

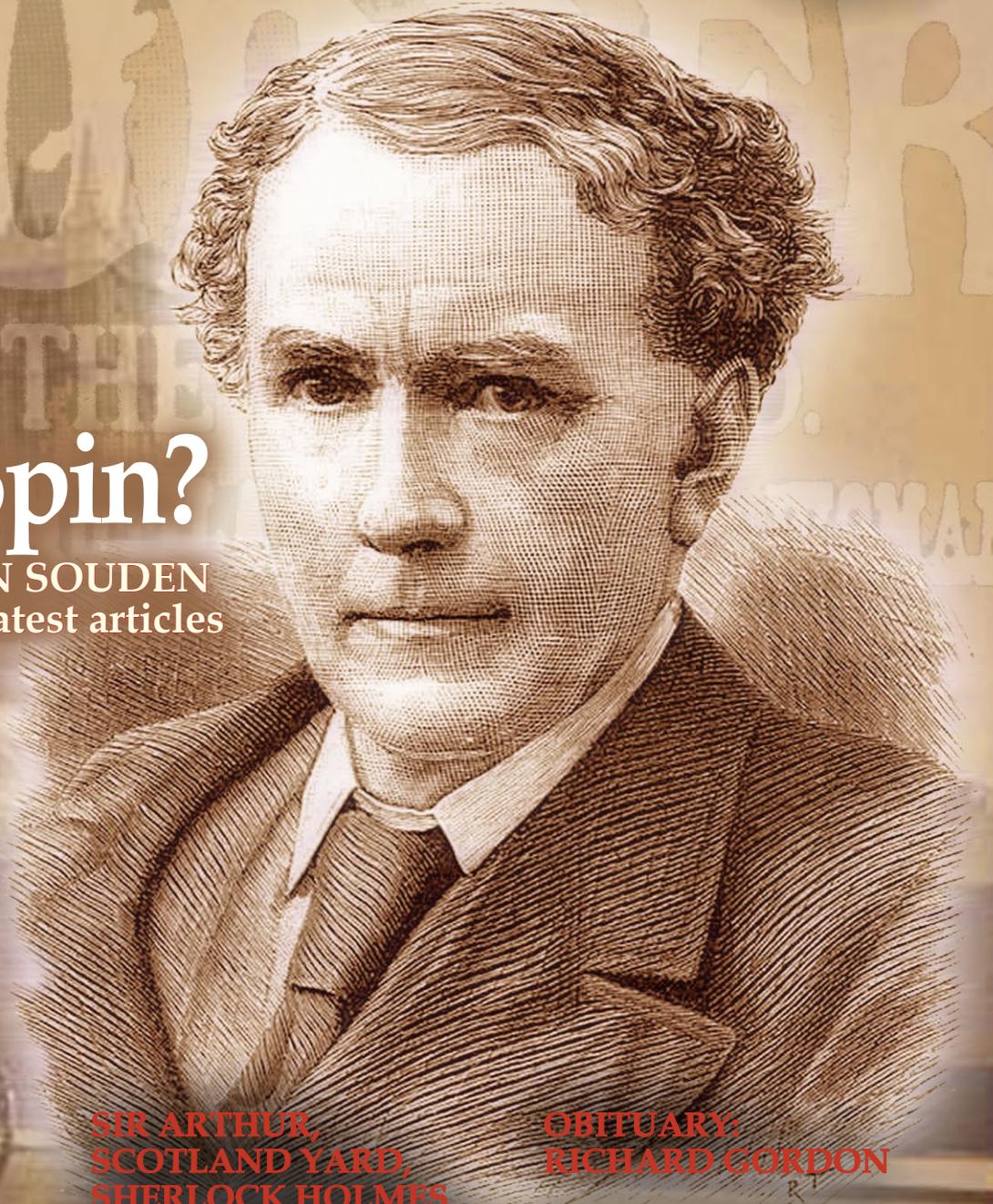
The Journal of Jack the Ripper, East End and Victorian Studies

Ripperologist

August/September 2017 No. 157

Home Office Spin?

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Editorial

Farewell, Supe

ADAM WOOD Executive Editor

We were deeply saddened to learn recently of the passing of Don 'Supe' Souden, a former long-standing member of *Ripperologist's* editorial team, after a long illness.

Don joined us in July 2006 with issue 69. We'd steadied the ship following our transition seven months earlier from a print magazine to electronic format, but Don's infectious enthusiasm and drive saw the good ship *Ripperologist* soon reach a rate of knots following his arrival. He was able to turn his hand to just about anything: it was his idea to prepare our four-part series *The Autumn of Terror*, an intense investigation into a myriad of aspects of the case published over consecutive months to mark the 120th anniversary of the crimes. It was he, too, who nonchalantly penned the series *The Detectives*, in which famous fictional sleuths such as Miss Marple would be placed in 1880s Whitechapel.

Don departed in January 2010 following the publication of issue 110, taking the helm of the *Casebook Examiner* in time for its launch in April that year. Seven information-packed issues were produced over the course of the following year before the title ceased publication; Don soon reappeared with the *New Independent Review*, which sadly ran for just four issues between September 2011 and November 2012, when Don announced that his failing health meant he could no longer cope with the demands of running the magazine.

Although few were aware at the time, he entered a rehabilitation centre following severe diabetes problems. Despite initially showing signs of recovery, Don suffered a stroke on 8 August 2013 and would spend his remaining years in hospital in his native Connecticut.

But rather than dwell on the problems of his later years, we'd like to remember Don's incredible work in the Ripper field. He was one of the most knowledgeable people studying the case, and had a knack of approaching it from angles few would contemplate; his understanding of particular intricacies admirable. He was as much at home sparring on the Ripper message boards as penning published articles, and it is there that most will have fond memories of his sharing of genial insights and locking of horns, all the while with the intelligent, easy-going nature which won him so many friends.

Those joining the Ripper community in more recent years will have no knowledge of Don's work, and that's a great pity. We feel it very appropriate, therefore, to republish over the following pages two of his articles from issues of *Ripperologist* gone by. Reading them, it's impossible not to admire the man's talent but to also miss him terribly.

Rest in Peace, Supe.

Donald Ogilvie Souden: 21 October 1941 - 30 July 2017



While mourning the loss of Don, we're pleased to welcome with this issue our new Editor-at-Large, Jonathan Menges, who will be known to many of you as the brains behind the phenomenal *Casebook: Rippercast* project, which since February 2008 has seen podcast interviews with more than 100 Ripper authors, researchers and commentators.

Welcome JM!

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To be added to the mailing list, to submit a book for review or to place an advertisement, get in touch at contact@ripperologist.biz.

We welcome well-researched articles on any aspect of the Whitechapel murders, the East End or the Victorian era in general.

Pardon Me

Spin Control at the Home Office?

