Scrofula, Erysipelas, Salt-Rheum, Fever Sores and all other Chronic complaints of years' standing.</p> <p>P. S.—The doctor will also give particular attention to all diseases peculiar to Females and children.</p> <p>☞ The poor will be liberally considered.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Brantford, August 12, 1856. 89</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Listen to the Voice of Truth and Reason and be Profited by it.</p> <p>THE time has come that all who will can escape the iron grasp of Mercury, and other mineral poisons, by calling without delay to see the well-known and justly-celebrated Indian Herb Doctor, F. TUMBLETY, at the Burlington Hotel, King Street, East, Hamilton, where he will remain until the 15th of August, to administer those only true and safe medicines from nature's garden, which has for its author the great and Allwise Physician above!</p> <p>The following diseases can be cured by Dr. T. in the most obstinate state of their existence, viz: Disease of the Lungs, Heart, Liver and Throat. Also, Dyspepsia, Dropsy and all diseases of the blood, such as Scrofula, Erysipelas, Salt-Rheum, Fever, Sores and all other Chronic complaints of years standing.</p> <p>P. S.—The Doctor will also give particular attention to all diseases peculiar to Females and Children.</p> <p>The poor will be liberally considered.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Hamilton, June 24, 1856. d37td</p>
<p>Brantford Weekly Expositor August 29, 1856</p>	<p>Hamilton Spectator August 13, 1856</p>

⁹ London Free Press, May 6, 1856.

In June 1856, Tumblety made his way to the larger city of Hamilton, CW, where he maintained an office at the Burlington Hotel for approximately three months, then left in August 1856, opening up an office in Brantford. The reason Tumblety left Hamilton may have been because of an incident that was witnessed by a number of Hamilton residents. According to the Hamilton Spectator, November 29, 1888, Hamilton residents John Smith and a Dr. Chittenden recalled living at the

Burlington Hotel “during 1854” when Tumblety arrived “selling patent medicine on the market.”¹⁰ Although, the actual date was 1856, the fact that they accurately remembered the Burlington Hotel supports the veracity of their recollection of events. They stated that Tumblety hired a boy to barge into his office as he was treating other patients, then make a scene by crying due to a horrible toothache. Tumblety would then instantaneously cure him with a dose of medicine. The scam seemed to work until one evening Tumblety gave the young boy the wrong dose, which caused him to go into convulsions. The Hamilton residents then stated that the boy’s mother, a big Irish chambermaid, found Tumblety at the hotel and beat him, giving him a black eye and disarranged hair. The residents stated that this “made him such a laughingstock that he had to leave the city.” The significance of this event is, it is the very first time Tumblety was reported to using deception in order to further his business agenda.

Headquarters Toronto and the Seismic Shift

Tumblety finally made his way to Toronto in late November or early December 1856 and quickly placed a short introduction advertisement in the papers beginning on December 2nd up until December 12th. It stated that “The Indian Herb Doctor F. Tumblety, can be consulted at the International Hotel, Toronto, C.W., where he will remain to 1st March, 1857.” In the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, May 10, 1865, a Toronto eyewitness recalled how Tumblety promoted his involvement with Native Americans, clearly amplifying his Indian herb doctor persona:

“In front of his [Tumblety] office was displayed as a sign, a large pair of buck horns, which he claimed were presented to him by an Indian chief named “Sundown,” a savage of the plains, with whom he was intimately acquainted.”

As he charged five dollars for his medicines in London, CW, a Toronto eyewitness stated in the New York World, May 9, 1865, he did the same in Toronto, “His plan of operations consisted inviting all to consult him free of cost, the interview winding up with the sale for which five dollars was charged, and in some cases more.” On January 27, 1857, Tumblety added in his advertisement of his intentions to make Toronto his home.

“After traversing the United States and Canada, has come to make Toronto, C.W., his home for the future, where his safe and efficacious [sp] medicines, from nature’s garden, can be obtained, Consultation Free”.
[Author emphasis added]

A *New York Tribune* reporter stationed in Brantford, CW, reported in their September 29, 1857, issue seeing Tumblety in Toronto and stated he “seemed to make money fast.” The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 10, 1865, commented to the proprietors of a Buffalo newspaper, the *Buffalo Express*, contacting the Bank of Toronto, inquiring upon Francis Tumblety. The bank replied, stating, “His check is good for \$60,000 in this bank,” which is \$1,648,754 in today’s value. Tumblety had become independently wealthy within a few short years of operating out of Canada West, so establishing his main office in Toronto and making Canada West his business territory made business sense.

Two connected court cases in March 1857 created a seismic shift in the direction of Tumblety’s future

¹⁰ Brantford Daily Expositor, November 30, 1888.

plans.¹¹ These events are also arguably what sparked Tumblety's deep interest in anatomy and surgery and performing medical lectures illustrated with anatomical specimens. On March 27, 1857, Tumblety found himself in front of a Toronto police court magistrate, which had the definite possibility of him losing his lucrative Canadian-based business and even seeing prison time. According to the *Toronto Globe*, March 30, 1857, an article discovered by researcher Joe Chetcuti, the first incident involved a young man named Adolphus Binkert, a lithographer, desiring to clear his acne. He was recommended by an acquaintance to go to Tumblety "about two months ago," meaning in January 1857 to help him with his affliction.

He went and Tumblety surprised him with a diagnosis of consumption, meaning, tuberculosis. Tumblety then promised to cure him of both afflictions for a steep price. After numerous visits at a cost of over \$50 and a gold watch, Binkert read an expose' on Tumblety in the papers proclaiming that he was an "unprincipled and wicked impostor." The now angry Binkert approached Tumblety and demanded that he return his money and property, but Tumblety refused, resulting in him charging Tumblety with taking money and property under false pretenses.

The significance of this court case with Adolphus Binkert was less about Tumblety being convicted of the charge at hand and more about who the prosecution asked to re-examine Adolphus Binkert - Dr. John Grant. Dr. Grant was a faculty member of the Physicians and Surgeons of Scotland and in the employ of the Governor General of the Province of Canada, Sir Edmund W. Head. Grant was also closely aligned with the members of the medical licensing board for Upper Canada, the board responsible for allowing medical doctors to practice medicine and surgery in Canada West. According to the Medical Act of 1827, all doctors desiring to practice medicine or surgery in Upper Canada must be issued a license through an examination by the board, even if they have a valid medical diploma. This legislation regulated the practice of physic (medicine), surgery, and midwifery in the Province of Upper Canada.¹² Dr. Grant and the members of the medical licensing board based in Toronto were unaware of Tumblety's business operations in Upper Canada for the last year, since Tumblety was only placing ads in the respective local papers. Because of the Adolphus Binkert case in Toronto, however, Dr. Grant became aware of Tumblety and realized he had never approached the board for a medical license, thus, he was in violation of the Medical Act.

In Upper Canada in 1857, having a valid medical diploma from the United States did not satisfy the requirements in the Medical Act of 1827. Per the Medical Act:

"Unless an applicant held a diploma or license from a designated, bona fide British university, belonged to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of London, or had held a commission or warrant in the British forces as a military surgeon, he had to submit to the Medical Board's examination."

Submitting to the Medical Board's examination meant that at least three members of the board, who were all medical doctors licensed in Upper Canada approved by the Governor General, interviewed the candidate¹³ This meant that doctors from the United States had to undergo an oral examination before the medical board. They also reviewed relevant credentials, then if satisfied would issue a certificate for the Lieutenant Governor (After 1841, it was the Governor General) to grant a license. The reason for the Medical Act of 1827 was to reduce the number of quacks and unlicensed doctors. A quack doctor was a medical charlatan who scammed

¹¹ Toronto Globe, April 2, 1857.

¹² Baehre, R., *The Medical Profession in Upper Canada Reconsidered: Politics, Medical Reform, and Law in a Colonial Society*, 1993, Canadian Society of the History of Medicine, Carleton University <<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/cbmh.12.1.101>>.

¹³ Romano, T.M., *Professional Identity and the Nineteenth-Century Ontario Medical Profession*, 1993, History of Medicine, Queen's University.

the sick and elderly, promising false cures and remedies in exchange for money. Unlicensed doctors may have had honest intentions of healing, but because of questionable methods, a lack of governance of these doctors by the established expert community would hurt the reputation of medicine administered in Upper Canada. Dr. Grant formally lodged a complaint on March 31, 1857, claiming that Tumblety was practicing medicine without being duly licensed. In accordance with the Medical Act, the case was adjudicated in the courts. A commentary in the April 3, 1857, issue of the *Toronto Globe* stated:

“There is no charge here of false pretences [sp], such as was alleged in the first case; the accusation simply is, that the defendant gave medicine and took payment therefore... Yet upon this charge Tumblety is seized, his person rifled, his property taken forcible possession of by the police, and he is committed to stand his trial for an offence punishable by a £25 fine, or imprisonment for six months.”

Tumblety and his attorney, Mr. J. Boulton, were in front of the police court magistrate on April 1, 1857. In this case, the prosecutors called for the deposition of eyewitness Thomas Mullen, who stated that around February 8, 1857, he went to Tumblety because of his general debilitated state. Tumblety told him he was in a bad condition in consequence of his secret habit, meaning masturbation, which he was addicted to. Mullen then admitted to Tumblety that he had a secret habit and asked what he should do. Tumblety told him that for \$20, followed by an additional \$10, he could cure him.

The magistrate was convinced that Tumblety violated the elements of the Medical Act, because he *“accepted a fee from his patient in the practice of physic.”* [Author emphasis added]

The magistrate then committed the case up to the next judicial level in front of a judge at the Court of Assize. Notice that Tumblety was not in violation of the Act for offering free-of-charge advice (as sometimes advertised) for both Binkert and Mullen, but for the practice of physic, meaning the practice of diagnosing and treating a patient. Tumblety charged them not for the medicine, but for him treating with a procedure for taking medicine after diagnosis. Tumblety was acting as a medical doctor as opposed to a druggist, or pharmacist, recommending the best medicine to take in their pharmacy then charging for the medicine.

Tumblety ultimately lost the case. When he was cross-examined on a separate court case in New York on April 1, 1861, he admitted to the defense attorney that he was convicted for practicing without a license in Toronto. An article in the May 9, 1865, issue of the *Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser*, added further detail:

“Subsequently Tumblety was arrested at Toronto on the instigation of regular faculty as a quack and he was taken to court. There he produced some kind of certificate which he had obtained from a Philadelphia College and escaped with a fine of twenty pounds, which he paid...”

The *Boston Pilot*, May 16, 1857, reproduced some of the actual dialogue in court, as recorded in the *Toronto Mirror*:

“At the sitting of the Court Mr. Read moved for judgment in the case of F. Tumblety, the Indian Herb Doctor, who was, during the present assizes, found guilty of practicing medicine without first obtaining a Canadian license, as required by the statute. His Lordship. –Francis Tumblety, you have been found guilty, under the provisions of an Act practicing physic, surgery, or mid-wifery without obtaining a license, an offence.”

“Dr. Tumblety. –I have a diploma from the Medical College of Philadelphia. The doctor then produced it.

His Lordship. –That is not sufficient. The jury, however, in rendering their verdict, have most strongly

recommended the case to the forbearance of the Court. Therefore I will not enforce the utmost penalty. The sentence of the Court is, that you pay a fine of £20 to the Queen, and remain in the custody of the sheriff until the same is paid.

Dr. Tumblety at once handed to his counsel, Mr. Eccles, an immense roll of bills, containing, it is said, between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

Mr. Eccles paid the fine to the clerk out of this huge pile, and returned the large balance to the doctor, who then left the court”

Even though Tumblety presented a diploma, real or fake, he would still have had to undergo an oral examination in front of three board members if he wanted to charge for treating patients with his patent medicines, i.e., practice physic, the source of his big money. He would not have been allowed to practice after the case and would have had to practice as a pharmacist, which is exactly what his advertisements show. Tumblety was allowed to seek out a license, and since he planned on making Toronto his home, this may very well have been his plan. The only problem is, the established medical community who comprise of the licensing board were now convinced Tumblety was a fraud.

The commentary in the April 3, 1857, issue of the *Toronto Globe* was titled, “The Medical Profession,” and it used Dr. Grant’s charge against Tumblety for practicing physic without a license to make the claim to their readers about bias in the medical profession against alternative, or nontraditional, medical practitioners. Acceptable accredited medical schools had to follow the requirements directed by the Medical Act of 1827, which meant they had to teach physic, or medicine, anatomy, surgery, and midwifery. Physic at the established traditional medical schools taught allopathic medicine, meaning to treat with the opposite, such as treat a fever (hot) with cold¹⁴ Disease was caused by the imbalance of the four fluids. Diplomas from accredited alternative medical schools were actually accepted in Canada West, such as from homeopathic medical schools where the medicine was to treat with the same, as opposed to the opposite.¹⁵ What makes a person ill also cures them. Homeopathic medical schools were still required to teach surgery and midwifery. The Homeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania (HMCP) was in Philadelphia, which obtained a charter in 1848.¹⁶ Of the botanical medical systems, such as Thomsonian, Indian herb, or root, medicine, and eclectic, only the eclectic herbal system had accredited medical schools in the 19th century; albeit just a few. Certain states, such as Ohio, did indeed issue a charter for certain eclectic medical schools, specifically, the Eclectic Medical Institute (EMI), and Pennsylvania, with the Eclectic Medical College of Pennsylvania (EMCP). This meant that it was appropriate for a physician graduating at accredited homeopathic and eclectic medical schools to sign their name with M.D. at the end.

It is not a surprise that Tumblety claimed his medical diploma came from Philadelphia, since one of the only two herbal-based medical schools was there. It makes sense that Tumblety would claim to the board a medical diploma from an eclectic medical school, since his advertisements not only promoted botanical remedies but also rejected allopathic remedies. Corroborating this is an eyewitness account of Tumblety in St. John, New Brunswick, in 1860. In the *Montreal Gazette*, November 22, 1888, the St. John resident stated that Tumblety, “purported to be an eclectic physician.” This meant there was a path for the “eclectic” Dr. Tumblety to receive a license to practice medicine in Canada West, thus in turn, give him the credentials and justification for using title of medical doctor, or MD, for the rest of his life. Incidentally, newspaper reports in the United States subsequent to the *Montreal Gazette*, November 22, 1888, such as the *New York World*, November 27, 1888,

14 Whorton, J.C., *The History of Alternative Medicine in America*, 2004, Oxford Univ. Press.

15 Loudon, I., *A Brief History of Homeopathy*, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, National Library of Medicine, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1676328/>>.

16 Philadelphia Medical History and the University of Pennsylvania, *Extinct Philadelphia Medical Schools*, University Archives and Records Center.

misread the word eclectic and published “electric.”

Actually, Tumblety fits into none of these respected 19th century botanical medical systems, even though he claimed publicly that he was an Indian Herb doctor. All honest medical practitioners, whether their approach was traditional or non-traditional, had a common goal; improving the health of their patients. While Tumblety advertised this, his true, hidden agenda was financial gain. He was a quack doctor; a conman, or confidence man, callously scamming the sick out of their money. He began his trade with a lie. Might Tumblety have been a true Indian herb doctor merely attempting to earn an honest living through questionable advertising techniques, or was he an actual quack doctor callously scamming his patients? We now have a window into how he interacted with his patients with an unsympathetic hand, deceiving them out of their money and having no remorse afterward. Recall the Toronto court appearance on March 27, 1857, when Adolphus Binkert visited Tumblety’s office for his acne problem. As recorded in the *Toronto Globe*, March 30, 1857, under sworn testimony, Binkert stated, “Tumblety felt my pulse and shook his head, saying to me ‘*Poor fellow, it is all over with you, and you must die very soon. You’re a goner – you are in a consumption, but I can cure you for \$50*’”

Notice how Tumblety used a strawman trick to first convince a patient of a serious affliction, then effectively cure them of that affliction with his own vegetable medicine. Little did the patient realize that they never had the affliction in the first place. Binkert came into Tumblety’s office for a minor issue and Tumblety convinced him that he had consumption, or tuberculosis, which was incurable in the 19th century. This explains why so many patients believed Tumblety cured them. Once convinced, the patient would be ecstatic about being cured of an incurable disease and likely tell others of the miraculous Tumblety. Point; at no time was Tumblety concerned about the health of his patient.

Tumblety continued to maintain an office in Toronto, so he clearly wanted to keep it his headquarters, but he no longer earned the big money. The only solution was to get a license to practice medicine as a physician by convincing the board his knowledge of anatomy and surgery and of midwifery. Tumblety had a huge problem, though. He never actually attended medical school. Corroborating this was a 1905 court case where Tumblety’s nephew Michael Fitzsimmons affirmed to the court under oath that Tumblety never went to medical school.¹⁷ This means Tumblety had no formal education and training in anatomy and surgery, so if a medical board in Toronto composed of licensed physicians drilled him with questions, they would quickly realize his Philadelphia medical diploma is a fake. He needed to prove his anatomical knowledge and surgical skills to prove his diploma was not a fake. But is there any evidence that Tumblety attempted to learn anatomy and surgery after losing the case in May 1857? Researcher Roger Palmer discovered an article in the June 19, 1857, edition of the *Toronto Mirror* titled *Medical Improvements* that connects Tumblety with learning the human anatomy:

“Dr. Tumblety has recently purchased a splendid set of physiological engravings and representations, which can be seen at his rooms, opposite the St. Lawrence Hall. They consist of no less than ten set of fine plates, superbly mounted on rollers, and exhibiting the nerves, muscles, bones, and aorta, so clearly and beautifully as to convince the beholder, in truth and in very deed, that “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.” They have been imported at considerable expense from Rochester, in which city the Doctor practiced his peculiar department of medicine with success for several years.”

¹⁷ Circuit Court Archives, City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Case Number 31430, Series A., 1904 – 1908.

The nerves, muscles, and bones are entire systems (“aorta” likely meant the circulatory system) in the body, so the 10 plates were clearly illustrations of the entire human anatomy. These were educational tools to increase one’s knowledge of anatomy. This is the first time Tumblety was directly connected to anatomical knowledge. The fact that Tumblety was not trumpeting himself as an Indian Herb Doctor as he always did meant he was attempting to focus the readers’ –including members of the licensing board- attention to other areas of his medical expertise.

In part 2 of this article, Tumblety makes his way to Canada East, or Lower Canada, specifically, Montreal, opening up a “medical institute” while still maintaining his headquarters in Toronto, which he also called a medical institute. A medical institute would be tailor-made for gaining anatomical knowledge and honing surgical skills in preparation for a future oral medical examination. Also, did prominent Montreal “first citizens” really ask Tumblety to challenge Thomas D’Arcy McGee in upcoming elections? Did he truly received a gold medal valued at \$800 from these same citizens? No.

Michael Hawley is the author of several Ripper books focused on the suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety: Jack the Ripper Suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety, The Ripper’s Haunts and Dr. Francis Tumblety & the Railway Ripper. He has appeared on numerous television documentaries and podcasts. He is based out of Buffalo, New York.

WEIRD COINCIDENCES

The main witness in the murder of Martha Tabram was Pearly Poll.

The next victim was Mary Ann ‘Polly’ Nichols...

Catherine Eddowes gave her name as Mary Kelly when she was released from custody the night she died.

The next victim was Mary Jane Kelly...

Martha Tabram was thirty-nine when she died, she was stabbed thirty-nine times...

Elizabeth Stride’s partner was Michael Kidney...

Less than an hour after Stride’s murder Catherine Eddowes had her kidney removed...oo-ee-oo.

Jonathan Tye's PRESS TRAWL

AN ARREST IN WHITECHAPEL.

The Echo (London)

Friday, 14 September 1888

SEARCHING FOR HER DAUGHTER

Margaret Elmore, an old lady of 69, was found on a doorstep in Berners-Street fast asleep. When a constable told her that if she were homeless, she should go to the workhouse, she commenced shouting 'Police!' and 'Murder!' To-day she appeared at the Marlborough -Street Court. It was quite true, she said, that she was asleep on a door-step, but she was sitting, not lying down, as described. She heard the sound of voices, and then the policeman came to her and shook her and otherwise handled her very roughly. She was in the habit of going out late at night, to see if she could find her daughter, who some time ago was taken by some to Belgium, and who, she had been informed, had returned to England, and was now walking the streets. She had, in fact, seen her twice. There was no occasion for her to go to the workhouse, as her brother, who was a merchant in Cuba, allowed her £25 a year, beside which she received £16 from another source, and a gentleman paid her rent. Under the circumstances she was discharged.