By DONALD SOUDEN

One of the fallacies to guard against when doing any sort of historical theorizing is that of applying modern concepts to centuries-old problems. What seems clever and even natural to us today may not only be misplaced when applied retroactively but actually quite counter-factual in practice. This fallacy also applies to any speculation about Jack the Ripper and is one reason that profiling, when applied to the events of the fall of 1888 in Whitechapel, may be little more than a dodgy parlor trick. That said, however, there is one group of people whose basic instincts and behavior has changed little over the course of human history - and no, I am not talking about serial killers but rather about politicians.

Oh, the issues may change with the times, though among the British variety of politician the old cry "We have to teach those *demmed* [insert here a word like *colonials*, or *foreigners* or *lower classes* or *upper classes*] a good lesson!" resonated well for centuries and the notion of spending other people's money in big bundles to buy popularity is a perennial favorite everywhere - even in places like Zimbabwe where the money is literally not worth the effort to print it. In the same way, the perquisites of power may vary over time, with \$400 blow-dry hairstylings and a helicopter at one's beck and call topping the charts today, just as powdered perukes and personal sedan chairs were once the favored preserve of politicians.

Nonetheless, if there is one guiding principle to which all politicians have subscribed from the time of the first protofolk moot to that of multi-national parliaments it is the simple notion of CYA (cover your butt in less graphic language). Crises and even scandals may come and go, but so long as a politician can protect his power base and cling to office by whatever combination of smoke and mirrors... well that is all that really counts. And it is that universality over time and from place to place of politicians that leads me to consider the belated issuance of a pardon for any of Jack the Ripper's accomplices as nothing more than an

LVP exercise in "spin control."

Of course, the government of the moment and the Home Office officials would not have understood the term (thinking, perhaps, it referred to an uprising of "whirling dervishes"), but if the phrase might have seemed strange the purpose would have been quite clear. The public, the press and even the monarch were growing ever more disenchanted with the inability to catch Jack the Ripper and the governing party - rightly or not - was getting increasing criticism for the string of murders in the East End of London. Clearly, something had to be done and, as ever, the prime imperative was CYA!

But, before taking a long look at the end result of the government's exercise in spin control it would be wise to take a look at the whole issue of Crown rewards and pardons as unfolded in the late 1880s. In fact, government rewards of anywhere from £200 to £2,000 (even going as high as £15,000 for the infamous Phoenix Park assassinations in Dublin) were accepted policy for several centuries. But that all changed in 1884 when some innovative criminals arranged for an explosion at the German Embassy and then framed an innocent man as the culprit in order to collect the posted reward. This, naturally, suggested the possibility of future such conspiracies so the then Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, ended the practice and even though he was from the other side of political divide his action provided the governing Conservatives with a precedent to cite in denying appeals for a reward in the Ripper case.¹

As it was, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Charles Warren and many of his subordinates didn't think that a reward was likely to be efficacious anyway, so that aspect of Home Secretary Henry Matthews's hewing to a

¹ Evans, Stewart P. and Donald Rumbelow, *Jack the Ripper: Scotland Yard Investigates*, Sutton Publishing (2006), pp. 146-7.

policy of no rewards was no cause for concern. However, overshadowing any question of a mere police investigation of a murder was that of politics - the elephant in the room that was never remarked upon but which forever loomed silently in all policy considerations in the LVP. The Conservative government of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury had been elected with a safe majority in 1886 (and would remain in office though 1892 and again from 1895 to 1902) was under increasing political pressure throughout the period, especially from the radical press that had become very important with the advent of cheap newspapers.

Aside from the ever-festered Irish question at the time, among the favorite targets of the radical press was Warren who was considered the bloody architect of the 1887 Trafalgar Square riots that saw the Metropolitan police use the bodies of the protestors like so many bongo drums. From Warren, the opprobrium flowed upwards to his superior, the Home Secretary and from there the criticism moved on and embraced the entire Salisbury government. And, politics again entering the equation; however much Salisbury might have liked to ease Matthews out of office the fact that he was the lone Roman Catholic in the cabinet made him something of a protected "minority token" at the time.

Moreover, this dangerous brew in a political cauldron stirred by the anti-government elements in the press truly threatened to boil over when prostitutes began to be eviscerated on the streets of Whitechapel. As far as the press and public were concerned, after the so-called "Double Event" six women had been cruelly murdered that year in the East End (despite any evidence to the contrary they included Emma Smith and Martha Tabram in the total) and so far the Metropolitan Police, responsible for investigating five of those killings, had proven remarkably inept. Indeed, Warren's (and ultimately the government's) minions were fair game for newspapers like the Star, which would editorialise:

The police, of course, are helpless. We expect nothing of them. The metropolitan force is rotten to the core, and it is a mildly farcical comment on the hopeless unfitness of Sir CHARLES WARREN that when red-handed crime is stalking the streets he has assigned his men the fresh duty of sharing with providence the looking after drunken men. But there is one scandal about this business so gross as to cry to Heaven. Mr. MATTHEWS - "helpless, heedless, useless" Mr. MATTHEWS as the Telegraph calls him to-day - is philandering with pot-house Tories at Birmingham while GOD'S poor are being slaughtered wholesale in London. Where is this man, and what is he doing? He must be sternly interpellated in Parliament. As

to the men under him and Sir CHARLES WARREN'S directions, they could have done one thing which might even now have caught the murderer. They might yesterday morning have drawn a cordon round the Hanbury-street district - which is plainly the Thug's headquarters - searched every nook and cranny, and examined every suspicious character. Meanwhile, we suggest (1) more Vigilance Committees, (2) the shadowing of East-end unfortunates, (3) further rewards. Further, there must be an agitation against Sir CHARLES WARREN, who is now beginning his old bad work of breaking up, or allowing paid Tory roughs to break up, the meetings of the unemployed in Hyde-park, and detaching more men from regular police and detective duty to political work. Above all, let us impress the moral of this awful business on the consciences and the fears of the West-end. The cry of the East-end is for light - the electric light to flash into the dark corners of its streets and alleys, the magic light of sympathy and hope to flash into the dark corners of wrecked and marred lives. Unless these and other things come, Whitechapel will smash the Empire, and the best thing that can happen to us is for some purified Republic of the West to step in and look after the fragments.²



Sir Charles Warren

2 Star, October 1, 1888.

The language is more than a little lurid and the suggestions to remedy things questionable in several instances. Just what made the *Star* decide Jack called Hanbury Street his home base is a bit puzzling at this remove in time, but what the editorial may have lacked in actionable evidence it more than made up for in nearly actionable invective - "philandering with pot-house Tories" surely struck below the belt with power. But this is the sort of derision the police, Warren, the Home Office and - by extension - the entire Conservative government was facing daily.