This sad story, which occurred between the murder of Annie Chapman on the 8th of September and the Double Event on the 30th of September, reflects the human face on the grim underworld of trafficking young women between the brothels of London, Belgium and France. It is a story that leads us back to 'Jacks Hole', Pennington Street and Breezer's Hill and ultimately, perhaps, to the mysterious woman known as 'Mary Jane Kelly'. The direction of travel of new Ripperology thinking is not to be found in the short journey down Bucks Row, but rather in the investigation of individuals who were at the heart of this underworld, work which is currently being painstakingly and expertly carried out by Jurriaan Maessen and others.

South London Observer

Wednesday, 10 March 1888

BRAVERY REWARDED

George Harris, 25, was charged at the Central Criminal Court with a burglary and stealing some articles of clothing, the property of Walter Purkess. The prosecutor resides in Buck's-row Whitechapel, and on the night of Feb.13 the prisoner made an entry into the house and picked up some articles of clothing. He was about to make off with his booty, when a woman named Coltiss, who lived near the prosecutor, seized him and held him until a constable came up and took the prisoner into custody. The prisoner was convicted, and it appeared that he had only just been liberated from a sentence of penal servitude. The Common Serjeant having sentenced the prisoner to eight years penal servitude, said he thought the witness Coltiss had shown a great deal of courage in the affair, and he ordered her to be paid a reward of £3.

How different the Whitechapel Murders would have been had someone been as vigilant as the woman named 'Coltiss' in the early hours of August 31, 1888. The woman rewarded was Ellen Coltis, aged 37, and a Devonian born in Plymouth. She was married to a local cigar maker and resided at number 15 Little North Street, the soon to be renamed Winthrop Street. There were three Burglars involved that evening and the story touches upon the issue much debated of escape routes that could have been used by the killer of Mary Ann Nichols. Two of the burglars got away, one was apprehended by a passer by in Bucks Row but for some reason let go and another was seen on the wall of the back yard of the house. The unfortunate Harris was captured hiding behind the water butt in Ellen Coltis's yard. The house that was ransacked of clothes of the estimated value of £10 was New Cottage occupied in August 1888 by Emma Green whose room overlooked the spot where Mary Nichols' body was found. Walter Purkis of course by this time had moved opposite to occupy Essex Wharf.

*Weekly Dispatch (London)
Sunday, 16 September 1888*

CHARGE OF ATTEMPTED MURDER

At the Thames court, on Monday, William Seaman, forty, of peculiar appearance, and described as a builder, of 11 Princes Street Whitechapel, was charged with attempting to kill and slay John Simkin, chemist, 82 Berner -Street Whitechapel. The prosecutor was too ill to attend on account of the severe injuries he had received. Charles M'Carthy, a labourer, of 11, Ellen's place, Ellen Street, Whitechapel, said that about twelve o'clock on Saturday night he was walking along Ellen Street. He heard a scream in the direction of Berner -Street. Witness then went to a chemist shop at 82, Berner-Street, kept by the prosecutor. Simkin, whose head was bleeding, was behind his counter, and the prisoner was standing in the shop. The former said to the witness, 'Here is the hammer he hit me with,' and then he handed him the hammer produced. The prisoner did not make any remark, neither did he attempt to make his escape. Witness could not say if he had been drinking. The police then came up and took the accused into custody. Constable 85H said prosecutor, who was an elderly man, was lying at home dangerously injured. When the prisoner was arrested, he said, 'I Shan't tell you what I did it for; but I will tell the magistrate' He had been drinking. Mr. Saunders ordered the prisoner to be remanded.

The above attack occurred on the same weekend as the murder of Annie Chapman and of course in the very street where Elizabeth Stride was to later lose her life in Dutfield's Yard at the end of September. The attack on John Simkin, fueled by alcohol, demonstrates the violence and dangers of the area. It is within this environment that all the Whitechapel murders were created, formed and executed. Indeed, had it not been for his incarceration for this crime, one could have identified the strange Seaman as a potential attacker of Chapman. What he supposedly said he would disclose to the magistrate is never recorded. However, this is not the end of his story. On October 22nd, 1888, William Seaman was sentenced to seven years for this attack but in April 1896 William Seaman was to carry out his own 'Double Event'. The victims were John Goodman Levy a 75-year-old Umbrella Maker of 31 Turner Street, a few minutes' walk from Berner Street and his 37-year-old housekeeper Sarah Gale. Both victims had their throats cut from 'ear to ear' and had been horrifically attacked with a hammer. The unfortunate Gale had desperately fought Seaman and because of his ferocity her head was almost severed from her body. William Seaman was hung as part of a triple hanging in Newgate on the 9th of June 1896.

Morning Post

Thursday, 10 January 1889

LAW INTELLIGENCE / BANKRUPTCY COURT- Wednesday (Before the Official Receiver)

This was a first meeting. The debtor, trading as a licensed victualler, at the Star and Garter, Whitechapel-road filed his petition on the 4th ult., and he attributes his failure to his trade having fallen off during the last three years, but particularly since August last owing to the recent murders in the neighbourhood of his house. The total liabilities are returned in the statement of affairs at £4,153, of which £1,076 are unsecured, and £2,250 fully secured; assets, £70 11s 6d. In the absence of a quorum of creditors, no resolution was passed, and the matter will be wound up[in bankruptcy by the official receiver.

The Era

Saturday, 9 February 1889

A PENNY SHOW

Thomas Barry, a showman, was indicted at the Central Criminal Court, on Tuesday, before the recorder, upon the charge of creating a nuisance by exhibiting figures illustrating a show, and thereby causing idle people to assemble and remain in the Queens highway. Mr Poland, Q.C, and Mr Gore prosecuted for the Whitechapel District Board of Works, and Mr Purcell defended. Mr Poland, in opening the case, said that the defendant was the proprietor of a show at 106 and 107, Whitechapel-road, and the inhabitants thereabouts had complained of the nuisance caused by the show. It had been the custom of the defendant to exhibit outside the place representations of the Whitechapel murders of 'Jack the Ripper', various fat people and dwarfs, and all kinds of monstrosities. There was a waxworks inside, and boxing and other performances went on. The price of admission was a penny. Noises were made outside to attract audiences, and large crowds assembled, obstructing the thoroughfare and causing, he contended, a nuisance.

The final two articles here starkly illustrate the contrasting fortunes of some as a result of the Whitechapel Murders as well as a clear indication of how quickly 'Jack the Ripper' was absorbed into mythology. At the time of reporting, the murder of Alice McKenzie in Castle Alley was still yet to occur. The address of the waxworks and show was also near where Joseph Merrick, 'The Elephant Man' had been exhibited. Yet the The Star and Garter Public House at the Corner of Court Street was only a stone's throw from these crowd-drawing shows. Why didn't this Public House benefit from the throngs of fascinated visitors drawn to blocking the Whitechapel Road? The site of the Star and Garter right on the corner of Court Street and connecting Bucks Row to the main road is likely one of the probable escape routes of the killer of Mary Ann Nichols in August 1888; she may have even led her killer to Bucks Row past the Star and Garters doors in the early hours. The degree to which the murder might have negatively impacted the Star and Garter is difficult to ascertain. One thing I strongly suspect is that Mr C Dixon, the licenced victualler of the Star and Garter, was not the greatest landlord of his time.

Jonathan Tye is a graduate of History from the University of Kent. He has been researching and writing on the Whitechapel Murders for several years. In October 2023 he presented on a hitherto unknown person of interest, Edward Buckley, who is to be the subject of his new book to be published in early 2025. Originally from South East London, Jonathan Tye currently lives in Essex.

A Question of Blades: Looking at the possible knives of the Ripper

By Steven Blomer

Two questions endure about the killer known to history as Jack the Ripper: What type of knife did he use on the Canonical Five victims? And did he use more than one weapon? Analysis of the different possible knives used can only help us to better understand his methods and form hypotheses on his possible motivations.

It has often been suggested that the weapon used was a Liston knife (fig 1.), named after the noted Surgeon Robert Liston¹ and sometimes called an amputation knife. This stems from the idea that the killer was either a surgeon or a doctor, which has endured for many years.



fig 1, Liston knife

In his book *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, author Donald Rumbelow goes into some depth about a Liston knife that came into his possession. There is still debate about this knife today.² While the idea of a Liston Knife remains popular in some quarters, it has decreased in recent years, just as that of the Ripper being a medical man. When attempting to determine the type of blade used to make any wound, be that length or width of blade, there are many points to consider. The type of wound is important, as are we talking of a stabbing wound or a slashing or slicing cut.

When attempting to determining the length of blade used, one needs to look at the length and deep of the wounds. A stabbing wound gives the more reliable data as to length. However, unless the blade is fully inserted to the hilt of the knife, we may only have a minimum length for a blade when we need the full length. If we are looking at a slicing wound like those on the necks of the victims, determining the blade used can be very difficult. This is because very similar looking wounds can be achieved by moving either a short bladed or a long bladed knife across the neck. The difficulty of determining Blade Size is discussed in an in-depth article at the website Forensicmed.co.uk.³

There are conflicting ideas about the nature of weapon used on each victim in the Whitechapel murders. The most well-known of these is that the knife used to kill Elizabeth Stride in Berner street on 29th of September 1888, was a different knife to that which was used on Catherine Eddowes and on the earlier accepted victims Mary Ann Nichols and Annie Chapman, and that it was of course different to that used on the possible non-C5 victims, Tabram, Mackenzie and Coles.

Some researchers argue that Stride was not a victim of the killer who murdered Nichols and Chapman, nor was there a double event. This view, that a different knife was used on Stride, has been repeated so many times that even seasoned and respected commentators have stated this as fact.

¹ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liston_knife

² <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/1704-the-ripper-s-knife>

³ <https://www.forensicmed.co.uk/wounds/sharp-force-trauma/sstab-wounds/>

But does this claim stand up to serious scrutiny? In this article I shall attempt to answer that question as clearly as possible.

When asked where this idea of a different knife comes from, one is often told that the doctors at the Stride inquest, Phillips and Blackwell, said this. We shall in this work look at exactly what they did say at the inquest.

However, to start with we need to look at the earlier murders of Nichols and Chapman, and the later murder of Eddowes to see just what the doctors said about the knife possibly used in each murder. After this, we will turn to the Stride case and look at exactly what the doctors said.

So let us begin with looking at the wounds to Mary Ann Nichols.

The following comments were reported by the press as being made by Doctor Llewellyn at the inquest into the death of Mary Ann Nichols:

“The weapon used could scarcely have been a sailor’s jack knife; it was probably a pointed weapon with a stout back, such as a cork cutter’s or shoemaker’s knife. In Dr. Llewellyn’s opinion it was not an exceptionally long bladed weapon.”

Morning Advertiser 1st September 1888.

“These cuts must have been caused with a long-bladed knife, moderately sharp, and used with great violence.

A Juror: Should you think it was done by a clasp knife or a butcher’s knife, or what?

Llewellyn: It must have been a strong knife. I cannot say what kind of knife.”

Lloyds Weekly News 2nd September 1888

“The cuts must have been caused by a long-bladed knife, moderately sharp, and used with great violence.”

The Times 3rd September 1888.

We can see immediately that there is a contradiction here. *The Morning Advertiser* reports it was NOT in the doctor’s opinion an “exceptionally long” blade, however, both *Lloyds Weekly* and *The Times* say it was a long bladed knife.



fig 2, shoemaker’s knife

So how do we assess this apparent contradiction? What is the difference between an exceptionally long and a simple long blade? Such, of course, is entirely subjective assessment by Doctor Llewellyn. One way to approach this question would be to accept that what is actually being said is that it is not a short bladed knife, but neither is it a very long-bladed knife, (again a subjective term) but one of a moderate length (six to eight inches). Unfortunately the language used is very imprecise and does not really allow us to form any opinion other than it was not a short bladed knife such as used by a shoemaker (figs 2 & 3). Llewellyn appears to continually be less than precise in much of his testimony at the Nichols inquest.⁴ What should be noted, of course, is that in this case, we have both stabbing

⁴ Inside Backs Row, Chapter 11, covers the often less than clear language used by Llewellyn in his testimony.

wounds to the torso and slicing wounds to the neck.

Let us now turn to the murder of Annie Chapman, and the testimony of Doctor Phillips.

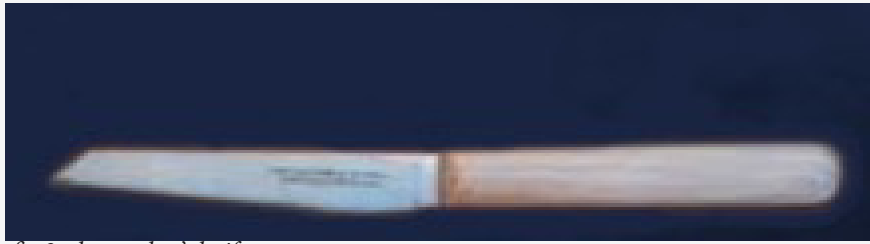


fig 3, shoemaker's knife

Coroner: Was the instrument used at the throat the same as that used at the abdomen?

Phillips: Very probably. It must have been a very sharp knife, probably with a thin, narrow blade, and at least six to eight inches in length, perhaps longer.

Coroner: Is it possible that any instrument used by a military man, such as a bayonet, would have done it?

Phillips: No; it would not be a bayonet.

Coroner: Would it have been such an instrument as a medical man uses for post-mortem examinations?

Phillips: The ordinary post-mortem case perhaps does not contain such a weapon.

Coroner: Would any instrument that slaughterers employ have caused the injuries?

Phillips: Yes; well ground down.

Coroner: Would the knife of a cobbler or of any person in the leather trades have done?

Phillips: I think the knife used in those trades would not be long enough in the blade.

The Daily Telegraph 13th September 1888.

Dr Phillips: I am of opinion that the length of the weapon with which the incisions were inflicted was at least five to six inches in length - probably more - and must have been very sharp.

The Daily Telegraph 19th September 1888.

So once again we see a contradiction. This time the doctor actually mentions blade length but says different things on different days of the inquest.

We have him saying at least six to eight inches, and possibly longer, on his first appearance at the inquest, reported on 13th September, but on his recall a week later he says at least five to six inches. This may seem a minor discrepancy, but it does demonstrate both how the doctors changed their views and just how difficult assessing the blade length of knife can be.

We can also see that Phillips, like Llewellyn, discounts a shoemaker's tool and rules out a bayonet, as supposedly was used in the Tabram case. His comments about most post-mortem cases not carrying such a knife have often been interpreted as Phillips attempting to defend his profession, but maybe it should just be seen as a statement of fact.

Finally, we have the comments about a slaughterer's knife. For this I also suggest we should include butcher's knives too (fig 4). While these could clearly have been used, Doctor Phillips believed they would need to be ground down to achieve the resultant wounds



fig 4, butcher's knives

seen on Chapman.

We now move onto the murder of Catherine Eddowes in Mitre Square, and the inquest testimony of Doctor Frederick Gordon Brown:

Coroner: Does the nature of the wounds lead you to any conclusion as to the instrument that was used?

Brown: It must have been a sharp-pointed knife, and I should say at least 6 in. long.

Daily Telegraph 5th October 1888.

For this particular case we have a third doctor, Frederick Gordon Brown giving his opinion. His comments on the knife used are very sparse, but again we see mention of a blade of at least six inches in length.

In the three cases looked at so far, the doctors have been able to rely both stabbing and slicing wounds on which to make their assessments on the length of the blade used. Although Llewellyn does not give an actual figure for the length of the blade he feels was used on Mary Ann Nichols, it seems that all three doctors are talking of a similar blade, one of moderate length, and one of at least six inches in length, possibly longer. If we again refer to Llewellyn, we still have a blade that is not exceptionally long. Unfortunately at this point, in we have no idea of just what “exceptionally long” could mean.

One would have hoped that much information would be provided by the complete butchery that took place in Miller’s Court on 9th November 1888, but that is simply not the case. No details were given at the inquest, and in his report on her injuries Bond says nothing about the knife used.

However, his report of 10th October does contain the following point:

“The instrument must have been a strong knife at least six inches long, very sharp, pointed at the top and about an inch in width. It may have been a clasp knife, a butcher’s knife or a surgeon’s knife. I think it was no doubt a straight knife.”

We now have four separate Doctors making assessments of the weapon used, and we again see that a knife of at least six inches is being suggested as the probable weapon used. For the first time Doctor Bond makes an estimate of the blade being an inch wide.

If we look back at the website [Foensicmed.co.uk](https://www.forensicmed.co.uk)⁵, mentioned earlier, we can see that assessments of the width of blade are considered difficult to make, due in part to the elasticity of skin and other tissues.

We will now consider the wound Elizabeth Stride sustained during the Berner Street attack. As mentioned earlier, many question if this was a Ripper attack, due in part to the often stated claim that the killer used a different knife. The wound to Elizabeth Stride’s throat was caused by a short-bladed, and some say blunt, knife, which was different to those used in the other attacks. We will now look at just what this claim is all about.

On Monday 1st October 1888, the day following the murder of Stride in Berner Street, a knife was discovered in the Whitechapel Road. Thomas Coram found this knife. Because of this, it is referred to as the Coram knife. This knife, is, in my opinion the reason why the weapon used in Berner Street is so frequently misunderstood.

To understand just why this is, we need to look at the evidence relating to the finding of this knife as presented to the inquest in some detail.

⁵ <https://www.forensicmed.co.uk/wounds/sharp-force-trauma/sstab-wounds/>

Thomas Coram: I live at No. 67, Plummer's-road, and work for a coconut dealer. On Monday shortly after midnight I left a friend's house in Bath-gardens, Brady-street. I walked straight down Brady-street and into Whitechapel-road towards Aldgate. I first walked on the right side of Whitechapel-road, and afterwards crossed over to the left, and when opposite No. 253 I saw a knife lying on the doorstep.

Coroner: What is No. 253?

Coram: A laundry. There were two steps to the front door, and the knife was on the bottom step. The production of the knife created some sensation, its discovery not having been generally known. It was a knife such as would be used by a baker in his trade, it being flat at the top instead of pointed, as a butcher's knife would be.

The blade, which was discoloured with something resembling blood, was quite a foot long and an inch broad, whilst the black handle was six inches in length, and strongly riveted in three places.

Witness (continuing): There was a handkerchief round the handle of the knife, the handkerchief having been first folded and then twisted round the blade. A policeman coming towards me, I called his attention to the knife, which I did not touch.

Coroner: Did the policeman take the knife away?

Coram: Yes, to the Leman-street station, I accompanying him.

Coroner: Were there many people passing at the time?

Coram: Very few. I do not think I passed more than a dozen from Brady Street to where I found the knife. The weapon could easily be seen; it was light there.

Coroner: Did you pass any policeman between Brady-street and where the knife was?

Coram: I passed three policemen."

Daily Telegraph 4th October 1888.



fig 5, baker's knife

From this, we can see that we are looking a very long weapon, the blade approximately a foot long, and the handle an additional six inches. We may, it seems, have reached a possible answer to the earlier subjective question on what is exceptionally long. This blade, I think, would qualify as an "exceptionally long" weapon; certainly far larger than suggested by the doctors in the other cases.

It is described as being the type of knife which may have been used by a baker (fig 5).

Next we need to look at the testimony of Constable Drage, the police officer who found the knife.

Constable Joseph Drage, 282 H Division: On Monday morning at half-past twelve o'clock I was on fixed point duty opposite Brady-street, Whitechapel-road, when I saw the last witness stooping down to pick up something about twenty yards from me. As I went towards him,

he beckoned with his finger, and said, "Policeman, there is a knife lying here." I then saw a long-bladed knife on the doorstep. I picked up the knife, and found it was smothered with blood".

Coroner: Was it wet?

Drage: Dry. A handkerchief, which was also blood-stained, was bound round the handle and tied with a string. I asked the lad how he came to see it, and he said, "I was just looking around, and I saw something white." I asked him what he did out so late, and he replied, "I have been to a friend's in Bath-gardens." I

took down his name and address, and he went to the police-station with me. The knife and handkerchief are those produced. The boy was sober, and his manner natural. He said that the knife made his blood run cold, adding, "We hear of such funny things nowadays." I had passed the step a quarter of an hour before. I could not be positive, but I do not think the knife was there then. About an hour earlier I stood near the door, and saw the landlady let out a woman. The knife was not there then. I handed the knife and handkerchief to Dr. Phillips on Monday afternoon.

Daily Telegraph 4th October 1888.

The location of 253 Whitechapel Road appears to have caused some debate over the years. Some of this no doubt due to the renumbering of Whitechapel Road around 1899.

Constable Drage implies 253 was on the southern side of the road, not far from Brady Street. However, the Goad map for the period clearly shows that 253 was much closer to Fieldgate Street than Brady Street⁶.

This extract from the 1890s OS map shows the location of 253 Whitechapel Road (fig 6).



1:1056 scale series of maps-1895 reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Our next questions are: What did the doctors say at the inquest into the Stride murder? Just how have we reached the suggestion of a different knife?

During Stride's inquest, there were two doctors involved: Doctors Phillips and Blackwell. I suspect that people have misinterpreted what they said and that such as simply been repeated over the years. Let us look at their testimony.

Mr. Frederick William Blackwell: In the neck there was a long incision which exactly corresponded with the lower border of the scarf. The border was slightly frayed, as if by a sharp knife.

Daily Telegraph 3rd October 1888.

⁶ <https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/maps-charts/33146-please-help-annotate-this-online-jtr-map/page-3>

Dr Phillips: The knife produced on the last occasion was delivered to me, properly secured, by a constable, and on examination I found it to be such a knife as is used in a chandler's shop, and is called a slicing knife. It has blood upon it, which has characteristics similar to the blood of a human being. It has been recently blunted, and its edge apparently turned by rubbing on a stone such as a kerbstone. It evidently was before a very sharp knife.

Daily Telegraph 6th October 1888

These first of these comments made by Blackwell make it very clear that the knife used on Stride would appear to have been sharp, whereas the Coram knife according to Phillips was blunted. Phillips refers to the knife as a slicing knife, rather than a baker's knife. However, both, it seems, look very similar to the knife shown in figure 5, which is long with a rounded, not pointed, end.

Coroner Wynne Baxter continued questioning the doctors.

The Coroner: Is it such a knife as could have caused the injuries which were inflicted upon the deceased?
Phillips: Such a knife could have produced the incision and injuries to the neck, but it is not such a weapon as I should have fixed upon as having caused the injuries in this case; and if my opinion as regards the position of the body is correct, the knife in question would become an improbable instrument as having caused the incision.

Daily Telegraph 6th October 1888

The coroner followed up on this:

Coroner: What is your idea as to the position the body was in when the crime was committed?

Phillips: I have come to a conclusion as to the position of both the murderer and the victim, and I opine that the latter was seized by the shoulders and placed on the Ground, and that the murderer was on her right side when he inflicted the cut. I am of opinion that the cut was made from the left to the right side of the deceased, and taking into account the position of the incision it is unlikely that such a long knife inflicted the wound in the neck.

Daily Telegraph 6th October 1888

When asked if the Coram knife could have inflicted the single neck wound to Stride, Phillips says it could have, but that he considers it improbable, because of its length, but he cannot completely rule it out.

Coroner Baxter continued:

Coroner: The knife produced on the last occasion was not sharp pointed, was it?

Phillips: No, it was Rounded at the tip, which was about an inch across. The blade was wider at the base.

Coroner: Was there anything to indicate that the cut on the neck of the deceased was made with a pointed knife?

Phillips: Nothing.

Daily Telegraph 6th October 1888.

The coroner clearly is trying to ascertain if the Coram knife, being rounded and blunted could have made the wound to the throat. Phillips replies that there is no indication as to if the blade was pointed.

Doctor Blackwell agrees with Phillips that although the Coram Knife could have inflicted the wound, he like Phillips considers it an unlikely weapon:

Dr Blackwell: With respect to the knife which was found, I should like to say that I concur with Dr. Phillips in his opinion that, although it might possibly have inflicted the injury, it is an extremely unlikely instru-

ment to have been used. It appears to me that a murderer, in using a round-pointed instrument, would seriously handicap himself, as he would be only able to use it in one particular way. I am told that slaughterers always use a sharp-pointed instrument.

The Coroner: No one has suggested that this crime was committed by a slaughterer.

Blackwell: Witness: I simply intended to point out the inconvenience that might arise from using a blunt-pointed weapon.

Daily Telegraph 6th October 1888

It seems that the Doctors are unsure about the length of blade used in this attack, unlike in the other cases. I believe this is due to nature of the wound, which Phillips addressed as follows:

Dr Phillips: The wound was inflicted by drawing the knife across the throat. A short knife, such as a shoemaker's well-ground knife, would do the same thing.

Daily Telegraph 6th October 1888

There are several important points in Phillip's last comment. Firstly, he addresses the nature of the wound, caused by the blade being drawn across the neck, is not a stab. This makes it all but impossible to estimate the length of the blade involved.

As we have seen, much of the preceding exchange between the Coroner, Wynne Baxter and Phillips revolved round the question of if the Coram knife could have inflicted the wound to Strides neck.

Phillips has already said that it could have, but that he considers it unlikely, given the length of that particular blade. He now adds that a short blade knife, if well ground, could do the same thing.

This is central to the debate about a different knife. I believe people have interpreted Phillips' statement to say the wound was made by a short bladed knife. However, I believe that he was simply trying to make it very clear that both the Coram knife and a very short bladed knife could have made the cut to the neck of Elizabeth. He was NOT, in my view, saying it was a shorted bladed knife.

The comments about the bluntness of the Coram blade also got added to the comments about the short blade. This is how we arrived at the suggestion of a blunt, short bladed knife being used in Berner Street.

CONCLUSIONS

It would seem that apart from the Berner street murder, the Doctors agreed that a similar weapon was used on Nichols, Chapman and Eddowes, and that it was a moderate length blade, some six to eight inches. They rule out a short blade and appear to not favour a very long blade such as the Coram Knife.

It would appear that at the Stride inquest, Coroner Baxter attempted to establish if the Coram Knife could be excluded as the murder weapon. Due to the nature of the wound, which was a slicing cut rather than a stab, it was impossible for the doctors Phillips and Blackwell to completely dismiss the Coram knife. They were relying on their professional judgement rather than hard facts. It would seem that Phillips went out of his way, to say that while the Coram Knife could have inflicted the wound, it was NOT the only weapon that could have done so too.

I believe that Phillips says that a short-bladed knife, like that used by a shoemaker could have made that particular cut. Though there is way to be sure, he is attempting to weaken the case for the longer blade instead of actively proposing that a short blade was the weapon.

We finish by returning to the comment made by Thomas Bond. After examining Kelly and looking at the

other case notes, he concluded, that all were killed by the same individual,

“The instrument must have been a strong knife at least six inches long, very sharp, pointed at the top and about an inch in width. It may have been a clasp knife, a butcher’s knife or a surgeon’s knife. I think it was no doubt a straight knife.”

While it may not have been the same actual knife used on each occasion I believe there is evidence to suggest it was at the very least a similar blade used in each murder.

Grateful acknowledgement to Thomas Savoury for the photograph of the Liston Knife .

Steven Blomer is an Administrator of the website JtRForums.com and the author of Inside Bucks Row.

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH A RIPPEROLOGIST

In each issue we’ll invite a noted Ripperologist to answer five standard questions on the case. Their answer can only contain a maximum of two words. For this issue we posed the questions to our new Editor-in-Chief, Jonathan Menges.

1. *How many people did ‘Jack the Ripper’ kill?*
2. *Who is your preferred suspect?*
3. *Who has influenced you the most in this subject?*
4. *Will the case ever be solved?*
5. *How would you describe the current state of Ripperology?*

1. Eight, maybe
2. Nobody
3. Paul Begg
4. No
5. Misunderstood

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VICTORIAN DOMESTICITY

A Column on Daily Life

By Amanda Lloyd



The idea behind this column is to focus on Victorian domesticity or, to be more precise, what ordinary working class Victorians cooked and ate and how they went about their daily business at home. The main focus will be on old recipes, some variations of which are still made today and to a lesser degree, general household management.

The British Empire reigned supreme during the Victorian period. Over the previous two centuries exotic imports of fruit and spices, tea, coffee, silks, cotton, sugar and other wonderful things flooded the British market and found their way into the homes of those who could afford them. Much of these imports were far beyond the means of the ordinary working classes but by the middle of the nineteenth century many goods became much more affordable. Tea, coffee, sugar, as good examples, had become available to all.

Probably the greatest impact to the British diet came with the colonisation of India and specifically during the British occupation from 1858 to 1947. Indian cuisine influenced what was served at the dining table in a variety of guises and the anglicised 'curry' became increasingly popular as did spicy food generally. Whilst fresh spices remained expensive, many were sold dried. Dried spices were cheaper to buy and easily stored.

Some dried spices were mixed and sold as 'curry powder', a purely British invention based on the original garam masala, and found its way into the pantries of many homes. Given the influence Indian food has in Britain, it only seemed right and proper to begin with a recipe which first appeared on the Raj's breakfast menu but has never lost its popularity. It is a great example of Anglo-Indian cuisine.

Served at both simple and elaborate meals, Kedgeree was a popular breakfast dish. The primary ingredients were, and still are, curried rice, smoked fish, onions and eggs. It was a variation of the Indian dish Khichiri, which used lentils as well as rice. Traditionally smoked haddock was used but today's variations include smoked salmon or mackerel. I searched for several Victorian recipes for Kedgeree but finally settled on the one in Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management, first published in 1861.

Before we start I thought I'd add an interesting aside that it was Mrs Beeton who perpetrated the myth that curry was first created to mask the taste of rotten meat. This was and is simply not true. Unfortunately the idea stuck for several generations and I remember my own mother telling me that.

RECIPE:

For the purpose of authenticity I will be using imperial weights and measures which can be easily converted online to ones of your choice.

Lard can be replaced with butter or oil.

Serves 3-4

Ingredients:

7 oz long grain rice

12 oz smoked haddock

1 pint milk or water (I used half and half)

1 medium onion

3 large or 4 medium eggs

1 large knob of lard

1-2 tablespoons of curry powder

Salt and black pepper to taste.

Parsley to garnish (optional)

Preparation:

Wash rice thoroughly and put in a large pan of salted water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes.

Place Haddock in a large skillet with the pint of liquid and poach for 15 minutes.

Fry medium onion in lard until soft, add curry powder and fry gently for another 5 minutes.

Place eggs in a pan of water and boil for 5 minutes. Switch off and leave until ready to use.

Remove skin of cooked fish and flake into a deep serving dish.

Drain rice and place into the liquid used to cook the fish. Add the curried onions, add pepper to taste.

Simmer until liquid reduces and the rice is moist but not dry.

Peel and chop eggs leaving one to garnish. Add to fish

Add chopped parsley on top if desired.

Serve immediately

Enjoy!

Amanda Lloyd is the Administrator of the 'Ripperology Books...and More' Facebook group. She lives in Sheffield.



Conversations

That Could Have Happened

By Jurriaan Maessen



There are some advantages to be had in allowing oneself a certain susceptibility to the trivial, a sensitivity to the unremarkable. Or, more accurately, the seemingly trivial and unremarkable, because what's unremarkable for some might be highly enthralling for others.

With so much historical material having already been plundered and re-plundered for every last scrap of ripperological meat, you may wonder what can possibly be left for us to uncover or explore.

As it turns out, quite a bit, actually. Although not necessarily the bits that many feel are of interest to “the case”.

Because hyperfocus tends to invite myopia, there's a good chance you'll find things entirely overlooked by ripperologists in decades past. It's true: if one is suspectologically inclined, most avenues have by now been thoroughly exhausted. But I find that when there are no scoops to be secured, brilliant little gems have a tendency of drifting to the surface all by themselves. Sometimes they appear in the shape of a stray sentence or incidental clause that may or may not have any bearing on your particular area of interest, or as some random snippet suddenly jumping up at you from an article you always deemed comprehensively looked at and understood.

So, there's something to be said for assuming a decidedly unassuming attitude when evaluating historical material, because that's when new and unsuspecting perspectives open themselves up.

One such gem halted my gaze as I was scanning one of the post-Kelly-murder burial reports as printed in the *East London Advertiser* of Saturday the 24th of November 1888. It was quite the matter-of-fact little snippet entombed inside a lengthy commentary on the removal of Mary Kelly's corpse from Shoreditch mortuary via St. Leonard's Church and subsequent transport to Leytonstone catholic cemetery on the Monday previous.

As Kelly's coffin was carried in an open car drawn by two horses, two mourning coaches followed immediately behind: “one containing three, and the other five persons”. Most reports covering the procession are considerably vague on the distribution aspect, just mentioning Joe Barnett as one of the passengers. The *East London Advertiser*, on the other hand, generously adds to the list of mourners, mentioning “someone from M'Carthy's” (presumably Thomas Bowyer) as well as six women who, according to the report, had given evidence at the inquest. Although the report does not name the women, the available inquest documentation provides their identities to a man (or woman, rather): Mary Ann Cox, Elizabeth Prater, Caroline Maxwell, Sarah Lewis, Julia Vanturney and Maria Harvey.

The scene as the company drove up to the church gates was described as one of “turbulent excitement”, the crowd apparently enraptured by some sort of mass hysteria, the expression of which was described by the reporter present as “(...) natural and unconstrained”. Others might say: frightening and intimidating, but to me the most salient part was the mention that these eight mourners “(...) had been fortifying themselves for the journey at a public house close to the church gates.”

Whether the decision to take refuge in the public house near St. Leonard's Church was spurred by the chaotic circumstances on the spot or pre-arranged in anticipation of the event, is not mentioned, but either way the scene must have unsettled the "inquestees" to such a degree as to have them eagerly accept some much welcomed shelter, not to mention a couple of nerve-calming pints on the house.

The alluring part for me consisted not only of visualizing them huddled up together around the beer tap as they waited for the excitement to die down outside; even more tempting was to imagine the conversation that may or may not have ensued. After all, the beer consumed may have done more than just calm their nerves; it may have loosened their tongues as well.

So what on earth would they have been conversing about?

One is inclined to see them discussing all particulars we would like to imagine them discussing, perhaps comparing notes on certain specifics. Between them, I imagine, they possessed more knowledge about the deceased than ripperologists have managed to accumulate in the last century, the acquisition of which would make some unscrupulous modern day researchers sell their own mothers without a blink, I'm sure.

One is furthermore inclined to imagine the women scolding at a stuttering Joe Barnett for failing to provide for Mary Jane in the weeks and months before their separation, forcing her onto the streets and ultimately into the arms of the Whitechapel assassin.

If one allows for even more elaborate flights of the imagination, one might also picture them chastising the simpleton for painting a mirage-like idyll in regards to his relationship with Kelly before enthusiastically explaining to him the realities of the trade in all their sobering particulars. I also imagine Julia "she was very fond of another man named Joe" Vanturney may have spearheaded the assault on Kelly's former lover-by-convenience, rubbing the notion in his face that if Kelly ever stopped prostituting, it certainly wasn't during the last six months of their cohabitation.

I trust no one will hold it against me that I chuckled at the thought of the assault on Barnett at some point having diverted to the problematic Mrs. Maxwell, unchangingly insistent that she had spoken to the deceased as late (or early) as 8.00 am on the 9th. A claim countermanded perhaps by Mary Ann Cox and Sarah Lewis, who in turn may have found themselves on the receiving end of Maria Harvey's scolding reprimands.

It may, on the other hand, also be true that after the third or fourth beer their mutually shared grief triumphed over all their quibbles as they shed tears together over the tragic loss of good-hearted Mary Jane in unison. Finally there is of course the possibility the company prepared for the impending interment in solemn silence, no words having been exchanged at all.

One imagines.

In this case I guess no harm is done in letting the bird of imagination fly free, because really there's no point to champion; no coals to shovel into the steam engines of the messageboards, just some much needed levity to take one's mind off the often weighty research that after all takes up a sizable amount of our ripperological pursuits.

I would recommend it to everybody.

Jurriaan Maessen ('s-Hertogenbosch, 1975) is a Dutch researcher and writer. Maessen's particular interest in Whitechapel Studies is focused on the historical research into Mary Jane Kelly, although he also researches other characters related to the case; in 2023 Maessen wrote and researched a dissertation on Edward Buckley with Jonathan Tye.

Montrouge, 1886.

The starting point of a bloody career?

By Fabrice Bourland
(Supervised translation by Gwendal Padovan)

Two weeks after the murder of Mary Jane Kelly in the Whitechapel district, the French daily *Le XIX^e siècle*, founded by Gustave Chadeuil, featured an article on its second page in the November 23, 1888 edition, titled in bold letters: “LES MYSTÈRES DE LONDRES” (“The Mysteries of London”). Signed by “a correspondent”, it described the assassination attempt on Annie Farmer two days earlier, which, according to the author, “seemed to be connected to the series of crimes attributed to ‘Jack the Ripper’ over the past three months”.

Just below, in a layout suggesting that it was a continuation or, at the very least, shedding new light on the subject, a second article counted 247 words:

THE MONTROUGE CRIME

The woman cut into pieces.

The elusive murderer.

We may recall the Montrouge crime committed in November 1886, which stirred strong emotions in Paris. The body of a young woman, cut into three sections, was found on Avenue d’Orléans, Rue d’Alésia, and in front of the Montrouge Church.

The right breast and uterus had been torn out; the torso was cut at the neck and thighs with a butcher’s knife; the right arm and head were missing.

According to all investigating magistrates, this was not a macabre prank carried out by medical students; it was an act of savagery committed by someone accustomed to butchering animals.

As seen, this murder bore a striking resemblance to the ten recent crimes in Whitechapel. Even more striking, the torso was wrapped in English waxed cloth and tied with a whip cord also of English make; the same origin mark was found with the bloody debris.

Was the Montrouge crime the first attempt of the Whitechapel murderer?

Mr. Goron, Chief of the Sûreté, has just dispatched brigadier Jaume to London, carrying with him the various pieces of evidence we have just mentioned.

Perhaps this very skilled agent can provide valuable information to the London police, who seem to be out of ideas and utterly discouraged.

This second text, thus without the first one dedicated to the assassination attempt on Annie Farmer, was also published on page 3 of the conservative daily *Le Gaulois* in a version identical to that of *Le XIX^e siècle*, but for one detail: it was signed this time by “Will-Furet”¹, a regular contributor to *Le Gaulois* and *La Gazette des Tribunaux*. For a historian of the famous Victorian-era serial killer, it is surprising to learn that the French police, represented by Marie-François Goron—who took over the leadership of the *Service de la Sûreté*² in 1887 from Ernest Taylor—openly suggested the hypothesis of a single murderer for the Montrouge tragedy and the “ten recent crimes in Whitechapel”.

¹ From his real name Jules Margat. Source: *Dictionary of Pseudonyms*, Georges d’Heylli, Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1971.

² *Sûreté* or *police de Sûreté* or *Sûreté parisienne*. The equivalent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Metropolitan Police.

Despite several errors—for instance, the case did not break in “November” but during the night of August 3-4, 1886—this article seems to have exerted a discreet but undeniable influence in the world of Ripperology.

In 2002, in his work *The Thames Torso Murders of Victoria London*, R. Michael Gordon³ adopted the theory presented by Will-Furet, including the date error. At the end of chapter one, he claimed that the murderer who terrorised London between 1887 and 1889—according to him, Jack the Ripper was also the author of the Thames Torso Murders series—had started his sinister career in Montrouge in 1886, without providing extensive information on the Parisian tragedy.

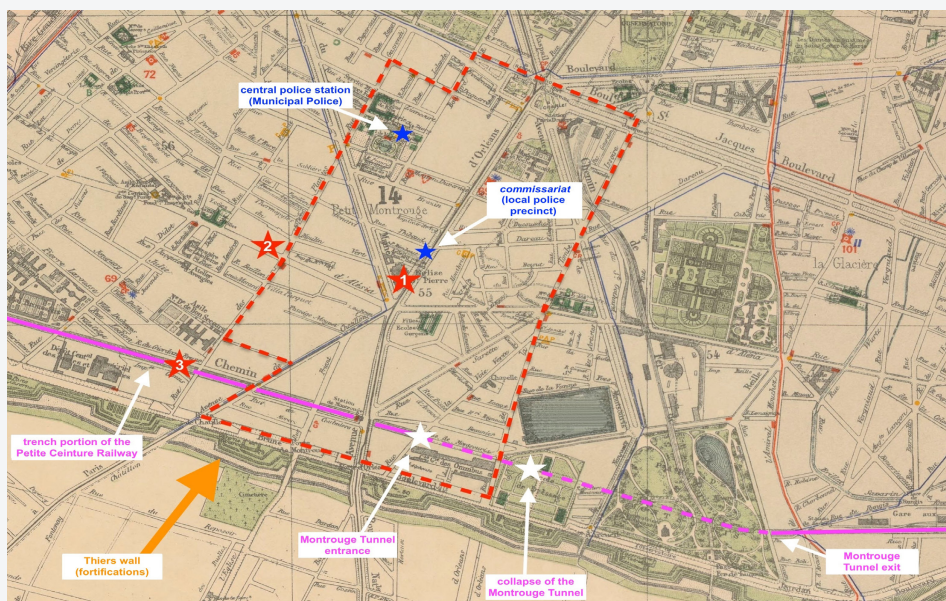
In 2013, British writer Sarah Pinborough also adopted the arguments—and inaccuracies—of R. Michael Gordon in her novel *Mayhem*⁴, which depicts Dr. Thomas Bond investigating the dismembered parts of four women recovered from the Thames.