Nor was it just such radical groups like the editorial board of the *Star* that was pecking, so to speak, at Warren's liver. The series of horrendous murders in the East End had seemingly shaken the fabric of British society. As Thomas Babington Macauley once famously opined "We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality." That once more seemed the case and everyone was getting into the act of telling Warren and the government how to do its job. Even so mainstream an organization as the Board of Works had seen fit to excoriate Warren and the police and he was obliged to respond. That reply is appended below; not because it is so important but because it is a grand example of the political class trying to smooth over criticism by saying nothing in as many palliative words as possible. Indeed, a close reading could serve as a non-narcotic (and surely non-addictive) sleeping aid.

4, Whitehall-place, S.W., Oct. 3.

Sir, - In reply to a letter of the 2nd inst. from the Clerk of the Board of Works for the Whitechapel District transmitting a resolution of the Board with regard to the recent atrocious murders perpetrated in and about Whitechapel, I have to point out that the carrying out of your proposals as to regulating and strengthening the police force in your district cannot possibly do more than guard or take precautions against any repetition of such atrocities so long as the victims actually, but unwittingly, connive at their own destruction.

Statistics show that London, in comparison to its population, is the safest city in the world to live in. The prevention of murder directly cannot be effected by any strength of the police force; but it is reduced and brought to a minimum by rendering it most difficult to escape detection. In the particular class of murder now confronting us, however, the unfortunate victims appear to take the murderer to some retired spot and to place themselves in such a position that they can be slaughtered without a sound being heard; the murder, therefore, takes place without any clue to the criminal being left.

I have to request and call upon your Board, as popular

representatives, to do all in your power to dissuade the unfortunate women about Whitechapel from going into lonely places in the dark with any persons - whether acquaintances or strangers.

I have also to point out that the purlieus about Whitechapel are most imperfectly lighted, and that darkness is an important assistant to crime.

I can assure you, for the information of your Board, that every nerve has been strained to detect the criminal or criminals, and to render more difficult further atrocities. You will agree with me that it not desirable that I should enter into particulars as to what the police are doing in the matter. It is most important for good results that our proceedings should not be published, and the very fact you may be unaware of what the Detective Department is doing is only the stronger proof that it is doing its work with secrecy and efficiency.

A large force of police has been drafted into the Whitechapel district to assist those already there to the full extent necessary to meet the requirements; but I have to observe that the Metropolitan police have not large reserves doing nothing and ready to meet emergencies, but every man has his duty assigned to him; and I can only strengthen the Whitechapel district by drawing men from duty in other parts of the metropolis.

You will be aware that the whole of the police work of the metropolis has to be done as usual while this extra work is going on, and that at such a time as this extra precautions have to be taken to prevent the commission of other classes of crime being facilitated through the attention of the police being diverted to one special place or object.

I trust your Board will assist the police by persuading the inhabitants to give them every information in their power concerning any suspicious characters in the various dwellings, for which object 10,000 handbills, a copy of which I enclose, have been distributed.

I have read the reported proceedings of your meeting, and I regret to see that the greatest misconceptions appear to have arisen in the public mind as to the recent action in the administration of the police. I beg you will dismiss from your minds, as utterly fallacious, the numerous anonymous statements as to the recent changes stated to have been made in the police force, of a character not conducive to efficiency.

It is stated that the Rev. Daniel Greatorex announced to you that one great cause of police inefficiency was a new system of police whereby constables were constantly changed from one district to another, keeping the ignorant of their beats.

I have seen this statement made frequently in the newspapers lately, but it entirely without fountain.

The system at present in use has existed for the last 20 years, and constables are seldom or never drafted from their districts except for promotion or from some particular cause.

Notwithstanding the many good reasons why constables should be changed on their beats, I have considered the reasons on the other side to be more cogent, and have felt that they should be thoroughly acquainted with the districts in which they serve.

And with regard to the Detective Department - a department relative to which reticence is always most desirable - I may say that a short time ago I made arrangements which still further reduced the necessity for transferring officers from districts which they knew thoroughly.

I have to call attention to the statement of one of your members that in consequence of the change in the condition of Whitechapel in recent years a thorough revision of the police arrangements is necessary, and I shall be very glad to ascertain from you what changes your Board consider advisable; and I may assure you that your proposals will receive from me every consideration.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
CHARLES WARREN.³

Amidst all the criticism of the government what was rapidly becoming the real "hot button" issue was that of rewards and it became even hotter when the City of London, not bound by any Home Office strictures, announced on October 4, 1888, that it was offering a £500 reward in regard to the murder of Catharine Eddowes, which happened (albeit just) within its boundaries. As might be expected, the *Star* saw this as a very sanguinary move and also took the occasion to once more heap scorn on Warren and Matthews.

LOOK at this question of the offer of a reward. At this moment the City proper is placarded with notices of a £500 reward, offered by the municipal authorities. Outside that magic area, the authorities believe that such an offer is useless, or worse than useless, and are so strong in that belief that they reject all proffers of private aid in the matter. Whether the City is right or the Home Office is right, what more convincing demonstration could be offered of the necessity of placing the whole police of the metropolis under the control of a genuine municipal authority?

IN our opinion the City is right. The very fact that the City police believe in the possible efficacy of a reward shows that there is room for doubt on the subject, and where there is room for doubt the benefit ought to be given in the direction of long-established and well-tried practice. It is the duty of Mr. Matthews and his subordinates, as we said the other day, to show that they

have left no stone unturned, no resource unexhausted. But there is a special reason for offering a reward in this present case. London is in daily danger of a repetition of the recent butchery. Ordinarily, a reward is merely designed to bring the perpetrator of a past crime to justice; but here it may have the effect of preventing a repetition of the crime. The prospect of a reward is enough in a district like the East-end to convert every other resident into an amateur detective. The criminal must know that it increases his risk a hundredfold, and who knows how many a life may be saved by that knowledge alone? Have our red-tape bound officials in Whitehall looked at this special feature of the present case?⁴



Home Secretary Henry Matthews

Less red-meat for its ravenous readers in terms of invective, perhaps, but the *Star* would seem to echo the sentiments of many at the moment.

Of course, not everyone and every publication fell into line and supported the notion of rewards. For example, the *Law Journal* (described by a contemporary as "extremely cautious") had this to say in an editorial.

The Whitechapel murderer, if such there be, has by invading the City boundary given rise to a curious illustration of the anomalies of local government which are now in process of being reformed. By slightly widening the circle of his crimes he has had brought

3 *The Times*, October 4, 1888.