Similarly, on Casebook or JTRForums, a reference to an obscure Parisian Torso Killer occasionally resurfaces.

So, what exactly is the truth behind this enigmatic case? Can it be asserted, like Will-Furet, Mr. Goron, and others, that it could be the “*first attempt of the Whitechapel murderer*”?

The Setting

But first, why is it referred to as the “Montrouge crime”? Were the body parts discovered in this suburban area of Paris or within the city itself? To answer this, we need to go back a quarter of a century. In 1860, the borders of Paris were expanded due to the annexation of eleven neighbouring communes (Montmartre, La Villette, Belleville, Passy, etc.) and of thirteen fractions of communes, including a part of Montrouge, south of the city. Overnight, the metropolis went from 12 to 20 arrondissements, its area doubled, and its population increased by half a million inhabitants. Bounded by Boulevard Saint-Jacques to the north, Rue de la Tombe-Issoire to the east, Boulevard Brune to the south, and Rue des Plantes to the west, the area known as “Petit-Montrouge” matches the portion of Montrouge “absorbed” by the capital, becoming the 55th administrative quarter in the XIVth arrondissement.



Map established by the cadastral plan of the city of Paris by Mrs. Max Mabyre, 1898. Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

³ Published by McFarland & Company, Jefferson, North Carolina

⁴ Jo Fletcher Books, London.

The title “*Montrouge crime*” given by the press is therefore misleading: it is indeed in the Parisian part of the former suburb that the murderer operated. On the map above, the delineation of the district is indicated by red dotted lines. While the first parcel was discovered in the heart of Petit-Montrouge (on the eastern side of the Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge Church), the location of the second (Rue d’Alésia, a few metres after the intersection of Rue des Plantes) and the third parcel (Rue Giordano-Bruno)⁵ were strictly speaking slightly outside the perimeter, in the adjacent Plaisance District. Ironically, this case of a woman being cut into pieces thus unfolded in a former commune itself divided in two.

To complete the setting, let’s add that Petit-Montrouge is bordered at its southern end by two iconic urban elements of late 19th-century Paris, which played a role in this drama:

- First, the **Petite Ceinture railway line**, which encircled Paris inside the Boulevards des Maréchaux. Built on a dedicated track over a 32.5-kilometer route, this line ran either on viaducts above the roadway or in protected trenches, on each side of which were thick retaining walls. In the Petit-Montrouge area, the trains thus travelled through a trench ten to fifteen metres deep, only revealing to pedestrians at street-level smoke from the locomotives.

- Secondly, the **Thiers wall**. The ultimate iteration of successive fortifications that protected Paris since the Gallo-Roman era, this wall, decided by Adolphe Thiers (then *Président du Conseil*), was erected between 1841 and 1844 all around the city over a length of 34 kilometres. Outside the 10-metre-high enclosure wall, there was the glacis, an immense ring of non-buildable land. To enter the capital, both residents and travellers had to pass through one of the 17 gates, 23 barriers, and eight posterns, and if they wanted to bring in goods, pay a tax at one of the numerous toll offices. After the 1870 war, the lower classes, driven away by the exorbitant rents of the new Haussmannian districts, began to establish makeshift shantytowns on the no man’s land of the fortifications. At the foot of Paris, this gigantic slum thrived and it was not until the late 1920s that the decision to demolish the wall was implemented.⁶

If, during the 1880s-1890s, London was schematically divided into two distinct parts, the opulent West End facing the indigent and crime-prone East End, Paris was also a city of contrasts and oppositions, not along a west-east axis but an interior-exterior one.

The Facts

Regarding unsolved criminal cases, meaning those that do not result in charges due to a lack of an indictment, the British judicial system has an advantage over the French system for historians eager to reconstruct the sequence of events: the public nature of the coroner’s inquest. During open hearings accessible to everyone, both anonymous individuals and journalists, the coroner questions witnesses, listens to experts, and synthesises the information.

In France, when the *procureur de la République* (public prosecutor) decides to initiate an inquiry, it is entrusted to a juge d’instruction (investigating judge) who, with the assistance of judicial police officers, collects evidence. There are no public hearings in this case; everything takes place in the secrecy of the magistrate’s office. This is why the facts reported in the newspapers sometimes prove to be imprecise, incomplete, or even contradictory.

The *Archives de la Préfecture de Police* in Pré-Saint-Gervais contain a cardboard folder labelled “*Montrouge Case. Woman Cut into Pieces. BA 1612.*” Unfortunately, apart from a few press clippings, it contains

5 Here is another error made by Will-Furet in his article of November 23, 1888. (“*The body of a young woman, cut into three sections, was found on Avenue d’Orléans, Rue d’Alésia, and in front of the Montrouge Church*”). Avenue d’Orléans (now Avenue du Général-Leclerc) and the Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge Church constitute one and the same location. However, he forgets to mention Rue Giordano-Bruno.

6 In his short story “The Burial of the Rats”, published in 1896 in the Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper, Bram Stoker portrayed with a consummate sense of horror a portion of this City of Waste that unfolded beyond the fortifications, on the edge of the commune of Montrouge.

only one official document: the handwritten report dated August 5, the day after the discovery of the dismembered body, by Georges Percha, the commissaire of the district, addressed to the *Préfet de Police*. Except for this text, nothing remains—no autopsy report, no record of hearings.

This brief report served as the basis for establishing the present reconstruction. While it does not offer a detailed view of the case⁷, it was useful in resolving certain contradictory information published in the press. For the rest, it was necessary to compare articles, cross-reference information, and isolate relevant data. We present the facts here in a raw and objective manner, without any intention of steering the reader towards any theory. It is up to everyone to form their own opinion.

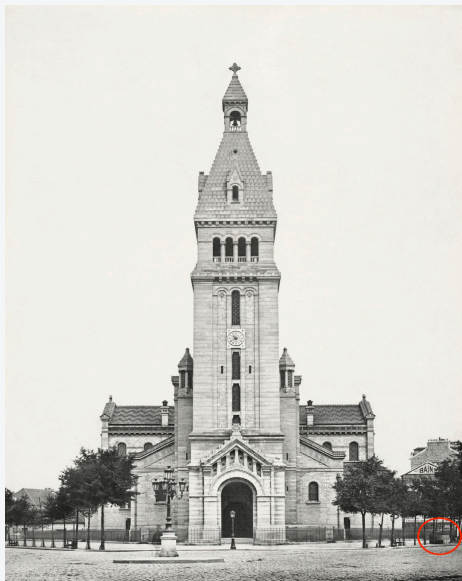
The First Discovery

In his report, the Petit-Montrouge's *commissaire de police* recounts the event in just two sentences:

I was informed yesterday morning at [missing word] o'clock that a tramway employee, Mr. Pamplume, had found at 12.30 a.m., in the urinal located on Avenue d'Orléans near the Montrouge Church, a package containing two legs and two arms. These human remains were wrapped in a white cloth covered with a piece of blue-green silk petticoat and tied with a braided string in the middle.

As a tramway driver for the Compagnie Générale des Omnibus, Mr. Pamplume⁸ is the one through whom the entire affair started. On the night of Tuesday, August 3, to Wednesday, August 4, 1886⁹, while he had just deposited his double-decker vehicle at the depot located at 123 Avenue d'Orléans and taken the horses to the stables, he was the one who, around 12.30 a.m., noticed the presence of the package on his way home.

Although *Le Radical* mentions a “double urinal with four stalls”, the enlargement of a photograph by Charles Marville, the official photographer of the City of Paris, depicting the Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge Church taken from the Four-Corners intersection, clearly reveals a urinal with six stalls, with two rows of three arranged facing each other.



Photograph by Charles Marville (circa 1877) depicting the Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge Church. Source: State Library Victoria.

⁷ That's why we only reproduce a few small excerpts.

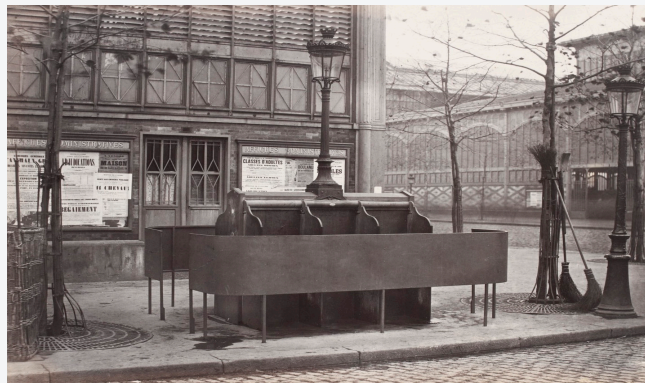
⁸ All journalists write “Pamplume.” As, unlike “Pampelume”, there are traces of several individuals with this surname on genealogy websites, we prefer to adopt this spelling.

⁹ Only *Le XIXe siècle*, in its edition of Thursday, August 5, provides the correct date for the crime: “during the night from Tuesday to Wednesday.” The other newspapers, also dated on the 5th, by merely placing the crime “last night”, suggest that it would have been committed from Wednesday to Thursday night, which contradicts the date of the human remains’ registration in the morgue register: August 4th at noon.

Entering the urinal, Mr. Pamplume noticed a package, right next to his shoe — “in the third compartment of this urinal, on the side of the church wall”, as indicated by *Le Figaro*. “Under the sheet metal plate that covers the upper part of the structure,” specifies *Le Radical*, before adding: “The first wrapping of the package, made of a piece of greenish silk that seems to be a fragment of a curtain, was removed, revealing a second wrapping, one of those oilcloth tablecloths called family tablecloths.”¹⁰ Regarding the rope, *Le Figaro* on August 7th adds this comment: “This rope [...] is curious. 1.80-metre long, it has a braided reinforcement in the middle, as sailors or coachmen who don’t have a whip would make.” As for the first wrapping, a blue-green fabric from a curtain or women’s garment—a dress or petticoat—*Le Petit Journal* explains that “this silk, all wet from the urinal water, had already bled”.



By enlarging the photograph by Charles Marville, the urinal on Avenue d’Orléans is distinctly visible. Source: State Library Victoria.



This other photograph by Charles Marville features a urinal of the same model as the one on Avenue d’Orléans. Source: State Library Victoria.

Finally, concerning the debris that Mr. Pamplume had a glimpse of when curiosity got the better of him and he moved aside the pieces of fabric, *La Gazette des Tribunaux*, in unison with most newspapers, states that “two arms and two legs cut at the knee”—in other words, without the thighs—lay on the cast-iron slab.

After the initial shock, Mr. Pamplume hailed two *gardiens de la paix* (common constables) on night patrol who were approaching the Four-Corners intersection. Although the *commissariat de police* (local police precinct) was only 120 metres away at 68 Avenue d’Orléans, and regardless of having to notify Mr. Percha, whose apartments were above the *commissariat*, regulations commanded the constables to first inform their immediate superior, the *officier de paix* (peace-officer) Louis Féger. Thus, after noting the coachman’s iden-

¹⁰ This refers to the oilcloth and the cord mentioned in the *Gaulois* article dated November 23, 1888, signed by Will-Furet, which informed us that they were of English manufacture. The term “toile cirée” or “waxed canvas”, refers to a fabric, usually made of cotton or linen, that undergoes a wax treatment during its manufacture, making it more rigid and easy to maintain. In France, the Maréchal factory in Vénissieux specialised in this type of fabric. If the police attributed English manufacture to the “family tablecloth” found in the urinal, as well as to the cord, it is because some unknown clues led them to do so.

tity, the *gardiens de la paix* transported the package 650 metres away to the central station of the Municipal Police, located in the town hall of the 14th arrondissement.

Here, we must pause for a moment to discuss the organisation of the Parisian Police, whose shortcomings were the subject of heated debates during the 1880s. Unlike today, the *commissaires de police*—normally one per district, with each of the 20 arrondissements comprising four districts —¹¹were part of the “sedentary” body of the *Préfecture de Police*. As such, the majority of their time was spent gathering public complaints and writing reports. In his *commissariat* on Avenue d’Orléans, open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., Georges Percha, like his colleagues, had no contingent of men, except for a secretary and two office boys¹². To apprehend the perpetrator of a crime, he had to either turn to the officer of the district, at the head of a force of several hundred uniformed agents, or to the *Préfet de Police* who, through the Chief of Municipal Police, could dispatch detectives of the *Sûreté*. On the other hand, the *officier de paix*, whose powers were limited to street policing, was obligated to defer to the *commissaire*, who alone had the authority to apprehend a suspect.

In summary, in a case like that of the dismembered woman, the two custodians of Petit-Montrouge’s security were, individually, devoid of any means of action.

General Commotion

Upon receiving the package, Louis Féger, the *officier de paix*, promptly sent for Mr. Percha as planned. Upon his arrival, with the central station equipped with a telegraph, the *commissaire* sent a dispatch to the First Division of the *Préfecture de Police*, requesting the dispatch of detectives from the *Sûreté*, and another to the public prosecutor’s office—this was the procedure in case of a presumed homicide. With this done, the majority of available troops were sent to comb the neighbourhood in an attempt to find other parts of the body.

In the meantime, the human remains and the two envelopes used to package them were laid out on the floor. It was noted that the white oilcloth was “worn and stained with spots” (*Le Figaro*). Regarding the “outer envelope”—the silk one—*La Petite Presse*, in its edition of August 15, when the decision was made to display the fabrics at the morgue in the hope of obtaining information, added this detail: it was “a piece of blue-green silk”, made “from a woman’s skirt composed of four lengths—this fabric, originally Havana-coloured, was later dyed blue; it has since served as a duvet cover, as there is still some down in the seams.”

While there was no doubt that it was a woman—“The roundness of the forms, the smallness of the hands and feet demonstrated it” (*Le Figaro*)—the same cannot be said for the colour of her hair. “The arms are covered with a light down. The victim had thus reached the age of full development. [...] From various other indicators, one can believe that this unfortunate woman had blond hair”, testifies *L’Intransigeant*. *Le Matin*’s reporter predicts that she was “light brown”. “Light brown or brunette,” corrects *La Lanterne*, conceding that “the murderer or murderers, undoubtedly wanting to prevent any identity research, carefully depilated the armpits.” It is also mentioned that a scar of about four centimetres, appearing to result from a violent blow received by the victim in her childhood, was discovered on the left tibia. But this detail, which could have helped identify the victim, will turn out to be a false lead; in its edition of August 7, *Le Figaro* announces that the mark “is not, as believed, an old scar. It is a groove traced by the braided rope, which, in this place, pressed against the flesh.”

11 In fact, there were only 75 commissaires, with ten districts sharing a single commissariat for two. This was the case for Georges Percha’s, whose jurisdiction extended to the neighbouring La Santé District.

12 *La Police à Paris, son organisation, son fonctionnement*, by a writer from *Le Temps*, Paris, Librairie du Temps, 1887.

For the rest, *Le Matin* was affirmative: “We were not dealing with anatomical pieces; all the debris belonged to the same woman’s body, and it was evident that the sections and disarticulation, skilful as they were, are not by the hand of a doctor or a student.”

With this initial examination completed, Georges Percha began his investigation by having himself taken to the urinal on Avenue d’Orléans, near the Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge Church. The journalist of *Le Figaro* recounts: “Across the street, the bars and the tobacco shop were closed. Only a café, located on the other side of the roundabout, was still lit. But from inside that café, nothing had been seen or heard, no more than the agents on surveillance at the intersection.”

It was only shortly after the *commissaire’s* return to the central station that two *gardiens de la paix*, “informed of the first discovery [...] and who were searching the area in the hope of completing these lugubrious findings” (*Le Cri du Peuple*), appeared in the large hall, carrying a new package. They brought with them additional sections of the body.

The Second Discovery

Regarding this new package, here is what Mr. Percha wrote to the *Préfet de Police*:

“At 3.30 a.m., two customs employees, the Tecquer brothers, passing through Rue d’Alésia, near No. 131, found a thigh and the posterior part of the body in the urinal placed there; these remains were unwrapped and immersed in the water flowing from the urinal.”

The *commissaire de police* is categorical: these new remains were not packaged. However, it should be noted that, except for *Le Matin* (“a mass of unwrapped flesh”) and *Le Radical* (“which were not covered by any wrapping and lay on the ground”), most newspapers agree that the new package was “exactly wrapped like the first” (*La Gazette des Tribunaux*) and “tied with thick twine” (*L’Intransigeant*). The confusion arises from the fact that, logically, the police officers did not move the body parts with bare hands and likely placed them in a bag for transport.



View of numbers 106 to 112 (from farthest to closest) on Rue d’Alésia (around 1894-1898). Source: Archives de la Ville de Paris.

It was the lower part of a woman’s torso—the pelvis, a part of the lower abdomen—still attached, by a flap of skin and muscle, to the right thigh. *Le Radical* reveals that “the pelvis was horribly mutilated, the belly was completely split vertically, the genital parts were torn off, as well as the entrails”. *Le Cri du Peuple* specifies that the belly was open “in its entire height with a blow from a very sharp cutting weapon”. “The genital parts

had been cut, almost torn off; the entrails had been removed”, attests *Le Petit Parisien*.

When questioned, the two *gardiens de la paix* explained that the new remains were discovered in “a urinal set up in a recess formed by a wall not in alignment in front of No. 131 and protected by a tin shelter” (*Le Petit Journal*).



The same photograph zooming in on the urinal. Source: Archives de la Ville de Paris.

The above photograph, from the iconographic collection of the *Archives de la Ville de Paris*, is of great help. It is observed that this urinal, compared to the one on Avenue d'Orléans, was of a rudimentary design. In the centre of the image, it is visible that the building at No. 110 Rue d'Alésia, opposite No. 131, did not comply with the alignment of the sidewalk and formed an acute angle with the facade of No. 108. It is in this corner that the public urinal (Visual 6) was installed, which offered a single basin against the wall. In front of the structure, a fragile sheet metal panel, covered with advertisements and municipal posters, partially protected the user from the gaze of passersby.

However, at the central station of the Municipal Police, the agents had barely recovered from their emotions when the next act was already beginning. A new piece had just been brought in. The last one.

The Third Discovery

In his report, Mr. Percha summarises this new episode in one sentence:

“Finally, at four o'clock, a certain Mr. Dhérissart, a farmer, passing through Rue Giordano-Bruno, saw a piece of flesh thrown into the land along the belt railway, and approaching, recognised a woman's torso missing the left breast.”

Rue Giordano-Bruno is “a kind of alley leading to the belt railway, about two hundred metres from the Montrouge Station” (*La Petite Presse*). In this part of the 14th arrondissement, as mentioned earlier, the line runs through a deep trench flanked by high and thick retaining walls. The railway track itself is difficult to access from the street—unless one wants to break their neck—and a wooden fence separates the sidewalk from the embankment overlooking the pit. It is “twenty metres from the bridge on Rue des Plantes that crosses the track” (*Le Petit Journal*) that the human torso was discovered, “behind the trellis of the belt railway enclosure” (*Gazette des Tribunaux*), “between the fence and the embankment” (*Le Matin*), “inside the light fence of slats bordering the embankment, rolled in the grass, two metres from the fence” (*Le Cri du Peuple*). Apparently, the murderer had slid the section through a gap in the thicket, but this “was not made by him; it has existed for a long time and is used by people who go to collect snails in the bushes there” (*Le Petit Journal*).

Several versions coexist in the press regarding the identity of those who made the discovery. For some, it was “Mr. Darissart, a gardener, residing on Rue Ledion, 14, who was on his way to work” (*Le Petit Pari-*

sien)¹³. For others, there is talk of a “caretaker, Mr. Desse, and a farmer, Mr. Marceron, from Malakoff” (*La Lanterne*). In *Le Petit Journal*, a “young labourer, working in the vicinity of Paris, in Châtenay” and a “sweeper named Desse, who was starting his shift in Rue des Plantes” are mentioned.

This apparent confusion is explained by the fact that several people were actually involved. *Le Figaro*’s account helps to visualise the scene: “A farmer passing by had seen it [the chest] from a distance and, calling a city caretaker, Mr. Desse, who was a bit far away, going to his work, he said, ‘Take a look, it’s a sheep’s back.’” For the caretaker, it was evident that they were dealing with a new piece of the dismembered woman about whom rumours had spread. It was therefore decided to bring it to the police station as quickly as possible. But, as reported by the journalist from *Gil Blas*, “They were quite embarrassed to carry this naked torso.” This is why the two men had to “stop a market gardener’s cart and borrow a bag from him to wrap the lugubrious debris”.

In any case, the contents of this third package solidify the horror of that ominous night from August 3 to 4, 1886: “It was a woman’s torso, but horribly mutilated, almost flayed,” says *La Lanterne*, before specifying, “The belly had been opened and emptied, the skin detached.”

Le Figaro provides even more detail: “The decapitated and slashed neck was still bloody, the sternum, cut into a triangle, revealed pieces of broken ribs; in place of the left breast, a wide wound—the breast had been cleanly cut off.”



Recap of the events in the August 14, 1886, edition of the weekly *L'Univers illustré*. Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The Autopsy

From eight in the morning, Ernest Taylor, head of the Parisian police, notified by telegraph, arrived at Petit-Montrouge with two of his men, chief-inspector Gaillarde and *brigadier* Jaume. A rather dull character, lacking the notoriety of his predecessors, Gustave Macé or Antoine Claude, and not enjoying the fame that Marie-François Goron, his successor, would later have, Taylor suffered, according to his detractors, from a clear lack of instinct. Moreover, the series of failures since his appointment in December 1885—the first of which was the unsolved murder of Prefect Jules Barrême—had severely tarnished his reputation.

Meanwhile, the human fragments were moved from the central station to the *commissariat*, and over the next two days, Mr. Percha’s offices served as the headquarters. Shortly after, in the morning, the *procureur de la République*, Octave Bernard, entered the scene, accompanied by the *juge d’instruction* Gaston Laurent-Atthalin, a young and tenacious magistrate appointed by him to lead the investigation.

¹³ *Le Radical* writes, “Mr. Henri Denissart, residing at 14 Rue Ledion.” However, like the “Mr. Darissart” mentioned by *Le Petit Parisien*, it appears that this is indeed the same man as the “sieur Dhérissart” from Georges Percha.

While Messrs Laurent-Atthalin, Taylor, and Percha began to summon the first witnesses, on Mr. Bernard's orders, the human remains were transported to the Morgue around eleven o'clock.

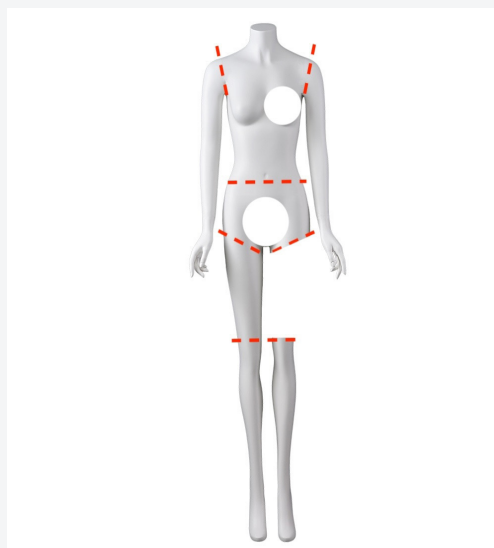
The Morgue of Paris

Unlike London, where, for both the "canonical" five crimes of Jack the Ripper and those of the Thames killer, the victims' bodies were examined in different morgues, some of which lacked essential equipment, all autopsies in the French capital were centralised in a single institution, the Morgue of Paris, located on the Île de la Cité, behind Notre-Dame Cathedral. The building had state-of-the-art facilities for preserving corpses, conducting dissections, and, should identification be necessary, displaying the bodies to the public behind a glass pane. Given the macabre nature of the dismembered woman case, only the tissues used to wrap the first package were displayed for a few days in the exhibition room.



The Morgue of Paris. Source: collection BIU Santé Médecine.

Until October 1889, when what remained of the unfortunate woman's body was buried in the Parisian cemetery of Bagneux, the debris was visible, upon an official request, at the Morgue of Paris. Thus, a few months after the tragedy, the engineer Arthur Good, a contributor to the *La Nature* magazine, was able to observe them at leisure. "Finally, in a visit we made to the Morgue, we were able, thanks to the courtesy of the clerk, Mr. Clovis Pierre, to examine the remains of the woman cut into pieces, a victim of the Montrouge crime whose perpetrator remained unknown; these remains, subjected to a temperature of -15 °C upon their arrival (August 4, 1886), have undergone no alteration; they have the appearance of marble or wax, and the skin's colour has only slightly browned."¹⁴



"The head, left thigh, and intestines as well as the genital parts and left breast were missing." (Extract from Georges Percha's report.)

¹⁴ "La Morgue de Paris et les nouveaux appareils frigorifiques", Arthur Good, *La Nature* No. 711, January 15, 1887.

On Wednesday, August 4, the corpse was autopsied by Dr. Charles Vibert, an expert with the Seine tribunal and the author that year of a *Manual of Forensic Medicine*, Dr. Paul Descoust, and Dr. Paul Brouardel, dean of the Paris School of Medicine, one of the most brilliant forensic experts of his time.

Although they noted that the remains were impregnated with phenol¹⁵, the three men nonetheless concluded that it was a murder. “*The opinion of these doctors is that there was a murder. The dissections were performed by an unskilled hand. There must have been pulling to separate the joints,*” notes *L’Intransigeant*, before adding: “*The belly does indeed present a wide wound—it is split throughout its height—and perhaps that is where the murderer began his horrible work; but the most probable hypothesis is that the murderer cut her throat with a razor or the instrument with which he finished dismembering her.*” *The 19th century, confirming that the dismemberment was “carried out by an inexperienced hand”, even suggests that “it would not have taken less than five hours”.*

Regarding the young woman, *Le Figaro* engages in deductive reasoning: “*The index finger of the right hand is not damaged. It only has a few needle punctures. The victim, therefore, worked but little. She only used the needle occasionally, accidentally, for mending, for example. Examining the breast left by the murderer is also interesting. This breast, although emptied below [...] remains firm, gathered, solid, not tired in a word. This woman may have had lovers, but she is not a prostitute.*”



Dr. Brouardel. Source: Bibliothèque de l’Académie nationale de médecine.

As for estimating the time of the crime, the forensic conclusions contradict the initial observations, which suggested the time of death to be around 3 p.m. when the fragments were found. According to *Le XIX^e siècle*, death would actually date “*three days ago, i.e., 48 hours before the lugubrious discovery*”, with the same newspaper adding, “*The precautions taken by the wretch who cut up this unfortunate woman are such that it seems almost impossible to establish the victim’s identity. Thus, the scrupulous care with which the murderer washed the body of his victim after cutting it into pieces was noted. He even went so far as to wash and wipe the inside of the thorax. It should be added that several ribs on the right side were fractured, suggesting that the victim must have put up a fierce struggle against her assailant.*”

On its part, *Le Matin* specifies that, after disarticulating the limbs, the criminal “*washed them so carefully that it is impossible to find a single bloodstain*”.

At the Morgue, the debris was photographed, individually and together—“*Three prints were taken*” (*Le*

¹⁵ Regarding this detail, Goron notes in his memoirs: “*The debris emitted a strong smell of phenol. Now, murderers usually do not want to preserve the body or body parts of their victim for as long as possible; they do not usually use antiseptics.*” (*L’Amour criminel*, Paris, Flammarion, 1899.) This “*strong smell of phenol*” is one of the commonalities in the case of the dismembered woman in Rue de Botzaris, whose remains were discovered on October 30, 1892.

Petit Journal)—then placed on the balance tray: their weight was 25 kilograms. According to autopsy results, “the victim is even younger than initially thought. The skeletal structure is that of a woman aged 18 to 20 years” (*Le Figaro*). Finally, “A very meticulous comparison of the debris allowed the exact height of the victim to be established, measuring, within a few millimetres, one metre fifty-three centimetres” (*Le Matin*).

The Offensive Dismemberment

French forensic medicine was at the forefront of the criminal dismemberment issue in the late 19th century, using the term “dissection” more commonly at that time. In the 1888 issue of the *Archives d'anthropologie criminelle*, the renowned Alexandre Lacassagne, a forensic medicine professor, dedicated an entire chapter to the subject. In this chapter, the Lyonnais scholar believed that in our so-called civilised societies, this operation had the sole and unique purpose of eliminating the evidence of the crime. It would take about fifteen years and the work of the Brazilian physician Raimundo Nina Rodrigues for the concept of *offensive dismemberment* (as opposed to *defensive*) to be developed and popularised.

In an article dated 1901, the year marking the emergence of the concept in criminology’s glossary, Dr. Albert Prieur wrote these enlightening words: “To this form of [offensive] dissection belong dissections carried out by the insane and epileptics, vindictive dissection after which the criminal serves the mutilated remains of a loved one as a stew to their enemy, and finally, dissection by violent criminals who, not content with taking the life of their victim, derive pleasure from mutilating the corpse¹⁶.” He defined what unites all these types of killers: “Their entire psychic activity is directed towards the desire for the sadistic act almost always identical to itself, the mind immobilised by the desire to appropriate or violate an organ, always the same.”

In other words, in August 1886, none of the three eminent forensic doctors who performed the autopsies on the remains of the dismembered woman had yet developed the theoretical tools to systematically profile the murderer.

However, the reports in the press were quite instructive on this point. For instance, by reporting that on Tuesday evening, a “young man, getting off the tram at this location [near Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge Church] at eleven forty-five, entered the urinal, kicked the package with his foot, but did not otherwise worry about it and left”, the journalist from *La Lanterne* suggested that the killer had not hesitated to leave his package at a time when there were still many onlookers on Avenue d’Orléans. This led the journalist to write about this individual: “It is surprising how casually he scattered the remains of his victim, skilfully hiding himself, but placing the corpse’s remains almost in plain sight of passersby.”

Le Figaro, on the other hand, was even more affirmative: “[The murderer] acted with unprecedented composure and nonchalance. The embankment of the railway is at least fifteen metres high and is planted with a thicket of acacias. He could have hidden the debris there. No, he calmly passed it through a hole in the fence and didn’t even bother to push it to make it fall. He gently placed it on the grass, exposed to everyone’s view.”

Moreover, regarding the location where the third package was discovered, the embankment of Giordano-Bruno Street, the reporters seem to have overlooked one detail. The night before the tragedy, on the night of Monday, August 2nd, a serious incident had occurred around 3 a.m. on the outskirts of the neighbourhood. 150 metres from the Montrouge Station, heading east, the tracks of the inner-city railway entered a nearly one-kilometre-long tunnel, which emerged on the other side of Montsouris Park. At its first third, just below the army’s horse training school, a part of the tunnel had collapsed with a crash, forcing the authorities to suspend train traffic on this section to urgently begin consolidation work.

16 Dr. Albert Prieur, “Essai sur la psychologie du dépeçage criminel,” published in the *Mercur de France* journal, Paris, Volume XXXVIII, April-June 1901, pp. 289-319.

In its August 14th edition, the weekly *L'Univers illustré* explains that shortly after the collapse, an “exceptional police service was organised by the police prefecture to prevent the invasion of the surrounding land by the curious crowd that flocks to these areas. From the early hours, various services of the City engineers, bridges and roads, water company, and gas company were called to the scene.”

Furthermore, *Le Siècle* explains that the evening after, Mr. Percha, “who had finished his duty at midnight, had just returned home after examining the state of the tunnel collapse [...] when agents came to get him” to inform him of the discovery of human remains. The information is thought-provoking: had it been just a little different, the magistrate, returning from his visit to the construction site, might have encountered the murderer depositing his loot in the urinal, just a few dozen meters from the commissariat?

The Investigation

The investigations were conducted at a fast pace. *L'Intransigeant* had immediately set the terms of the problem: “One thing is essential: the discovery of the victim’s head.” In this matter, *Le Petit Journal* was pessimistic: “Even if the head is found, one wonders if it will be possible to recognise a human face. Indeed, the various other parts of the body have been lacerated in a horrifying manner.”

To find the head, the agents of the *Sûreté* organised a search of the neighbourhood and its surroundings. The sewers, vacant lots, the embankment along the belt railway, and the ditch of the fortifications were examined inch by inch. *L'Intransigeant* reported that the police constables “go in groups through the narrow streets of Montrouge and ring the doorbells of all houses with gardens facing the street, but the remains remain unfound. The head has undoubtedly been burned, boiled, crushed, and will not be found.”

The disreputable haunts of Rue de Vanves and the neighbouring Plaisance District were subjected to close surveillance. The police questioned some suspicious individuals, but since it seemed certain that the murderer was not a professional criminal, there was little chance of catching him in the usual prowler hide-outs.

The search also extended to carriage rental services. With only one part of the remains—the first one, in the urinal on Avenue d’Orléans—wrapped and the other two bare, it was difficult to imagine that a man could have covered a long distance with such burdens on his arms, even making several trips.

On the evening of the tragedy, around midnight, several people had noticed the presence of a heavily loaded handcart. The man pulling it would have passed through Rue d’Alésia and Avenue d’Orléans, then retraced his steps. However, as *Le Petit Journal* rightly pointed out, “during the night, Avenue d’Orléans is crisscrossed by a large number of market carts”.

Around the same time, a customs employee, on guard at the Montrouge Gate, had seen a yellow carriage loaded with several packages moving along Boulevard Brune. The coachman seemed unfamiliar with the route and was wandering aimlessly. “This customs employee no longer remembers the carriage number; however, he was able to provide a fairly detailed description of the vehicle, the horse, and the coachman” (*Le Petit Parisien*). A few days later, 150 metres from the Sèvres Bridge on the right bank of the Seine, an angler discovered a drifting package near his boat containing a woman’s breast. The man hurried to bring his find to the Saint-Cloud’s commissaire de police, who sent it to the Morgue, assuming it belonged to the dismembered woman. However, the forensic doctor, Mr. Descoust, “nullified this hypothesis. He established that this breast was affected by cancer and had been removed as a result of surgery” (*L'Intransigeant*).

A large crowd, eagerly awaiting new developments, stood relentlessly in front of the commissariat. Over the days, a woman's boot was found some distance from the urinal on Avenue d'Orléans, believed to have belonged to the victim. A tuft of chestnut hair—woman's hair—wrapped in newspaper was also reported. Finally, a large blood clot was discovered on the embankment, 50 metres from where the torso lay, inside the pages of a crumpled newspaper dated July 10, 1886. Unfortunately, each of these findings proved to be red herrings for the agents.

Meanwhile, *L'Intransigeant* announced that the “*direction of the investigation has been taken away from Commissioner Percha*”. Now it was Ernest Taylor, head of the *Sûreté*, who had a free rein. The first had not fallen short, far from it, but, in the eyes of public opinion, it was not conceivable to leave the heavy burden of operations to a commissaire of district.

Mr. Taylor knew that the identification of the victim was one of his only chances to solve the case. Consequently, his agents redoubled their efforts to check all cases of disappearances. A titanic task! “*Numerous letters indicating the disappearance of women reach the Service de la Sûreté. About thirty such indications have been provided*” (*L'Intransigeant*). It didn't matter; everything had to be verified... Fortunately, according to *Gil Blas*, the *Sûreté* would have kept a piece of information about the victim's body secret. “*It would be marked with a sign that a mother could not mistake*’, according to Mr. Pierre, the Morgue's clerk.” “[...] *A characteristic sign noted by Mr. Brouardel on one of the fragments he was examining*”, adds *La Gazette des Tribunaux*. Thanks to this, it was determined that none of the missing women was the dismembered woman.



Ernest Taylor
Source: *Le Journal du 20 janvier 1908*.



Gaston Laurent-Atthalin.
Photo by Antoine Meyer.



Marie-François Goron
Engraving by Auguste Vimar.

Wearied, remembering that the human remains were impregnated with carbolic acid, and despite the forensic conclusions about the criminal nature of the case, Taylor began to investigate the hospitals, where it was known that pieces of corpses, and even entire bodies, sometimes disappeared. *La Justice*, in its edition of August 28, bluntly concluded: “*The police de Sûreté has just finished the investigations carried out in hospitals to discover if the remains of the dismembered woman did not come from any amphitheatre. These investigations have yielded no results.*”

Time passed, and the press began to openly mock the failure of the head of the *Sûreté*. As early as mid-August, rumours circulated about Ernest Taylor's resignation—it would not happen until a year later! Newspapers fooled around by publishing classified ads to reward anyone providing the name and address of the victim. The editor of *La Lanterne* commented on M. Taylor's brief trip to Trouville, Normandy: “*He hopes, no doubt, that some wave will bring him the head of the woman from Montrouge and the names of the ten or twelve authors of crimes he has not discovered.*” On August 20, *L'Écho de Paris* published a fake interview with the Montrouge murderer in which the butcher “*revealed*” that he had been planning his crime for

many months. “My decision was irrevocable from the day Mr. Taylor was appointed head of the *Sûreté*. From that moment on, no obstacle, no fear, no danger of punishment could stop me.”

The theory of the abortionist, championed by *Gil Blas* before being definitively rejected by the forensic experts, briefly resurfaced in mid-September after the search conducted by the *Sûreté* at the home of a herbalist midwife on Avenue d’Orléans. But the public learned the next day that a denunciation by an enemy of this lady was behind the move. *Le Cri du Peuple* deplored that this affair served “daily as a pretext for people seeking revenge. The number of denunciations received at the police prefecture is incalculable. Each day brings its own.” And he expressed a hope: “We hope that severe repression will serve as a lesson to those tempted to play with justice to satisfy their personal grudge.” Months passed, and in the absence of new facts, weariness and forgetfulness took their toll. In November 1887, Taylor resigned from his position as head of the *Sûreté*—officially for health reasons. Marie-François Goron, who joined the service as an assistant chief a few weeks after the start of the case, was designated to replace him.

A few years later...

Although their work, one as head of the *Sûreté*, the other as a *juge d’instruction*, kept them occupied without interruption, Goron and Laurent-Atthalin, each in their own way, never gave up. While the uproar of the Whitechapel murders—and also those related to various cases of human remains found in the Thames—had not yet subsided, *Le Siècle* of December 9, 1888, reminded that in Paris, regarding the Montrouge crime, “Mr. investigating judge Atthalin never closed the investigation into this case”. *Le Temps* even claimed that he had “just sent a circular letter to the police commissaries of Paris, accompanied by various fragments of the fabrics in which these remains were wrapped, in order to have the magistrates investigate with the fabric merchants in their district to find out the origin of these fabrics, believed to be of English manufacture”.

As for Mr. Goron, the newspaper *La France* wrote two weeks earlier, about the “*Mysteries of London*”: “Although these crimes take place in a country on the other side of the strait, Mr. Goron, our head of the *Sûreté*, did not lose interest. He followed the investigations step by step, aiming to discover the murderer and drew conclusions.” The journalist even claimed that he “had the file of the dismembered woman in Montrouge brought to him and found a certain correlation between these various crimes. With the help of brigadier Jaume, he conducted the investigation that only confirmed him in his initial idea.”

One thing is certain: neither Marie-François Goron nor Gaston Laurent-Atthalin solved the mystery of the Montrouge unknown woman... let alone those of the murders committed by Jack the Ripper and the Thames Murderer—making them share a commonality with the sleuths of Scotland Yard.

If Goron’s reputation was not tarnished by the failure of his service in the Parisian mystery—after all, in August 1886, he was still only a *commissaire de police* in Pantin, a suburb northwest of the city, outside the fortifications—the head of the *Sûreté* would have a lot to do on October 30, 1892, when another sensational case broke out, that of the woman dismembered in Rue de Botzaris, which, rightly or wrongly, the press immediately linked to the Montrouge crime.

And in this new drama, too, the phantasmagorical shadow of Jack the Ripper would loom.

Fabrice Bourland is a writer living and working near Paris. Along with having written books, he has been published in numerous magazines, anthologies and collections.

Book Reviews

One-Armed Jack: Uncovering the Real Jack the Ripper

Sarah Bax Horton

Michael O'Mara Books Ltd. 2024

304 pgs.