4 *Star*, October 4, 1888.

to bear upon him a resource of barbarism of late years relegated to the past. The Home Secretary, in spite of clamor, has been steadfast in maintaining the practice inherited from his predecessors of refusing to try to catch criminals by offering large rewards. This is a policy which has now been adopted for the whole country, and it is obvious that if once broken in upon the whole mischief of information being held back by those who are waiting for the offer of a reward is revived. Unfortunately, the understanding which has prevailed has only the sanction of the comity of the police authorities throughout the country, and has no legal force. The City authorities, having the control of their own police, can revert to exploded expedients by dealing with crime from the commercial point of view with some show of right, but in point of law every private person may offer a reward for information leading to the detection of crime, and would be held to his promise in a court of law. An Act of Parliament is necessary to save the administration of the law from the periodical reversion to quack remedies to which it is exposed.⁵

Nonetheless, the opinion of the *Law Journal* was definitely in the minority as far as most of the popular press and, it would seem, a good portion of the populace. So much so that organizations and individuals came forward offering to augment any rewards offered by the government.

In fact, as far back as early September - just two days after Annie Chapman's murder - the MP for Whitechapel, Samuel Montagu, wrote to the police that he would personally underwrite a reward:

Dear Sir,

Feeling keenly the slur cast upon my constabulary by the recent murders & the non discovery [sic] of the criminal or criminals I hereby authorise you to print & distribute at my expense posters offering £100 reward for the discovery & conviction of the murderer or murderers, which reward I will pay.

Samuel Montagu
Member for Whitechapel
Sept. 10th 1888⁶

This letter led to Charles Edward Troup, a clerk in the Home Office, to research and write what would be the basis of Home Office policy in regard to rewards throughout the Ripper's reign:

The H.O. rule is against offering rewards and, even if exceptions to the rule are to be allowed, I think this case is the last in which it should be done.

It is generally agreed that the Whitechapel murderer has no accomplices who could betray him.

Any person, other than an accomplice, who possesses information, would be certain, in the present state of

public feeling, to give it without prospect of reward.

On the other hand, the offer of a reward would be almost certain to produce false information.

Even if the case were a proper one for a reward, the M.P. for the district is not the proper person to offer it. Of course SofS cannot forbid Mr. Montagu to publish the offer, but he can forbid Police to give their authority to it.

Say that, had the case been considered [a] proper one for the offer of a reward. SoS [would] at once have offered one on behalf of the Govt., but the practice of offering rewards was discontinued some years ago because experience showed that in their general effect such offers...produce more harm than good, and the SofS...thinks the present case one in which there is special risk that the offer of a reward might hinder rather than promote the ends of justice.

Add that the offer of a reward while any person is under arrest on suspicion, is open to special objections and has...not at any time be [sic] allowed.⁷

Troup's draft was forwarded to Edward Leigh Pemberton, Home Office Legal Assistant to the Under-Secretary, who then drafted a letter to Montagu that said, in effect, "thanks, but no thanks." And it was then that an essentially simple matter became yet another major political thorn in Warren's side. The message from the Home Office to Montagu was evidently delayed and moreover the Member for Whitechapel was aggrieved that his letter about a reward, first sent to the police, was not handled immediately by the force. After disputing the wisdom of the Home Office decision, Montagu went on to complain:

On Monday the 10th inst. about mid-day I made my offer to Inspector West. He stated he would submit it to you. On Tuesday he called here & said that the proposal had been submitted to the Home Office & he thought it would be favourably received. I regret that you did not obtain the decision of the Home Secy. at once by telegram, because on Tuesday my proposal must have transpired & was published in the daily papers on Wednesday last.

Under these circumstances it is too late to withdraw my offer & in case information is received, leading to conviction of the murderer or murderers, I must pay the £100 to the person entitled to receive.⁸

Forget about a woman scorned, Hell truly hath no fury like a politician embarrassed (politically and financially).

5 As reprinted in the *Star*, October 6, 1888.

6 Evans, Stewart P. and Keith Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Companion*, Carroll & Graf (2000), p. 113.

7 Ibid., pp. 111-2.

8 Ibid., p. 114.

Nor did Warren help by churlishly replying to Montagu that if he had wanted a telegraphic reply he should have said so.

Warren, a very maligned fellow in many ways, did have an absolute knack for creating public relations disasters. At about the same as he was irritating an M.P., J.S. Sanders, the assistant to the private secretary to the Home Secretary, reported that Warren:

[R]emarked to me very strongly upon the great hindrance, which is caused to the efforts of the Police, by the activity of agents of Press Associations & Newspapers. These "touts" follow the detectives wherever they go in search of clues, and then having interviewed persons with whom the police have had conversations and from whom inquiries have made, compile the paragraphs which fill the papers. This practice impedes the usefulness of the detective investigations and moreover keeps alive the excitement in the district and elsewhere.⁹

There may well have been a kernel of truth in Warren's complaints about the press, but in the course of just two days he had managed to alienate further members of Parliament and members of the Fourth Estate, actions that would only exacerbate the problems the government was facing in connection with the Whitechapel murders.

And meanwhile, the clamor for a government reward as well as offers of private rewards kept coming. In September, George Lusk and his Vigilance Committee had considerable - and increasingly acrimonious - correspondence with Warren and the Home Office over the matter of rewards. Ever one with an eye for publicity, Lusk eventually went quite public with the following letter to the Daily Telegraph:

SIR - As members of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, who communicated without result with the Home Secretary with the view of obtaining, on behalf of the public at large, the offer of a Government reward for the apprehension and conviction of the assassin or assassins in the recent East-end atrocities, we shall be glad if you will allow us to state that the Committee do not for one moment doubt the sincerity of the Home Secretary in refusing the said offer, as he apparently believes that it would not meet with a successful result. If you would, however, consider that in the case of the Phoenix Park murders the man Carey, who was surrounded by, we may say, a whole society steeped in crime, the money tempted him to betray his associates, in our opinion if Mr. Matthews could see his way clear to coincide with our views the Government offer would be successful. The reward should be ample for securing the informer from revenge, which would be a very great inducement in the matter; in addition to which such offer would convince the poor and humble residents

of our East-end that the Government authorities are as much anxious to avenge the blood of these unfortunate victims as they were the assassination of Lord Cavendish and Mr. Burke. - Apologising for trespassing on your valuable space, we beg to subscribe ourselves, faithfully yours,

GEORGE LUSK
JOSEPH AARONS.¹⁰



George Lusk

Nor did Lusk and his Vigilance Committee cavil at raising the ante yet more. This it did by involving Queen Victoria, directly sending her a letter of petition:

To Her Most Gracious Majesty
The Queen
The Humble Petition of George Lusk

Of Nos. 1, 2 & 3 Alderney Road in the Parish of Mile End Old T[own] in the County of Middlesex, Builder and Contractor, a mem[ber] of the Metropolitan Board of Works, a Vestryman of the above named Parish and the President and Chairman of the Vigilance Committee formed for the purpose hereunder mentioned....

Sheweth

1 That Your Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department has for some years past discontinued the old practice of offering a Government reward for the apprehension and conviction of those offenders against Your Sovereign Majesty Your Crown and Dignity who have escaped detection for the crime of Murder.