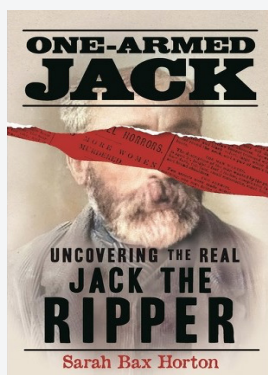
ISBN-10 : 178929536X

ISBN-13 : 978-1789295368

One-Armed Jack is a suspect book centered on Hyam Hyams, a Polish Jew who was detained by the Met Police and committed as a dangerous lunatic to Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum in April, 1889, and then later that year sent to the City of London lunatic asylum at Stone. An alcoholic who suffered from epileptic fits, Hyams is 'one-armed' due to an injury sustained to his left arm that made it difficult for Hyams to bend or fully extend it.

Hyams was first posited as a suspect by researcher Mark King in 2001. Although by confusing two men sharing the same name, King's work contained much incorrect information which had been repeated over the years, until the correct Hyam Hyams was identified by Tracy I'anson and Chris Phillips in 2010. Hyams was extremely violent towards his wife, Sarah, as well as to authorities at the asylums and suffered from extreme paranoia.

Horton attempts to put him in the frame as Jack the Ripper by citing this history of violence, skills with a knife, and by noting his familiarity with the streets of the East End. He may have had several nearby bolt holes available, which were mostly businesses run by members of his large extended family. She suggests that Hyams was responsible for 6 murders, the anonical Five plus Tabram, and also the attacks on Annie Millwood and Annie Farmer. A final assault on his



wife is what led to Hyams's removal from circulation. We're told that Sir Robert Anderson knew that Hyam Hyams was the Ripper, and his later writings on the suspect refer to him, and not, as Swanson believed, Kosminski.

Like all suspect books, *One-Armed Jack* is a top-down affair. Find your suspect and then build the case underneath him using any and every tie available, no matter how tenuous. I personally don't find Hyams a compelling enough of a suspect to merit a book-length treatment, but perhaps you will. - JM

Jack the Ripper: The Entire Life Story, Biography, Facts & Quotes (Jack the Ripper as Reported by the Victorian Press).

John Paez

Published by Percy Clint (given in the book) or Michael Legaspi (given on Amazon)

ISBN: 9780995293977

£18.95



There are several ways to describe this book, and none of them is repeatable in polite company, but being of a charitable disposition, I allow that this may not be the author's fault. The book may not be what the author wrote. It's evidently a translation from another language, but the translation appears to have been done either by somebody unfamiliar with English or possibly by a machine having a really bad day.

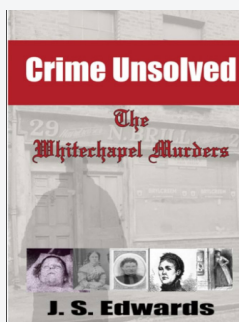
First of all, it is unreadable. True, sometimes one can get a sense of what the author is talking about, but it's not worth the effort. The book begins with

eighty-two pages that appear to belong to a different book about mysterious disappearances. It begins with an account of Sir Walter Raleigh's 'Lost Colony' and proceeds to tell about the Bermuda Triangle and assorted vanishings. The Whitechapel murders vanished as well. The author duly finds them and finally gets down to the nitty-gritty, or one would believe if one understood it.

And here's the funny thing, the book ends with the discovery of Mary Kelly's body. John McCarthy just informed the police and...an abrupt end to the book. So, don't even think about wasting your money. Amazon simply shouldn't be selling this sort of rubbish. It does them no good, if their products can't be trusted. One thing you may find amusing, the author has a disclaimer holding himself not responsible for anything like damages and cost incurred by using the information in the book, and recommends that the reader 'consult a professional medical practitioner in order to ensure you are both able and healthy enough to participate in this program.' (I assume the 'program' is the book.) Nuff said. There's no index, biblio, or anything like that.

The Whitechapel Murders (Crimes Unsolved)

J.S. Edwards
Independently Published, 2024
241pp; illus;
ISBN: 9798396810990
£16 Hardcover, £13.52 Softcover,
£7.56 Kindle ebook



Is it understandable that some people want to give readers their own take on the Jack the Ripper story, and setting out this complex subject on paper undoubtedly helps one get the facts straight, but far too many people have succumbed to this temptation. There's an absolute glut of overviews of the Ripper murders, nary a one offering anything original or new. Reworking the same old facts takes a hell of a lot of time and effort, and I respect the dedication needed to do it, but we really don't need any more.

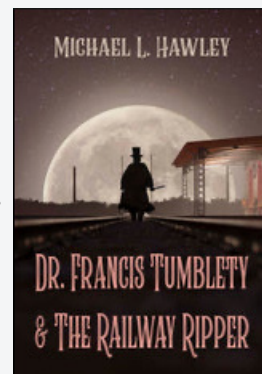
Jason Scott Edwards' contribution to the field is a fairly pedestrian effort and I'm afraid it isn't particularly well-written. There's also a liberal smattering

of obvious typos such as Arron instead of Aaron, Autom instead of Autumn, and Faron instead of Farson. And there are no notes, no bibliography and no index. In the book's favour, it is generously illustrated.

If you are in the market for a personal overview of the case, there has to be better choices out there.

Dr. Francis Tumblety & The Railway Ripper

Michael L. Hawley
Sunbury Press, 2023
Hardcover, paperback &
ebook
232pp; illus



Dr. Francis Tumblety & The Railway Ripper is the third Michael Hawley book, following *The Ripper's Haunts* and *Jack the Ripper Suspect: Dr. Francis Tumblety*, that compiles and presents new, up-to-date research about the life of this most interesting Ripper suspect. Each of Hawley's previous books also contain a healthy dose of theorizing- which is to be expected in suspect-focused works- and this latest book is no exception. In fact I would suggest that *Dr. Francis Tumblety & The Railway Ripper* is his most speculative work to date. Normally the chosen title would repel most 'Ripper research' oriented Sergeant Joe Fridays and perhaps conjure up bad memories of author R. Michael Gordon's past follies published on the suspect candidacy of George Chapman, but beneath the title, there is much to appreciate in this book.

Before getting into the meat of the 'Railway Ripper' matter, Hawley uses the first few chapters to shore up subjects that have faced some criticism in his earlier written output.

An examination of the issue of Inspector Andrews being sent to the United States in December 1888 to search for "the Whitechapel fiend" is presented with new research that tends to verify that the trip actually took place, rather than being

invented by a reporter, and that Andrews remained in America for weeks, not two days at the most, as has been argued. This points to the prospect that Scotland Yard considered Tumblety a serious suspect for the Ripper murders.

The author also revisits the eternal argument that Tumblety was remanded in Holloway Prison on charges of gross indecency from 7 November to 14 November and therefore could not have committed the murder of Mary Jane Kelly. Here, again aided by new research, Hawley convincingly demonstrates that Tumblety was likely released just a day or two after he was arrested and was therefore very capable of perpetrating the slaughter in Millers Court.

Francis Tumblety famously jumped bail and arrived back in New York City on 2 December, 1888. In departing the ship *La Bretagne*, he was reported to have been wearing 'a long English cloth Ulster without a cape'. It is this attire, along with his height, known whereabouts, and hatred of women -a fact on record- that Michael Hawley uses to suggest Dr. Tumblety might be responsible for any one of *dozens* of unsolved murders and assaults in the Eastern half of the United States between 1880 and 1901, many of which Hawley then goes on to describe.

He presents a list of 77 incidents and details the particulars of several of them, followed by his explanation of why Tumblety should not be ruled out as the perpetrator. On the surface this speculation is interesting, though by no means totally compelling. If one is interested in crime of this time period you may be irresistibly drawn, as I was, to look deeper into some of these cases. Perhaps you might find, as I did, press reports that Hawley seems to have missed.

One of the more persuasive accounts presented in the book is the 1881 murder and dismemberment of Ella Clark. Her body was found bundled in two sacks and discarded in swampy woodlands in Freeport, Long Island. At the time of her death Ms Clark was said to have been attempting to visit an abortionist, a Dr. Thomas, though he was quickly cleared of suspicion after having given convincing evidence that he had never seen nor heard of the victim. The coroner's inquest ultimately ruled that her death was indeed caused by

a botched abortion. What draws Tumblety into the frame is the proximity of his Manhattan office-less than one mile away from both where Ella Clark was living at the time and also near the office of Dr. Thomas. This opens up the possibility that, having failed to meet Dr. Thomas, Ella Clark literally walked into Dr. Tumblety's murderous web instead.

Tumblety was never suspected of this murder, but the author relates two other individuals who were. While doing so, he gives the reader the impression that the lead detective in the case, Stephen Payne, was simply desperate to pin charges on any local physician once all leads in the case had dried up.

The first suspect that Detective Payne accused of murdering Ella Clark is a Dr. Charles Smith. Smith was arrested on suspicion of receiving a package containing the remains, mailed from Brooklyn, and of depositing the remains in the swamp. Dr. Smith was able to produce a package containing a suit of clothes, not body parts. Despite Detective Payne's objections, the judge was convinced that this was the same exact package and so discharged him from custody.

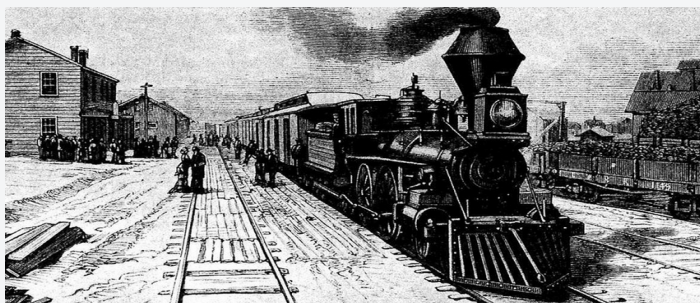
The second suspect is a bit more interesting. Over a year after the case against Dr. Smith was dropped, a Mrs. Margaret Carman was arrested and charged with the murder of a woman by malpractice, i.e. a botched abortion. This dead woman was found in Carman's residence on Long Island, near the swamp where Ella Clark's remains were discovered 2 years prior. Testimony was produced that a member of the family who owned the swampland saw a wagon pass into the swamp around the time of Clark's disappearance, and that Margaret Carman's husband owned such a wagon. Evidence was also presented that Carman had a young female guest visiting her home at this same time. While not charged with the murder of Ella Clark, Margaret Carman was convicted of the murder of the woman for which she was arrested and sentenced to ten years in Sing-Sing prison. In my opinion, Hawley does not provide enough detail about the evidence against Margaret Carman to allow the reader to properly weigh that evidence against that of Tumblety, which is based solely on his proximity to two locations in the large

metropolis.

The 1896 murder of Maimie Sullivan in Patterson, New Jersey is another case where Hawley picks Tumblety as the murderer, this time based on an eyewitness describing ‘a tall man wearing an Ulster coat with the collar turned up’ seen shortly after the attack. What isn’t mentioned in Hawley’s account, which he apparently missed, is that a man came forward to admit to being this tall man in the Ulster coat. According to The Sun newspaper of March 16, 1896, Joseph Devine, a butcher, said he had “passed the place where Mamie Sullivan was murdered about the time of the murder, and that he wore a gray ulster with the collar turned up and a slouch hat. He had been visiting his mother-in-law”. In addition to this revelation came the testimony of eyewitness James Howe, who described a man with dark clothes, wearing a derby hat, with slight mustache and of medium height. The New York Tribune goes on to report that this new suspect has “replaced the much-sought-for tall man in a gray overcoat.” It looks like Tumblety can be exonerated for this particular murder.

That Hawley took the time to chronicle dozens of unfamiliar and unsolved murders and assaults that occurred in the United States in the later half of the 19th century is alone enough to recommend this book to our readers.

Bringing us up to date with the current research on Tumblety is also enough to recommend it. It’s in combining the two elements that leaves me questioning whether or not the author has built a bridge too far. However, to his credit he states his position clearly- if Tumblety was responsible for just one of these many cases, then it should further propel him up the suspect ladder by proving that he was capable of channeling his extreme hatred of women into something more monstrous and deadly. - JM



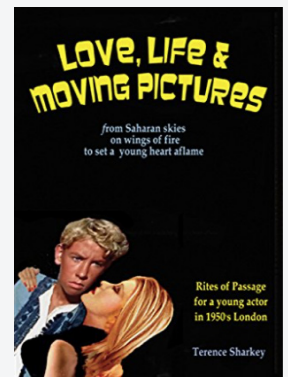
Love, Life and Moving Pictures. Rites of Passage for a Young Actor in 1950s London

Terence Sharkey
Independently Published on
Kindle in 2014,
softcover edition 2017.

This book is a POD (Print On Demand) title.

182pp; illus; biblio; index
ISBN: 9781508578321

£7.39 softcover, £5.84 kindle ebook.



Back in 1987, several books were published in anticipation of the centenary of the Jack the Ripper murders the following year. Among them were books which have acquired a certain notoriety since their publication, such as Martin Fido’s *The Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper*, Colin Wilson and Robin Odell’s *Jack the Ripper, Summing Up and Verdict*, Martin Howells and Keith Skinner’s *The Ripper Legacy*, and a revised edition of Donald Rum-below’s classic *The Complete Jack the Ripper*. Two books in that 1987 bunch which have almost been forgotten are Peter Underwood’s *Jack the Ripper, One Hundred Years of Mystery* and Terence Sharkey’s similarly titled *Jack the Ripper, One Hundred Years of Investigation*. Peter Underwood was famous as a writer about ghosts and hauntings, but to the best of my knowledge he had never written about Jack the Ripper or expressed an interest in the case, so it seemed as if his book was simply jumping on the centenary bandwagon. His book still feels that way, despite claims therein that he visited Whitechapel in the early 1960s and spoke with locals who recalled the murders.

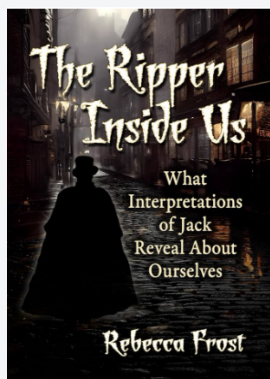
The author of the other book, Terence Sharkey, was unknown to me. And he remained so until just the other week. I had often wondered who he was. If he had an interest in the subject, why wasn’t he a member of the Cloak and Dagger Club or a subscriber to *Ripperana* or *Ripperologist*? Was ‘Terence Sharkey’ a pseudonym for someone better known in Ripper circles? Did he keep his head down because his book was, shall we say, not one of the best, which may explain why it’s pretty generally forgotten? Well, I came across *Love, Life & Moving Pictures* by Ter-

ence Sharkey, and it's by the same person who wrote *Jack the Ripper, One Hundred Years of Investigation*. So, now I know that he was a child actor in the 1950s, mainly in theatre. His only film was *The Black Tent*, which was set during World War II. It had a good cast, including Anthony Steel, Donald Sinden, Donald Pleasance, Michael Craig and Anton Dffering, who naturally played a Nazi, and Bryan Forbes, whose scene was deleted. It is generally agreed that the location shooting in Libya was very good and is perhaps the most enjoyable and noteworthy thing about the movie, but I haven't seen it and I don't always trust a critic's opinion.

Anyway, Sharkey discusses making the film at some length in *Love, Life, and Moving Pictures. Rites of Passage for a Young Actor in 1950s London*. Sadly, though it falls outside the parameters of his book, he does not mention Jack the Ripper at all, so I still have no idea what his interest in the subject was or is, or how he feels about it after thirty-seven years. One thing he says in this book is that a Kindle edition of *Jack the Ripper, One Hundred Years of Investigation*, would soon be available. That was in 2017, seven years ago, so I guess it's never going to happen, but used copies are readily available, and you'll probably get a copy, inc. p&p, for less than a tenner.

The Ripper Inside Us. What Interpretations of Jack Reveal About Ourselves

Rebecca Frost
rebeccafrostwrites.com
Jefferson, North Carolina:
McFarland & Co., 2024
www.mcfarlandpub.com
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This is Rebecca Frost's third bite of the Jack the Ripper apple – her first book examined how Ripper writers have discussed the victims, and her second bizarrely compared the Ripper with a totally different and modern American crime. In this book, she looks at how representations of the Ripper have

changed over the years as authors respond to new information, reinterpretations of old information, advancements such as profiling and DNA, and assorted media, from podcasts to graphic novels. As the £40 cover price probably indicates, Rebecca Frost is writing for a specialist audience who knows what she's talking about. I'm afraid that the audience didn't include me, as I realised this when she wrote that "the Ripper case makes such a unique Thematic Aptitude Test", but she didn't explain what that is and never mentioned it again. I discovered that it is a Thematic Apperception Test. That didn't help me much.

Anyway, apparently the intention was to see what this remodelling of the Ripper tells us about ourselves. Or, as Hallie Rubenhold put it in a blurb on the back cover, Frost asks the "uncomfortable question, what does our need to keep telling these stories [about Jack the Ripper] say about us?"

Frost begins with a long introduction in which she provides an overview of the case, but observes, "Most of the known facts about the Canonical Five women murdered by Jack the Ripper centre on the discoveries of the murdered women's bodies, but not on the women themselves."

So, it's clear that Hallie Rubenhold's influence will be felt, and it is. Frost goes out of her way to show some of the victims in the best possible light. Of Annie Chapman, she writes, "Although she, too, left her husband and children, it was a mutual separation due to the death of one of their children..." This, though, is untrue. A 12-year-old daughter had died from meningitis, and that must have been devastating, but Chapman was a severe alcoholic who spent a year in rehab and fell from the wagon within weeks of leaving the Sanatorium. To her credit, she apparently realised that she was unequal to the battle for sobriety and left her husband before her drunken behaviour further embarrassed him and perhaps caused him to lose his job.

As we know, Chapman was ejected from her lodging house on the night she died because she didn't have the money to pay for her bed, but Frost says this was "because she had been in the hospital and unable to work and not because she drank it all away." Chap-

man had been to the hospital, but probably only as a day patient or for no more than a night, and it probably doesn't explain her shortage of money. Annie was a severe alcoholic, and it is likely she did spend what little money she had on drink.

It is presumably Rubenhold's argument that Mary Nichols collapsed in a drunken stupor on an open pavement in Bucks Row that is behind Frost's claim that "a murdered woman, like a woman so drunk as to be passed out on the street at all hours, was not out of the ordinary for the East End..." The East End was a very violent place and women bore the brunt of the violence, but the popular belief that murder was commonplace is wrong. The Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for 1888 states that there were twenty-eight cases of murder in London, eight of which were of women classed as "unfortunates", five of those being the victims of Jack the Ripper. In other words, had it not been for Jack the Ripper, there would have been three prostitute murders in London in the whole year! As for the frequency of drunken women being found collapsed on open pavements, I don't have any data, nor have I ever seen any, so it is unclear how Frost can assert that it was so common as to not occasion comment. Even the contention that Nichols was in a drunken stupor is open to doubt. We don't know how drunk she was when last seen, and we don't know if she could have sobered up on the half-mile walk to Buck's Row or its immediate vicinity.

But let's not linger over the influence of Hallie Rubenhold. Let's talk about me. Or rather John Bennet and myself, because in our *The Complete and Essential Jack the Ripper*, we argued that the serious historical approach to Jack began with Tom Cullen. Or, as Rebecca Frost put it, "Begg and Bennett mark the emergence of 'a new, improved era of 'Ripperology'" in 1965 with the publication of Tom Cullen's *Autumn of Terror: Jack the Ripper, His Crimes and Times* and Robin Odell's *Jack the Ripper: In Fact and Fiction*." She then batted our comment out of court, "Cullen and Odell, however, marked a short era instead of a complete turn in Ripperology, which descended into royal theories and elaborate conspiracies in the 1970s..."

Let me briefly explain why Rebecca Frost is wrong. The people in 1888 found the idea of a "motiveless" murder incomprehensible, so they tried to rationalise it by suggesting either a motive for the killer or his occupation based on the skill set the Ripper was supposed to possess. From Leonard Matters to Robin Odell, writers were concerned with the Ripper's motive. Matters and Edwin T. Woodhall named a suspect but made no effort to prove his or her existence. They were there to make the motive more believable. What made Tom Cullen's *Autumn of Terror* so different is that it was the first book to name an identifiable person whose life could be researched. In fact, Daniel Farson "discovered" Druitt and revealed his initials on his 1959 television programme, Farson's Guide to the British. However, Farson didn't write his own book, *Jack the Ripper*, until 1972, and was therefore pre-empted by Cullen.