2 That in the course of the present year (A.D. 1888.) no less than four murders of Your Majesty's subjects have taken place within a radius of half a mile from one point in said district.

⁹ Evans, Stewart P. and Keith Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Companion*, Carroll & Graf (2000), p. 117.

¹⁰ *Daily Telegraph*, October 1, 1888.

3 That notwithstanding the constitution of the Scotland Yard Detective Office and the efforts of the trained Detectives of such office, the perpetrator or perpetrators of these outrages against Your Majesty will remain undiscovered.

4 That acting under the direction of Your Majesty's liege subjects your petitioner...caused to be sent to Your Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department a suggestion that he should revert to the original system of a reward looking at the fact that the present series of murders was probably the work of one hand and that the third and fourth were certainly the work of that one hand and that inasmuch as the ordinary means of detection had failed and that the murderer would in all probability commits other murders of a like nature such offer of a reward at the earliest opportunity was absolutely necessary for securing Your Majesty's subjects from death at the hands of the above one undetected assassin.

5 That in reply to such suggestions your Petitioner received from Your Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department a letter of the following is a copy... *[There followed what had become the standard "Thanks, but no thanks" letter from Pemberton in regard to offers of rewards.]*

6 That the reply above quoted was submitted to the inhabitants of the East End of London in meeting assembled and provoked a considerable amount of hostile criticism and that such criticism was re-echoed throughout Your Majesty's Dominions not only by Your Majesty's subjects at large but, with one or two exceptions the entire press of Great Britain.

Your Petitioner therefore

Humbly prays Your

Majesty as follows:

That Your Majesty will graciously accede to the prayer of Your Petitioner preferred originally through Your Majesty's Secretary of State and direct that a government reward sufficient in amount to meet the peculiar exigencies of the case may immediately be offered, Your Petitioner and these loyal subjects whom he represents being convinced that without such reward the murderer or murderers of the above four victims will not only remain undetected but will sooner or later commit other crimes of a like nature.¹¹

Naturally, the Queen did not respond; rather, her staff immediately forwarded it to the Home Office. In any case, the fat was truly in the fire now and even the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, was involved if not active. After all, parliamentary democracy that Great Britain may have been at the time, when the reigning monarch says "Jump!" even (or rather especially) the prime minister can only reply "How high?" The result was a spate of internal Home Office

correspondence on the question of rewards, with ever more obscure examples of the usefulness or lack of some of the practice being dredged up by such legal researchers such as the aforementioned C.E. Troup. And in the end the result was always the same, the policy precedent established by Harcourt should stand.

Throughout the month of October there was a volume of correspondence between Warren and Matthews on the reward/pardon issue. It should be borne in mind that the pair did not like each. Indeed, Matthews was rather unpopular with many within the government and was viewed as a rather weak vessel who certainly was not at his best defending the government in parliamentary debate. Still, his status as the lone Catholic in the government (and the first since Elizabeth I was on the throne) kept him protected. For his part, Warren always chaffed at being subordinate to anyone (throughout his military career he had always performed best in far corners of the empire that saw him removed from the normal chain of command and thus able to act on his own initiative) and was thus not the best of public servants on behalf of the government.

Lending his part to ongoing debate was once more George Lusk. Just how much he was motivated by the public weal and how much by a lust for publicity remains an open question, but having gotten no satisfaction in the matter of a reward, he began to call publicly and privately for the issuance of a pardon. These efforts prompted a letter from Warren to the Home Office on October 9.

Sir,

In reply to your immediate letter just received on the subject of Mr. Lusk's proposal as to a pardon to accomplices in the Whitechapel murders, I have to state, for the information of the Secretary of State, that during the last three or four days I have been coming to the conclusion that useful results would be produced by the offer of a pardon to accomplices. Among the variety of theories there is the possibility that the murderer is someone who during the day-time is sane, but who at certain periods is overbalanced in his mind; and I think it possible in that case that his relatives or neighbours may possibly be aware of his peculiarities and may have gradually unwittingly slid into the position of being accomplices, and may be helpless of any escape without a free pardon...

As a striking commentary on this matter I have today received a letter from a person asserting himself to be an accomplice, and asking for a free pardon; and I am commencing a communication with him through an advertisement in a journal. The letter is probably a hoax,

11 Evans & Skinner, op.cit., pp247-8.

for we have received scores of hoaxing letters, but on the other hand it may be a bona fide letter, and if so I feel what a very great loss it would be to the discovery of the murderer by omitting to offer the pardon; and I cannot see what harm could be done in this or any future case by offering a pardon.¹²

It is worth noting that even now, before the Kelly murder, Warren, at least, was willing to entertain the notion of accomplices. This would contrast greatly with the Home Office position when a pardon finally was offered.

In contrast, the Home Office Permanent Under-Secretary, Godfrey Lushington, wrote to Matthews advising against a pardon.

Mr. Matthews,

This letter from the Commissioner [Warren] and letter from Mr. Lusk on which it is founded, give you an opportunity to offer a pardon if you are so inclined. Offering a pardon is not open to the same objections as offering a reward, nor has the S. of S. done anything to commit himself to refuse to offer a pardon. The mere lapse of time occasions no difficulty, for in a crime of this atrocious character it is desirable that if possible no person, even an accessory after the fact, should receive a pardon. A pardon, therefore, is only offered when it is pretty clear that the efforts of the Police to detect the crime have been unavailing, and if the S. of S. does not now offer a pardon his action will of course be open to the criticism that he has declined to take a step recommended by the Commissioner. On the other hand the Commissioner's letter does not appear to me to throw any new light on the case or to suggest the probability that the offer of a pardon will lead to discovery. His recommendation is based on a mere supposition, one of many suppositions that have occurred to everybody from the beginning.

Then, as to the offer of a pardon on the public mind. The offer of a pardon will not allay the excitement of the public who on the contrary will wrongly infer that the view of the Home Office is that the murderer had an accomplice and this will make the outrages appear of a far more grave character. Nor will the offer of a pardon restore confidence in the Police. It will be accepted as an admission of their failure to detect the crime; it will provoke renewed attention to the action of the Home Office and hostile critics are sure to say that the step if taken ought to have been taken earlier. In my opinion it would be better for the S. of S. not to...offer a pardon taking his stand on the ground that he has held from the



Godfrey Lushington

first that it is not a case in which the offer of a pardon is appropriate.

It is quite possible however that you may be of a different opinion.¹³ [Emphases in original]

The reader will note that throughout the memorandum from Lushington has a political cast. The arguments advanced, for and against a pardon, are not so much concerned with what might prove useful in finding the murderer, but rather what will resonate best with the voters. Just as President Nixon's advisers were said to ask "Will it play in Peoria?" so, too, does this analysis worry most about the political effect of a pardon. Also worth remembering is Lushington's caution that a pardon issued at this late date would draw criticism as to why it was not done much sooner.

In any case, the correspondence between Matthews and Warren for the rest of October and early November returned to the question of a reward. Warren was of the opinion that while the efficacy of a reward was doubtful, there could be little or no harm done. For his part, Matthews clung to the "no reward" position and further argued that it was not likely to produce any positive results. In this regard, Matthews was being proven correct: since the first week of October more than £1,400 in reward money (worth considerably more than £100,000 in today's money) was available and yet no worthwhile claimants had come forward with useful evidence.

Moreover, for the same period of time the murderer (who by then had been christened Jack the Ripper) had been quiet. And if the public had not quite relaxed its obsessive fascination with and fear of the fiend, there was doubtless an increasing hope on the part of the police and government that the series of murders had ended and while bruised a bit, both had survived without much damage. And then, on the morning of November 9, 1888, landlord John McCarthy's hired man, "Indian Harry" Bowyer went to collect some rent from Mary Jane Kelly.

What Bowyer saw when he peeked through a window was the result of yet another Ripper murder and without doubt the most horrendous to date. Kelly's murderer had literally flayed her body and left skin and body parts strewn around her little room at No. 13 Miller's Court. The news quickly spread and quite upstaged the Lord Mayor's Parade the same day. Even more, it reopened the long festering wounds

12 Evans & Skinner, op.cit., p. 255.

13 Ibid, pp, 253-4.

the government had suffered throughout the earlier Ripper outrages. It raised the spectre of a political catastrophe and the government moved quickly to apply the best political solution available. The cabinet met post haste and voted to issue a pardon. Nor did it come any too soon. The Star had yet another rabid editorial and moreover one that tore into not only Warren (even reprising Trafalgar Square) and Matthews but the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, as well, suggesting that things augured poorly for the Conservatives' majority:

Meanwhile this seventh murder ought to rid us of Mr. MATTHEWS, and also of Sir CHARLES WARREN. The proclamation of a reward by the City authorities shows that the criminal apathy and indifference of the HOME SECRETARY have not been echoed even in quarters where interest in the lives and welfare of the people is small indeed. What effect the issue of a reward may ultimately have on the capture of the murderer it is impossible to say, but there cannot be the slightest doubt of the result which the withholding of all tangible Ministerial sympathy has had in the poor quarters of London.

We have heard the wildest stories as to the reasons which popular opinion in Whitechapel assigns for Mr. MATTHEWS'S obstinate refusal to offer a reward. It is believed by people who pass among their neighbours as sensible folk that the Government do not want the murderer to be convicted, that they are interested in concealing his identity, that, in fact, they know it, and will not divulge it. Of course this is rank nonsense, but it is nonsense which may end in a panic, while for the Government it is particularly dangerous nonsense.

Already the folly of Lord SALISBURY, in sticking to his discredited colleague, will cost the Government every seat which they hold in the East-end of London. For our part, if it were not for higher considerations even than the winning of two or three seats for Mr. GLADSTONE, we should say - By all means let Mr. MATTHEWS go on and fill the cup of his follies full to the brim. But we remember Trafalgar-square, and the danger of fresh assaults on the unemployed this winter. Therefore, we say MATTHEWS and WARREN must go, and the sooner the better. The first is a pitiful creature, a poor and spiritless specimen of the race of smart adventurers who creep into politics by back doors. Above all, he is a tactless, heartless red-tapeist, and probably nine out of ten of the clerks at the Home Office would be better fitted to look after the lives and property of the citizens of London than the right hon. gentleman who takes £5,000 a year for doing nothing. As for the second, there is but one cry from Tory and Liberal - "WARREN must go." At the Show yesterday his name was execrated from Aldgate to Pall Mall. He has become impossible. He is doomed.¹⁴

And so, the cabinet meeting on the morning of November 10, 1888, voted to issue a pardon to any accomplices of the Ripper not actually involved in the murders. As those things work, the cabinet sent Warren a copy of the letter (appended below) that had already been sent to the press over his name.

The Commissioner of Police
Metropolitan Police

Murder
Pardon

Whereas on November 8 or 9, in Miller-court, Dorset-street, Spitalfields, Mary Janet Kelly was murdered by some person or persons unknown: the Secretary of State will advise the grant of Her Majesty's gracious pardon to any accomplice, not being a person who contrived or actually committed the murder, who shall give such information and evidence as shall lead to the discovery and conviction of the person or persons who committed the murder.

CHARLES WARREN,
Commissioner of Police
of the Metropolis.

Metropolitan Police-office, 4, Whitehall-place,
S.W., Nov. 10, 1888.¹⁵

It was accepted practice that subordinates like Warren would agree to whatever words the Home Office put in his mouth (or penned to paper), but in this instance it was truly a formality as Warren had resigned the day before, effective the end of the month. His action had nothing to do with the Ripper murders or even Trafalgar Square. Rather, never able to take direction well, Warren resigned because he refused to allow the Home Office to scrutinize beforehand any articles he submitted to journals. In a way, though, Warren's resignation was a blessing as it provided a handy, and now out-of-office, scapegoat should the need arise.

Meanwhile, as a dutiful public servant, Lord Salisbury himself informed Queen Victoria of the cabinet's decision, hoping of course the action would still some of her recent misgivings.

Decypher
Novr: 10.1888
Marquis of Salisbury
To
The Queen
Humble duty:

¹⁴ *Star*, November 10, 1888.

¹⁵ Evans & Skinner, op. cit., p. 349.

At Cabinet today it was resolved to issue a Proclamation offering free pardon to anyone who should give evidence as to the recent murder except the actual perpetrator of the crime....¹⁶

There was one last public act in the pardon saga that occurred in the House of Commons on November 23, 1888. The member for Aberdeen, North, a Mr. Hunter asked Matthews “whether he is prepared, in the case of the Whitechapel murders, other than that of the woman Kelly, to offer a free pardon to any person not being the actual perpetrator of the crimes?”

In reply, Matthews said:

I should be quite prepared to offer a pardon in the earlier Whitechapel murders if the information before me had suggested that such an offer would assist in the detection of the murderer. **In the case of Kelly there were certain circumstances** which were wanting in the earlier cases, and which made it more probable that there were other persons who, at any rate after the crime, had assisted the murderer.”¹⁷ [Emphasis added.]

That phrase “certain circumstances” has bedevilled Ripperologists for more than a century now as they seek to uncover its meaning. For some it means that the Ripper and his clothes had to be such a bloody mess after he had hacked her to bits that wherever he called home there must have been someone who saw him in such an incardine state. For others it has been suggested that the police may have thought that the man seen by Sarah Lewis loitering across the road from Miller’s Court was an accomplice (though, Israel Schwartz’s “pipeman” might also have filled that bill). Then there are the conspiracy buffs whose febrile imaginations conjure up all manner of secret evidence involving Fenians, Royals or rogue elements the Knights of Pythias.