Frost rightly says that in the 1970s Ripperology descended into "Royal theories and elaborate conspiracies", although she doesn't realise even these named real people. But Frost disregards this other strand of Ripperology, which can be traced back to Cullen. She doesn't mention Daniel Farson's search for Montague Druitt in his *Jack the Ripper* (1972) at all, and amazingly, she only mentions Donald Rumbelow inconsequentially and almost in passing. Yet his overview of Jack the Ripper in all its forms, *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (1975), is one of the most influential books on the subject. Next year, it will be fifty years old, and has never been out of print! Another book, published in 1975, was *A Casebook on Jack the Ripper* (much expanded and rewritten as *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive Casebook* in 2014). It's written by Richard Whittington-Egan, who is regarded by many as the doyen of British true crime writers. His sensible and wonderfully written assessments of the various theories were and are highly regarded, but Frost does not mention Richard or his book at all.

Frost speeds past the centenary decade of the 1980s. Martin Fido and his *Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper* (1987) isn't mentioned at all, yet it was Martin and not Philip Sugden, as Frost repeatedly claims, who was the first academic to turn his attention to Jack the Ripper. He carefully evaluated the sources, he was (surprisingly) the first to identify Anderson's

unnamed Polish Jew with Macnaghten's "Kosminski", and his determined trawl through asylum records identified Aaron Kosminski. Frost similarly ignores *The Ripper Legacy* (1987) by Martin Howells and Keith Skinner (although she does mention them as "recognised experts"), *Jack the Ripper: The Bloody Truth* (1987) by Melvin Harris, and my own *Jack the Ripper: The Uncensored Facts* (1988), which eschewed suspects altogether (except for those named by Macnaghten) and paved the way for later titles like *The Jack the Ripper A to Z* (1992), Sugden's *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (1994), and *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook* (2000).

Today, we dismiss Matters to McCormick, although their books are highly collectable, and their theories are hardly discussed at all in more recent books. But with Cullen and Odell, we see authors who are still highly respected, and their books are bought and read.

Rebecca Frost isn't a historian. No responsible historian would have written, as Frost has, that Macnaghten "... names Kosminski and Ostrog in support of the idea that the Ripper had to have been a "foreigner," and also Jewish". If there is one thing we can be certain of, it's that Macnaghten did not name these men "in support" of any theory.

Frost also comes to some extraordinary conclusions. In *The Complete Jack the Ripper* reference is made to Rumbelow being the first to publish certain information. From that passing remark - which wasn't made by Donald Rumbelow, as Frost says, but by Colin Wilson in the book's introduction - Frost manages to conclude that "It is apparently the mark of a true Ripperologist to remember which piece of information, be it image, description, or document, was discovered by which person and be able to recite this information from memory with Quiz-bowl-like accuracy." How on earth does Frost reach such an improbable and bizarre conclusion from such a simple statement? It's disturbing because if she can reach a bizarre conclusion like that, can other conclusions be trusted?

At the beginning of chapter four Rebecca Frost asked, "What, exactly, is a Ripperologist?" She later answers that question, writing, "It would seem, then, that anyone whose work is accepted for publication

[in the journal *Ripperologist*] is a Ripperologist, and that the term is one adopted from the inside. What does it mean to be part of this presumably exclusive group?" Ripperologists are a large and disparate group of people who share a common interest. There's no membership card, no rulebook, no governing body, and no exclusivity. When I read the conclusion that you become a Ripperologist by writing for *Ripperologist*, I thought, Toto, this ain't Kansas anymore.

Perhaps one of the strangest comments made by Frost opens chapter two: "After the murder of Mary Jane Kelly, Jack the Ripper quickly left the newspapers. Things were hushed up and the case declared closed, even though no one had been sent to trial for the murders. The killer, and the media sensation, were quickly swept under the rug as headlines moved on to other topics... The police had failed to catch the Ripper, the newspapers had made their money on the case, and it was time to move on." Words like "hushed up" and "swept under the rug" feed the conspiracists and are wholly unacceptable, especially from someone claiming to be writing a serious book. The police did not close the case after the murder of Kelly, and the editorial content did not move on because the Ripper cash cow wasn't giving milk anymore. There was diminished interest, but that was because the swiftness of Kelly's inquest denied oxygen to fresh speculation which had been exhausted during the murder-free month of October.

For a historian or someone with pretensions of being a historian, the book left out so much, and so much of what was put in was either questionable, doubtful or wrong.

That said, Frost makes some sound observations. For example, she says that when Patricia Cornwell's theory about Walter Sickert was criticised by Ripperologists, "rather than address concerns about her scientific procedure", she attributed the criticism to her being "an outsider" and argued that "Ripperologists did not want the mystery to be solved." She attributed the same behaviour to Russell Edwards and said that both Cornwell and Edwards "position themselves as the underdogs in opposition to the established experts, fighting against the long-standing

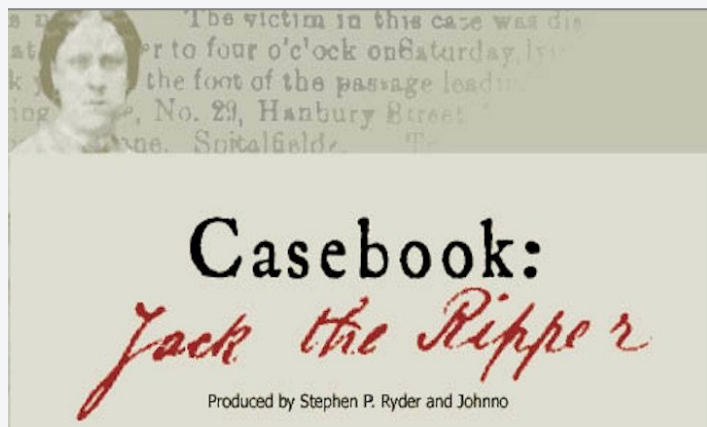
dominant narrative...” That description also fits Hallie Rubenhold when Ripperologists challenged her theories about the victims.

Overall, this isn't an easy book. It's written for a specific audience who is already tuned into what Rebecca Frost is talking about. Had Frost clearly explained her purpose, then my expectations might have been different and I'd have understood the book better.

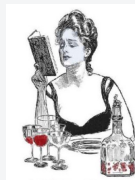
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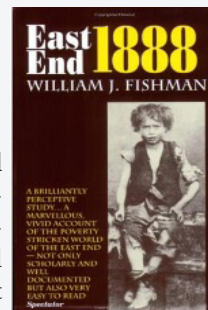
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Book Recommendations from *Off the Shelf*

East End 1888: Life in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor

By William J Fishman, 1988



Today many books on the Whitechapel murders and related subjects are published every year, most of which are suspect-orientated. Sometimes these are well researched, other times not so well. Most however include the standard formula of a chapter which attempts to set the scene of an 1888 Whitechapel.

I would like to look at a work first published in 1988 which is entirely devoted to the conditions in Whitechapel in this period; *East End 1888: Life in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* by the late and widely respected academic William J Fishman. I consider this book to be absolutely essential for anyone wishing to study the East End and specifically Whitechapel in the late Victorian period. Before looking at the book itself, we should take a look at its author.

William was a son of the East End, and fully understood what made the area tick in both the late 19th Century and the third quarter of the 20th century. He was born in London in 1921 to an immigrant tailor from Russia and his Ukrainian wife. William's early years were spent in the East End. In 1936, at age 15, he was an eyewitness to the Battle of Cable Street. He was initially educated locally at the Central Foundation Boys' School in the Whitechapel Road, which backed onto the location of the former Mortuary in Eagle Place that was used for several of the victims of the Whitechapel murderer. From here, Fishman progressed to the Wandsworth Teachers Training College and eventually the London School of Economics. He then taught history at Morpeth School, Bethnal Green. Later, he served as the Principal of Bethnal Green Junior Commercial College, which focused on the provision of evening classes. William, however, was not content and he gained a Schoolmaster Fellowship at Balliol College Oxford. afterwards becoming visiting Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin in Madison from 1969 to 1970, receiving an Acton Society Fellowship. In spite of his educational and professional achievements, William never forgot his local roots.

In 1972 he attained the Barnet Shine Senior Research Fellow in Labour Studies position with special reference to the Jews at Queen Mary College, University of London. In 1988, he became an honorary fellow at Queen Mary College and Visiting

Professor to the Centre for the Study of Migration. He also conducted tours of the East End, linked to his class 'Politics and Society in East London'. Fishman produced a number of books on the subject of the East End, all of which are well worth reading even now:

- *The Insurrectionists* (1970); Publ: Methuen
- *East End Jewish Radicals 1875–1914* (1974); Publ: Duckworth
- *The Streets of East London* (1979) (with photographs by Nicholas Breach);
- *East End 1888: Life in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* (1988); Publ: Duckworth
- *East End and Docklands* (1990) (with Nicholas Breach and John Martin Hall); Publ: Duckworth
- *Into The Abyss: The Life and Work of G. R. Sims* (2008); Publ: Elliott & Thompson

His 1975 book *East End Jewish Radicals 1875-1914* is considered one of the best works on the subject of immigration of Jewish people in the late 19th century. William Fishman died aged 93, on the 22nd December 2014.

While *East End 1888: Life in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* is written in an academic style, with copious foot-notes, it is still very accessible to the general reader. The contents are arranged into ten chapters plus an appendix, extensive bibliography and index.

Fishman begins with setting the scene for us. A map showing the area of the East End covers the different occupations most prevalent in each area. The first chapter is titled 'The Image and the Reality'. The author moves on to an interesting chapter which looks at the housing available in the area, the standard of it, and the living conditions therein. It examines the levels of overcrowding and sanitation, and how these both had devastating affects on the residents' health. From here, we are given fairly detailed information about the levels of employment (or rather unemployment) and how this tied into the sweating system which most notably occurred in the tailoring and cabinet making industries. This chapter gives an insight into the often-apalling working conditions how the already poor were further exploited. Fishman then gives us a fair and unromantic view of the workhouse and those who were forced to resort to them -- those without regular income, or none at all. This chapter starts with the following evocative few lines: "over the sweated and unemployed, the casuals, the old, the lame, the blind and the indolent hung the shadow of the the "Bastille" – the workhouse."

What follows is a view of the intolerable and often inhumane attitudes and conditions that many, at the lower end of Victorian society had to enduring. It is little wonder that many preferred to avoid the workhouse unless there was no other option.

There is a relatively brief but nonetheless important chapter on women and children. In places it becomes really quite moving which demonstrates this is more than just an academic work. Raising the conditions of and attitudes towards women and children: "the degradation of women was inherent in an oppressive, patriarchal system"

It's interesting to note that Fishman was looking at the lives of women some thirty-five years ago, long before current authors who have taken up the case.

We now come to what for me, personally, is the most interesting section of the book; what Fishman terms 'the ghetto'. This deals with the rise of the Jewish population in the area, a decade either side of 1888. We see how the area became the first port of call for the initially hundreds and later thousands of immigrant Jews who arrived at the London docks, just a stone's throw away from the area under discussion.

The author looks at the reaction of the wealthy, the poor and those in positions of authority. Attitudes displayed are still prevalent today, if now aimed largely at a different immigrant population in the area. These attitudes were and are fuelled by sections of the media and those with political influence, the aim being to use discontent and resentment to ultimately gain power and further influence. To feed off off fear, to lay the blame for a lack of jobs and homes on the immigrant community, the author provides many quotes and sources on his issue, including:

"I object to England with its overcrowded population and small area, being made a human ashpit for the refuse population of the world"

Another, often misunderstood issue, is the tension that existed between the older, more established Jewish community and the new arrivals from Eastern and Central Europe:

"not only were the immigrants open to the hostility of British workmen, they also had to endure he harsh criticism of fellow Jews long settled in the area"

And it's surprising to learn some members of the older community actually suggested deportation of the new arrivals.

In the following chapter Fishman takes an in-depth look at crime and punishment, the types of crime, from petty theft to more serious crimes including murder. Punishments are analysed and the links between poverty directly leading to criminality. There are several pages devoted to the Whitechapel Murders in this chapter. We are next given a more upbeat chapter looking at philanthropists and social reformers, and how they had an effect on the area. Dr Barnardo, Samuel Barnett, Frederick Charrington and William Booth are amongst those considered. This is followed by a look at politics, the rise of socialism and the links to the newcomers from Eastern and Central Europe. Here, we have a specific mention of a location familiar to us all:

"it was the international workers' education club in Berner street, a narrow slum thoroughfare off the Commercial Road, that provided both a power-house for ideas and a mobilising centre for workers' demonstrations."

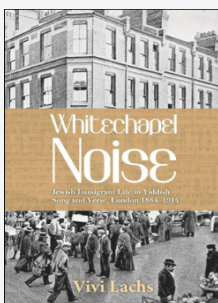
The work excels (in my opinion) in giving a real glimpse of the conditions the lower classes experienced in the area at that time. If you wish to fully understand the social issues in the East End in general and its growing Jewish community, this is an essential read, still as relevant today as it was when first published in 1988.

- Steeven Blomer

Whitechapel Noise: Jewish Immigrant Life in Yiddish Song and Verse, London 1884-1914

Vivi Lachs, 2018

An interesting book, split into two parts. Part one describes how the influx of Yiddish-speaking, mostly poor Jewish Immigrants into the East End after 1881 encountered, contributed and many times conflicted with London's already settled and more prosperous Anglo-Jewish community, and developed popular entertainment, activism and a press to publicize their struggles in their newly adopted home. The second part contains a detailed analysis of many song lyrics that were performed in front of audiences in Yiddish music halls and published in the radical press. You will encounter in this book many familiar places such as the Berner Street Club, Princes' Hall, Goulston Street, and Victoria Park. It's an immersive education on an important but scarcely written about aspect of the East End Jewish experience. - JM



*In England there is a town called Leicester,
In London there is such a square,
Each day three sisters stand in the square,
The girls—everybody knows them.
The youngest sells flowers there,
The middle one—shoelaces
And late at night you can see approaching
The oldest, who sells herself.
The two younger ones both think of
Their older sister without hatred;
Because all three girls despise
The world and the town and the street.
The golden stalks are breaking
As the storm pushes them to the ground
And the purest longings for a sunny day
Are becoming annihilated
And late at night when they come
To their nest they call home
The shoelaces and the flowers are drenched
With their tears that don't want to leave
- "Dray shvester" (Thee Sisters) by Morris Winchevsky, the founder
of Arbayter fraynd, 1884*

Starkweather: The Untold Story of the Killing Spree that Changed America
By Harry N. MacLean, 2023

Caril Ann Fugate celebrated her fifteenth birthday in 1958 from behind the walls of Nebraska's State Hospital for the Insane awaiting trial on two counts of first-degree murder. Caril accompanied her sometime boyfriend, nineteen year old Charles Starkweather on a week long killing spree after he had already murdered a gas station attendant, Caril's mother, step-father and baby half-sister. This later rampage, with Caril now in attendance, claimed seven additional victims, bringing Stark-



weather's death toll to eleven.

From the moment she fled Starkweather into the waiting arms of the police on a deserted stretch of Wyoming highway to today (she now lives in Michigan under a different name) Caril Ann Fugate has maintained her innocence, claiming that Starkweather convinced her that her family had been kidnapped and would be released unharmed only if she followed his every command. Starkweather, on the other hand, changed his story multiple times while awaiting trial.

Initially he too absolved Caril from any involvement in the killings, but in the end, after being told by Caril to never contact her again, he took the stand as a prosecution witness against her. There was evidence indicating that Caril was telling the truth, in the form of a note tacked to the front door of her house and another note addressed to the police hidden in her coat pocket. For days after her arrest she asked the authorities when her parents were going to visit her, unlikely behavior for someone who supposedly was present when they were murdered. But it was several decisions made by the male power structure in Lincoln, Nebraska including questioning Caril- a fourteen year old girl-without an attorney present, releasing one-sided information to a friendly press, even sedating Caril with drugs and parading her in a stoned condition in front of the cameras, that convinced the nation that Caril Ann Fugate was one-half of a 'killer couple'. Later the world would be introduced to her via big screen and made for television movie adaptations. Charles Starkweather and Carol Ann Fugate became a mid-century modern Bonnie and Clyde. Natural Born Killers.

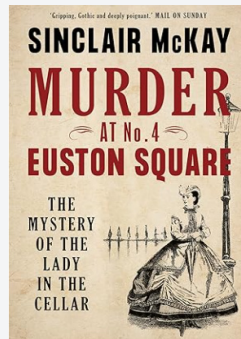
Starkweather was quickly executed for his crimes while Fugate was sentenced to life in prison. She was a model prisoner whose good behavior gifted her increased freedoms while behind bars such as speaking in front of community groups and even operating the visitors gate at the correctional facility where she was doing time. In 1976, nearly 18 years after the Starkweather murder spree, Caril Ann Fugate was paroled. Finally on the outside, she found employment as a nurse in a local hospital and also worked as a children's nanny.

MacLean is an accomplished and award-winning true crime author whose background in psychology and law is brought to bear in *Starkweather* in a level not seen in his previous books. In the late 1950's there was no such thing as Stockholm Syndrome, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or other psychological conditions that might explain Fugate's relationship to Starkweather's crimes. MacLean convincingly argues that if her trial was held today and her attorneys availed themselves of these now commonplace defenses, Fugate would not have been convicted of murder.

Harry N. MacLean's *Starkweather: The Untold Story of the Killing Spree that Changed America* isn't the first book to argue the case for Fugate's innocence. In fact, the book should have been titled *Caril*, but that name was already taken by a book also focused on promoting Fugate's side of the story. Another pro-Fugate book *The 12th Victim* has recently been made into a multiple episode documentary series you can find on a streaming app. But MacLean's work is the most up-to-date and probably the definitive

account of the Starkweather murder spree and its long 50 year aftermath. It's a book about small town American justice struggling to deal with killer kids. An explosive, sensational, high profile mass murder case at the tail end of the nifty fifties and at the dawn of the age of serial killers. -JM

**Murder at No. 4 Euston Square:
The Mystery of the Lady in the Cellar**
By Sinclair McKay, 2022



In the early summer of 1877 the boarding house No 4. Euston Square received a visitor, a new lodger named Miss Uish. A lady in her 60's, she took one of the home's empty rooms on the second floor for 12 shillings a week and settled in. The boarding house was operated by a German couple, the Bastendorffs, who lived on the top floor with their four children. Mr. Bastendorff was a furniture maker by trade and operated a workshop in the backyard and there he employed a team of men who bustled around the shop all day. As for inside the house, there was only one other lodger, a traveling salesman who was mostly away on business, and a housemaid, Hannah Dobbs. This dearth of people created an intimacy which allowed Miss Uish the opportunity to spend much time with the Bastendorff family, which all parties seemed to enjoy, especially the children. She'd take the children to the park in the afternoons and in the evenings sit with the family and conduct fortune-telling exercises from The Book of Dreams. A bit eccentric, but in a fun way. Even her clothing was playful, she'd wear outfits not suited for an older woman, but more like young girls outfits. More costumes really than clothes. Then suddenly, before summer's end, Miss Uish moved out. Or so it seemed.

The title is a spoiler, for Miss Uish had never left the house. Her body was discovered two years later, with her hands cut off and a rope around her neck, underneath a coal pile in cellar. Along with her body, it was discovered that the kind Miss Uish wasn't Miss Uish at all, but Matilda Hacker, she was an ex-con and a wanted criminal, and the police had been chasing her. But Matilda Hacker was dead, the suspects were limited...whodunit?