In fact, they are most assuredly all wrong. On the morning of November 10 the Salisbury cabinet was faced with a political crisis of frightening proportions and as politicians they sought an expeditious - and political - solution. Given time, they doubtless would have fallen back on the politicians’ favored answer to any looming problem: the appointment of a Blue Ribbon Commission. Indeed, commissions are an ideal way to deflect adverse public criticism. They give the impression those in charge really care, they can suggest the “best and brightest” are on the job (especially if a few prominent and seemingly disinterested citizens can be persuaded to serve) and by the time a commission finally

issues a report it can be hoped that the original problem will no longer seem important. Commissions are the ideal way to handle a political crisis, but they do require time and above all the Salisbury cabinet must have known they had very little time to assuage public opinion.

Still, there was a need for the government to be seen as doing “something” and moreover a something that suggested a rapid response to the Ripper’s latest murder that might actually help run him to ground. Popular as it still was in the public mind, a reward was impossible after all the previous refusals to offer one. A pardon, however, had many of the same advantages (e.g. a strenuous bid to discover the Ripper) and having never been dismissed out of hand like a reward it could be proffered with a straight face.

Ah, but what about Matthews’s phrase in answering Mr. Hunter in the House, the business about “certain circumstances”? To understand that, we must go back to Godfrey Lushington’s minute about pardons in early October in which he advised Matthews that a pardon “will provoke renewed attention to the action of the Home Office and hostile critics are sure to say that the step if taken ought to have been taken earlier.” This objection to a pardon would be obviated, however, if it could be suggested that the Kelly murder was somehow different than the others. Since Mr. Matthews was not known as a great debater in the House one suspects he was primed with the “certain circumstances” response (perhaps by Lushington) if the question ever did come up. In fact, the phrase was a very clever rejoinder because it provided the government with plausible deniability in the event anyone wondered why the pardon was so late in coming. As it was, the pardon offer succeeded. It looked as if the government was concerned enough to try something daringly different, it bought time and, except for a couple momentary frissons of fear after the murders of Alice McKenzie and Frances Coles, the Ripper scare subsided enough that the government also survived its own scare.

Boys will be boys and politicians will always be politicians - even at the height of the Ripper terror. The pardon was an exercise in spin control.

¹⁶ Evans & Skinner, op. cit. pp. 348-9.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 349.



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What's Wrong With Being Unmotivated?

By DONALD SOUDEN

The underlying motive for the Ripper murders is an evergreen topic within the community and was doubtless a favored subject of conversation over a few (many?) pints at the recent [2010] conference in London. Indeed, for many among the ranks of Ripperologists the question of Why seems even to transcend that of Who. Nor is that curiosity necessarily a means to answer both questions with one pull of the trigger, though, as will be seen, explanations of motive are a particular staple of most suspect-based books and theories.

Nonetheless, the Why of the Ripper murders is often enough sufficient by itself to keep Ripperologists wondering and expatiating at length. As an example, the message board at JTRForums.com has a thread dedicated to the Ripper's motivation that lists thirty different possibilities, followed by "31) Combinations or variations of the above. 32) Unknown" and finally that ultimate escape clause, "33) Other." There is no question, then, that motivation looms large in the minds of many and, with a plethora of possibilities, admits of nothing close to a consensus.

Given that interest, it is worth noting with a bit of irony that discovering a motive, far less proving it, is not necessary while investigating or prosecuting criminal conduct. Of course, certain crimes admit of rather obvious motives that need little explanation. That is, most robbers are motivated by a hope of monetary gain. The same holds for embezzlement, extortion and simony. In contrast, there are many crimes that are essentially motiveless, such as vehicular homicide or assault and battery when the underlying cause is the consumption of enough alcohol to render someone too drunk to understand, far less moderate their actions.

Nevertheless, motive - especially in capital (or what were capital cases) is rather beloved of District Attorneys and Crown Prosecution Service counsels, they believing

through experience that being able to show plausible motive goes a long way toward getting a conviction from a jury. This was explained well by DA Vincent Bugliosi in his book *Helter Skelter* about the Manson Family's Tate-Labianca murders in 1969. To that end, Bugliosi conjured up a convoluted motive based on a Beatles song and an apocalyptic race war. Today, that fervid fable seems overblown and overly imaginative, but it was effective in helping secure a guilty verdict, though perhaps not nearly so important to jurors' minds as the crimes themselves and the actions of the defendants. After all, motive tends to take a backseat when those on trial not only boast of their alleged crimes but comport themselves like drug-addled dregs of society.

Motive is also a staple of most detective fiction, with "why the butler did it" often leading, albeit tortuously, to the perpetrator. But the unraveling of motive, of course, is only achieved with the aid of a smudged fingerprint, a seemingly guilty demeanor, an unexplained lapse in the alibi and the sudden recollection that the guilty party had once admitted to a positive passion for smelts sautéed with sauerkraut (a predilection in real life that would be ipso facto proof of not only a crime against nature but likely a mental illness as well). Being a work of fiction, moreover, allows the author to ascribe a motive to the murderer murkier more confusing than the Voynich Manuscript (though, perhaps more plausible than those put forward by some Ripper theorists). Generally, the motive will involve, in varying combinations and permutations, a legacy or title, an effort to forestall the revelation of various guilty secrets or a longstanding resentment that the victim received rather more remuneration from the Tooth Fairy when he and his proxy Atropos were but wee bairns. It often makes for entertaining reading at least.

Another group that enjoys exploring motive would be criminal psychologists and their mind-probing minions. One obvious reason for this practice is that it is the

only avenue open to them; the nuts and bolts of actual investigation being well beyond the ken of those who populate the groves of academe. And this often results in their making egregious errors about the facts. Besides, these academics are by nature classifiers and “putters-in-pigeonholes,” even if their activities often flirt with the Alpha-Centauri Fallacy. That is, should we ever get to meet aliens from that solar system we can be darn sure they won't call the sun their home planet circles Alpha-Centauri. Still, their utterances also are often entertaining, though not nearly so much as the writers of detective fiction.

Further, we must consider the category into which many of our fellow travelers in Ripperology fall - armchair detectives. Without the energy or - irony of ironies - the motivation to time themselves (armed with stopwatch, map and GPS hardware) making the trek from Dutfield's Yard to Mitre Square or, alternately, inviting permanent pixel pixilation by spending hours, days, even years staring at digitized documents, some will content themselves with endless contemplation over just why Jack the Ripper did what he did. That is a harmless enough pursuit, rather on a par with pondering the number of pinheads who can dance on an angel, but one that rarely makes for entertaining reading.