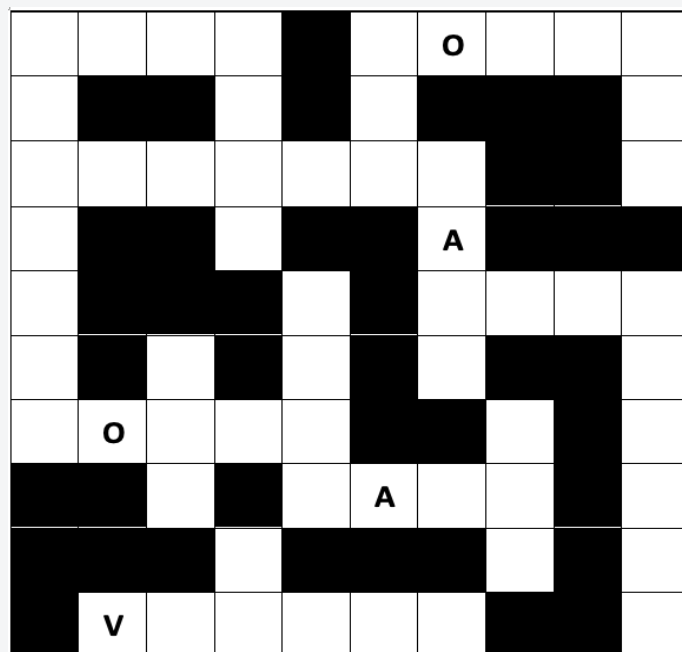
Murder at No. 4 Euston Square: The Mystery of the Lady in the Cellar reads in parts like a real-life Agatha Christie novel with hidden pasts and dark secrets lurking behind the walls of this house on the quiet, tidy terrace. McKay, a seasoned author of numerous books, mostly focused on World War II, handles this case well. He uncovers the past of Matilda Hacker, she and her sister Amelia were known locally as the 'Canterbury Belles' due to their identical extravagant dresses, Matilda's tax evasion, her stints in the gaol, fleeing the authorities under assumed names, and then deep dives into the inquest and two trails focused on her murder. The case caused a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic, and McKay relies heavily on not only the official court records but contemporary newspaper articles to really bring the trials alive. He also deftly handles the history of the area, its steady decline into squalor during the 20th century and now the neighborhood's recent rejuvenation. The

house itself shared the fate of most notorious murder houses left standing- it became a site for ghoulish gawkers and ghost hunters, until being torn down in the 1960s to make way for Euston Station. The author Eliot O'Donnell claimed that his aunt knew Matilda Hacker and used that excuse to write detailed descriptions of the house's supposed ghostly happenings. The murder of Matilda Hacker was, to me, an unfamiliar one, and if it's new to you, or you're looking for a book-length treatment of the case, then *Murder at No. 4 Euston Square* is a book to pick up. -JM

The Ripperologist ~~Lechmere~~ Cross Word

All the answers are Ripperology linked. Answers on page 80. We've given you a couple of letters to start you off. Clues in no particular order:

- The 'Thames _____ Murders' (5)
- Wood used in the coffin of Annie Chapman (3)
- Name of bird which inspired term used for slums like the Old Nicol (4)
- Surname of author of Jack the Ripper: The Facts (4)
- Post-nominal initials of barrister and magistrate Montagu Williams (2)
- Surname of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis from 1888 to 1890 (5)
- Surname of the co-author of Jack the Ripper: The Forgotten Victims (6)
- The number of times Mary Ann Nichols married (3)
- The V in PAV, Duke of Clarence (6)
- Mrs _____ washer of Batty Street lodger's bloodied shirt (4)
- Surname of one of the three named suspects in the MacNaghten Memorandum (6)
- Limb found near the Thames Distillery in Pimlico in 1888 (3)
- Middle name of rapper who sampled LL Cool J's 'Jack the Ripper' (3)
- Cabman at the centre of Stephen Knight's 'The Final Solution' (7)
- Generic top-level domain for Casebook (3)
- Surname of detective played by Matthew Macfadyen in Ripper Street (4)
- George _____, Murder location (4)
- Object Elizabeth Stride was found behind (4)





On The Screen

The Unsolved Killings of Jack the Ripper

EM Productions

1 hr

2024

This documentary begins with an actor playing Inspector Abberline reading fictional narration accompanied by swelling high-drama music and pretty decent set pieces with a passable looking cast. Mick Priestley finally appears in a big plaid newsboy cap and multiple earspools. Kind of distracting. There's a few things out of place, like flashing illustrations from the Tabram murder while they're discussing the Nichols murder, Kelly illustrations for the Eddowes murder, etc. Nothing that the general viewer would pick up on. Annie Chapman is portrayed to seem to go willingly to her death in a weird, hypnotic, romanticized pas de deux with the Ripper. My guess is they didn't show Handsome Jack ghastly mutilating Chapman's because it's not sexy. And it goes on in a repetitive fashion with fake Abberline and Mick taking turns telling the basics of each murder and the police investigation, interspersed with more repetitive scenes of each victim flirting drunkenly with Jack then acting puzzled, but unafraid, when he whips out his big knife.

Mick Priestley is a veteran tour guide so he can recite the facts of the Whitechapel murders backwards and forwards and he's very good at it. All Ripper documentaries are a degree of bad but this one isn't nearly as bad as others, due to it relying solely on Mick's expert abilities. Free on Tubi.



Jack the Ripper: London's Most Notorious Killer

1091/Entertain ME

1 hr 10min

2020, but looks more like 1990.

Terrible narration by Emperor Palpatine. No talking heads. Lots of thick, fake blood running down cobblestones. Occasionally the Phantom of the Opera appears playing Jack with extra face paint. Otherwise there's photos and illustrations we've all seen before plus some older home video of murder locations. William Stewart's images are used probably without permission. Unless you want to hear someone say "curry house" in a very sinister voice, don't bother.



The Trial of Jack the Ripper

Fillmhub

45min

2023

Three noted Ripperologists, Rob House, Tracy Ianson and Michael Hawley, present the case for their preferred suspect (Kosminski, Levy and Tumblety, respectively) to a small audience who then vote on their favorite. Filmed during the Covid pandemic, and using pieces from a wholly different documentary for Tom Wescott's bits. The experts appear via Zoom, and you get to see Tracy's cat jumping around on her couch. Not too bad. Watchable, even.



Heroes and Villains: Cora Crippen and a Question of Misogyny

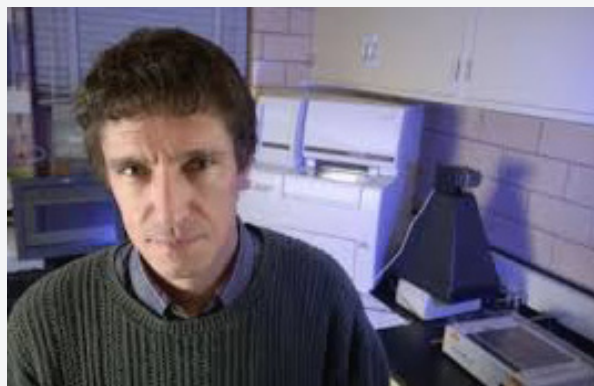
By *Madeleine Keane*



On a frigid Michigan January evening, the kind that chills you to the bone and makes you wonder if winter will ever end, I was babysitting my niece, my nephews, and one of their friends. The kids playfully teased one another as I got them dinner, and soon the conversation turned from school and sports to the all-in-good-fun rivalry between University of Michigan and Michigan State University. And then my niece brought up something that she had overheard her parents discussing: the firing of Michigan State's former football coach over an inappropriate relationship with a vendor and possible sexual misconduct.

This scandal with the football coach was big news since it occurred just a few years after the case involving Dr. Larry Nassar, the doctor who had assaulted members of the United States Olympics Women's Gymnastics Team. The team members reported their assaults to both authorities and the university. Dr. Nassar was arrested, tried, and found guilty of his crimes. He was sentenced to three consecutive life terms in federal prison in 2018. It was a bittersweet victory for his victims, who insist to this day that both the police and university failed to handle their cases properly. One of these other instances involved an individual whose controversial claims rocked the forensic science field.

In December 2007, Dr. David Foran made the shocking claim that he had exonerated Michigan-born Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen and his mistress, Ethel Le Neve, of the murder of his wife, Cora. In 2008, Foran explained how he came to his conclusions in an interview with PBS. Foran became interested in the case after seeing John Trestail's talk on historic crimes. Trestail, a Grand Rapids-based toxicology expert, believes that Crippen is innocent of the crime. In a 2008 article in *The Guardian*, Trestail stated: "Two weeks before he was hanged, he wrote, 'I am innocent and some day evidence will be found to prove it.' When I read that, the hairs stood up on my arms. I think he was right."



Michigan State University's Forensic Science Laboratory conducted the analyses of samples from the Crippen case, including two submitted by some of Cora's maternal relatives in 2005. Foran was later able to obtain slides that Dr. Bernard Spilsbury had taken during the postmortem conducted on the torso found buried in the basement of 39 Hilldrop Crescent. After extracting DNA from the pathology slides and testing it against the samples provided by Cora's maternal relatives, Foran determined that the torso was not that of a woman, but of a man. From this evidence, Foran concluded that there was no way that Crippen could have murdered his wife, and that an innocent man was wrongly hanged for the crime.

Foran indicated that The Royal London Hospital Archives and Museum provided Spilsbury's pathology slides for sampling. The Scotland Yard Museum offered to test their sample of Cora Crippen's hair. However, since they would have charged a substantial amount for the test and this was a pro bono project, this was not an option for Michigan State.

According to the paper summarizing the findings:
"Given the historical and thus unknown nature of how the cellular tissues were dealt with at the time, how might one

be assured that the DNA results obtained in this study resulted from the slide tissue, and not, for instance, from Dr. Spilsbury, who obviously handled the remains (whether he wore gloves of some kind and took other precautions is not in the records). The amplification success from only the Chelex preparation, which is consistent with fixed tissue and not touch DNA indicates a fixed tissue origin of the DNA”.

Unfortunately, while these results proved some people’s belief that Crippen was innocent of murdering his wife, there were still too many questions left unanswered. If the torso wasn’t Cora Crippen, then who was it? How were they killed? And how did they end up in the Crippens’ coal cellar? And more importantly, why was the lock of Cora’s hair found in the grave not tested for DNA so that Foran’s results could be confirmed?

There’s also the question of how the torso and other evidence were handled by Spilsbury and others during the investigation. In their paper, Foran and his colleagues admit that there is no way to know if Spilsbury took precautions like wearing gloves while preparing the slides. And since investigators did not have today’s knowledge about crime scene preservation, there’s a strong possibility that the investigators had left their DNA behind while handling the evidence.

While reading the scholarly paper and some of the other articles about the findings, one thing really stood out at me: both Foran and Trestail seemed absolutely convinced prior to starting the project that Crippen hadn’t killed his wife. The unwillingness to have Scotland Yard test the lock of hair in their collection never sat right with me. Understandably, since the project was being done on a pro bono basis, finances were a huge barrier. However, I find it odd that there was no attempt to obtain a grant or crowdfund the endeavor to clear up any unanswered questions.

The problematic, age-old narrative behind the Crippen case has a part to play, too. In most documentaries I watched about the case growing up, the story was always the same: the Crippen marriage was on the rocks, mostly as a result Cora Crippen’s bitterness at not striking it big in the music hall scene. Cora took out her resentment on her husband, a henpecked doctor who was doing the best he could to support his wife. Cora’s relentless bullying drove poor Crippen into the arms of Miss Ethel Le Neve and, finally, when he couldn’t take it anymore, to murder. In the past few years, though, the media has reexamined this narrative. Buried Bones with Kate Winkler Dawson and Paul Holes, for example, covered the Crippen case in a two-episode series and determined that Cora didn’t do anything to make Crippen kill her. It was a typical textbook case of intimate-partner violence that led to murder, with Crippen’s motive being that he wanted to get rid of his wife so that he could start a new life with his mistress, Ethel Le Neve.



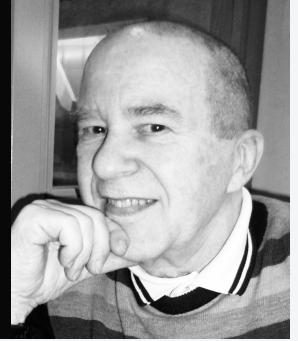
As time passed, Foran involved himself in other projects. But in July 2021, a bomb dropped: Dr. Foran resigned from his position at Michigan State University just before he was terminated. The reason? He sexually harassed and retaliated against four students. The incidents took place throughout the late 2010s. Eerily enough, this coincided with the Larry Nassar scandal unfolding at MSU.

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This information has always made me wonder about what exactly was going through Foran’s mind throughout the Cora Crippen DNA project. How could someone simply take Dr. Crippen at his word that he was innocent when the evidence clearly showed otherwise? In my opinion, like Crippen, Foran wanted to be the hero of his own story. He wanted to be the man who used forensic science to exonerate a man who had been wrongly hanged for a crime he hadn’t committed almost a century ago. But both men kept tight control over the narrative of their story, wanting the world to see them as the heroes they presented themselves to be. Both wanted to present themselves as good men, but underneath the carefully crafted façade, they both harbored terrible secrets that they didn’t want the rest of the world to know. Instead of the heroes they portrayed themselves to be, the revelation of both men’s secrets showed them to be completely different from the people they portrayed themselves to be. They weren’t heroes at all. They were the villains of their own stories.

In Memoriam - Paul Daniel

1936-2023



The mystery of Jack the Ripper is a legitimate topic for historical study, but it is often forgotten that the study of Jack the Ripper is also history. Writers like Robin Odell in *Ripperology* and Richard Whittington-Egan in *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive Casebook* have chronicled how Ripperology changed and developed over the decades, highlighting milestones such as Leonard Matters' first English-language examination, Stephen Knight's international best-seller which introduced thousands of people to the subject, Evans and Skinner's *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook. An Illustrated Encyclopedia* which revolutionised Ripper research by making it possible for people around the world to study the surviving case papers in detail and in depth. The recent years the launch of journals such as Nick Warren's innovative *Ripperana*, and our own *Ripperologist*, and websites like Casebook and Forums, have also played a part in the story of Ripper studies.

On 1 February 2024, I went to Oxford to say goodbye to someone who made a considerable and often overlooked contribution to Ripperology, Paul Daniel. We hadn't seen each other for a while, but we'd exchanged a Christmas message in which we agreed that we should definitely get together in the new year, but Paul died suddenly and unexpectedly on 31 December. That get-together will never happen, but in Oxford I was at least able to say goodbye. Back in 1995, Mark Galloway launched what was then called the Cloak and Dagger Club. Paul Daniel attended the second meeting, held in the back room of the now-defunct Alma pub in Spitalfields, and he received his copy of the Club newsletter. Mark quickly identified Paul as someone who could take charge of the newsletter, and Paul excitedly set about transforming those few stapled-together pages into a fully-fledged journal. In next to no time, as it seems looking back, *Ripperologist* was born. In time, *Ripperologist* developed a life away from the Cloak and Dagger Club, but he laid the solid foundations upon which the magazine was built.

Paul was born in London on 15 May 1936, the first of six children. When he was five years old he moved with his family to Oxford. He attended Westminster School, then Gordonstoun, and eventually did his National Service. He worked for a while at Chappell's of Bond Street, but quickly succumbed to the lure of the theatre. He lived in a top-floor flat on Shaftesbury Avenue, right in the heart of theaterland – everyone who visited it recalls the punishing climb up the stairs – and he worked on many West End productions, finally becoming Wardrobe Master at the Royal Opera House. Thanks to Paul, I managed to get a ticket to the dress rehearsal of *La Boheme* and was awed by the production, which kick-started my love of opera. Paul balanced club news with serious Ripperological research, and whilst the club reporting must have mystique of another world to those readers who couldn't attend meetings and didn't know the members, Paul's personal warmth always shone through. He was a major figure in Ripper studies and will be sorely missed. - *Paul Begg*



On-Board Research & Discussions

An interesting article was posted recently on Debra Arif's Morgenstern research thread at JTR Forums that has opened up new and promising areas of research in regards to Mary Jane Kelly's "Morgenstone" who, according to Joseph Barnett, had lived with her in Pennington Street.

Although the pioneering Sheldens had initially picked out one Adrianus Morgenstern for the part, subsequent research made it more feasible that the "Morganstone" mentioned by Joe Barnett to the inquest and the press was actually one of the other Morgenstern brothers: John (or "Jan Francis Morgenstern"), to be exact.

Of course previous research has already confirmed John Morgenstern was associated with 79 Pennington Street, recording him and his wife Elizabeth at the address from November 1885 onward. In addition, it

has been established that John's wife's name was Elizabeth Bockee/Bouquet, corresponding with some statements relayed by a Press Association reporter mentioning that Kelly's "(...) experiences with the East End appears to have begun with a Mrs. Buki who resided in one of the thoroughfares off Ratcliffe Highway, known as St. George's Street."

According to the same reports this Mrs. Buki purportedly assisted Mary Jane in retrieving the box of dresses at the "French Lady's residence".

ROUTING OUT LIMEHOUSE PEST HOUSES.
 —On Thursday night the police, at the instance of the Limehouse Vestry, made a raid on a number of disorderly houses in Jamaica-passage and Jamaica-place, Limehouse, and arrested the keepers, who were prosecuted by Mr. Birchall, Solicitor and Clerk to the Vestry. Emma Smith, 11 Jamaica-passage, was fined £5 and £5 costs, or one month; Maria Foxhall, 10 Jamaica-place, £5 and £5 costs, or one month; Alleir and Jane Hassan, 12 Jamaica-passage, each £15 and £5 costs, or three months; John Mugastein and Elizabeth Boquay each £15 and £5 costs, or the man three months and the woman nine weeks; Nicholas Glanges was also fined £15 and £5 costs, or three months' imprisonment. Mr. Dickinson observed that the prosecution was very properly undertaken, because the places mentioned had long been a blot on that part of London. He also expressed surprise at Mr. Birchall's statement that the costs would amount to £35, when warrants taken out by the police only cost 2s.

For obvious reasons the research community has already fingered Morgenstern and Buki as management of a "bad house", and Mary Jane Kelly as a prostitute employed at their address, but no definitive confirmation of that fact had thus far been produced. Until now, that is.

Collaborative research by Debra Arif, Chris Philips, Gary Barnett, Robert Linford and many others has focused the search into promising lines of inquiry, beginning with Howard Brown's find of a John Morgenstern in 1889 engaged in beating up several women near Jamaica Passage, Limehouse, again hinting at his status as a "bully", and a violent one at that. Now another newspaper report has surfaced, finally promoting that assumption to the realm of established fact.

In this 2 October 1895 report from the East End News and London Shipping Chronicle titled "Routing out Limehouse Pest Houses", we read about a police raid unleashed upon a number of brothels at the beforementioned Jamaica Passage address, the proprietors of which subsequently arrested by order of the Limehouse Vestry.

Among the names mentioned are those of "John Mugastein" and "Elizabeth Bouquet", associating them for the first time directly with a disorderly house and the keeping thereof.

In the fall issue of *Ripperologist Magazine*, the first in what promises to be a series of articles by researcher Jurriaan Maessen, will be published, documenting the history of the Morgenstern brothers: their origins, their ventures, and, finally, their connection to the last of the Canonical Five.

Meanwhile, I would like to refer anyone interested to learn more of our current understanding of the case to Deb's Morgenstern-thread, accessible via the following link:

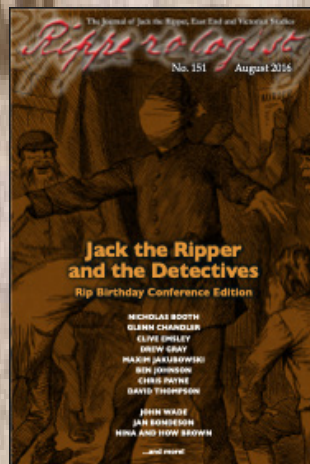
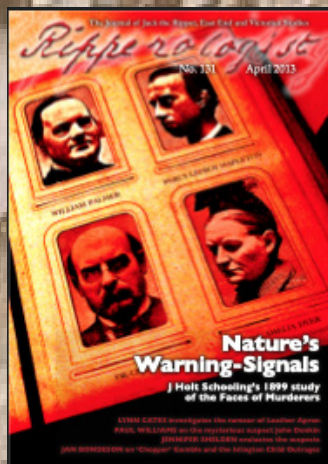
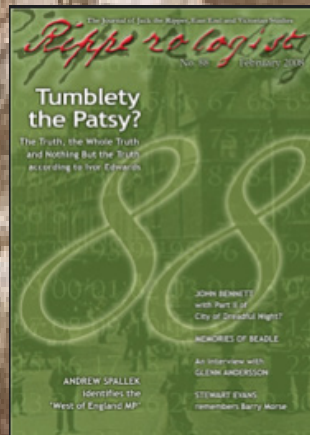
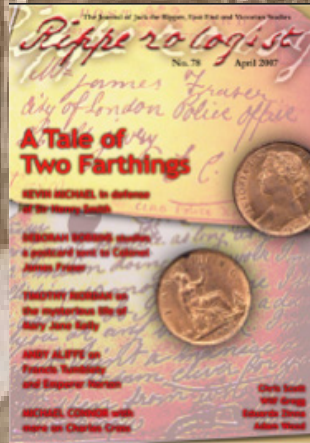
<https://www.jtrforums.com/forum/the-victims/mary-kelly/27698-the-morgenstern-brothers-felix-family-79-pennington-street>

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