That said, however, just such puzzling over why Jack the Ripper eviscerated a number of East End unfortunates is too often thrust upon an unfortunate public, usually in the guise of a book that names a particular suspect as the one and only Jack the Ripper. Like the District Attorneys and Crown Prosecutors previously mentioned, the writers of suspect-based Ripper books usually feel it incumbent upon themselves to explain just why their particular suspect felt it necessary to practice street-corner surgery upon the unwilling of Whitechapel. And for the most part these authors could give a stroke a hole - and still coast to victory - to most purveyors of detective fiction in terms of convoluted and downright bizarre reasons for murder.

Bruce Paley and his 1994 book *The Simple Truth* might be a good place to start a review of Jack the Ripper's murderous motivation. As theories go, his explanation of the Ripper's *raison d'être* is surely bizarre if not quite round-the-bend madness. He fingers Joseph Barnett,

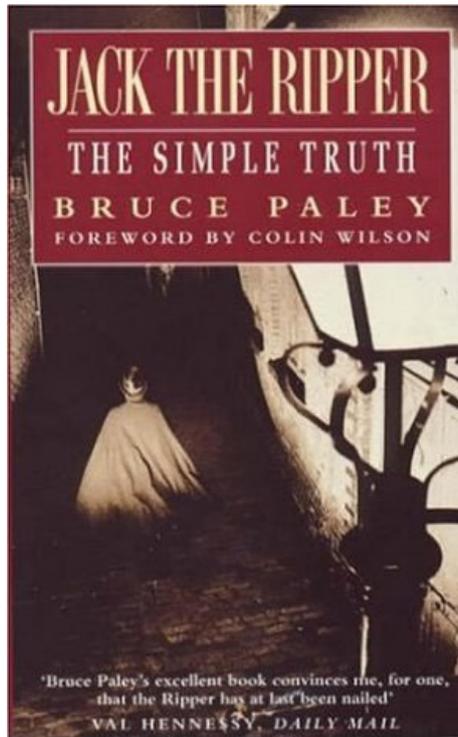
quondam lover of Mary Jane Kelly, and he makes the quite valid point that spouses and cohabiting lovers are always the suspects of choice, at least initially, when investigating the partner's murder. And quite often the police need go no farther in the search than that person. It is a disquieting fact of human nature that the line between love and hate can become blurred beyond recognition or reason by the trauma of rejection.

Had Paley stopped there, he would have produced a neat little solution to the murder at 13 Miller's Court, but in Ripperology that would be akin to Hillary and Norgay stopping well short of the peak during their assault on Mount Everest. So, with the bravura of all adventurers, Paley tried to link Barnett to all the so-called Ripper murders. He began by applying the “one-size-fits-all” FBI profile of Jack the Ripper and like all who do so found enough there - age, a mother who may have deserted

young Joseph and a possible speech impediment - to satisfy himself if not all (or even most) of his critics. Still, there remained that nagging question of motivation.

It was when he moved to explaining Barnett's motivation for killing anyone besides his beloved “Marie Jeanette” that Paley turned from detective to fabulist. The reason, we are told, for the series of brutal murders in Whitechapel during the fall of 1888 was that Barnett was so desperate to wean Kelly from working the streets as a prostitute that he sought to frighten her into chaste behavior by randomly killing some of her “sisters in sin” and only when that failed (and Kelly coincidentally turned him out) did he kill Kelly herself.¹ Seriously, is that the first expedient most people would attempt when trying to break someone of a bad habit? Today, I suppose, Barnett might have arranged an intervention, but back then he most likely would have beaten her with a cudgel. Not, let it be added quickly, a commendable means of chastisement but surely one more in keeping with the times than a random killing spree.

Think about that motive for a good long moment and ponder if it would even pass the test of bad detection fiction. To begin with, there is no reliable evidence that Kelly was still walking the streets after she and Barnett



¹ Bruce Paley; *The Simple Truth*; Headline Book Publishing (1995); passim.

settled into their Miller's Court snugery. That doesn't mean she wasn't and certainly her entertaining of Joseph Fleming was likely not for purposes of studying the Second Law of Thermodynamics or discussing the implications of Home Rule, but nonetheless to embark upon the random murder and evisceration of local unfortunates as a way of scaring Kelly straight is clearly counterintuitive and rather beyond the pale even for serial killers. But such are the problems people like Paley face when they try to explain the Ripper's motivation. Nor, is this stab at motivation far from the worst spun by Ripper theorists.

In fact, the motivation game began while the Ripper was still having his innings thanks to coroner Wynne Baxter. Addressing the jury at the inquest into Annie Chapman's murder the *Times* reported on September 27, 1888, that Baxter said in his summation:

Within a few hours of the issue of the morning papers containing a report of the medical evidence given at the last sitting of the Court [that Chapman's uterus had been excised and taken away] he [Baxter] received a communication from an officer of one of our great medical schools that they had information which might or might not have a distinct bearing on that inquiry. He... was informed by the sub-curator of the Pathological Museum that some months ago an American had called on him and asked him to procure a number of specimens of that organ that was missing in the deceased. He stated his willingness to give £20 apiece for each specimen. He stated that his object was to issue an actual specimen with each copy of a publication on which he was then engaged. He was told his request was impossible to be complied with, but he still urged his request. He wished them preserved, not in spirits of wine, the usual medium, but glycerine, in order to preserve them in a flaccid condition and he wished them sent to America direct. It was known that this request was repeated to another institution of a similar character. Now was it not possible that the knowledge of this demand might have incited some abandoned wretch to possess himself of a specimen?²

Baxter's effort at ascribing a motive to the Ripper's work - for gain more grisly but no less fathomable than murder in the course of robbery - was given short shrift by Scotland Yard and the press, but continues to be trotted out today in a somewhat different guise. That is, most modern theorists have eliminated the middleman and made the Ripper himself a collector of wombs. The theory is particularly dear to some who posit Dr. Francis Tumblety as Jack, arguing that he did, in fact, possess a number of such preserved organs at one time in Washington, D.C. On the other hand, Tony Williams suggested in his execrable book *Uncle Jack* that his distant relative, the renowned physician Sir John Williams, had embarked

upon a campaign of extracting the uteri of unfortunates in order to "cure" his wife's inability to conceive.³ Thus, perhaps the earliest attempt to assign motivation to Jack's depredations still has adherents today.



Wynne Baxter
© Adam Wood

However, despite coroner Baxter's foray into the theorizing derby, most of his contemporaries gave very little thought to the Why and were much more interested in the Who part of the Ripper conundrum. The police, who will be examined more closely later, were rather unanimous that Jack was maniac of some sort without worrying about any other motivational bells and whistles. This would also seem to have been the feelings of at least the "semi-literate" of the age. A check of letters from the public to the City of London Police reveals that these erstwhile armchair detectives were overwhelmingly concerned with capturing the fiend and the majority kept reinventing the wheel by suggesting the police use policemen dressed in female garb as decoys. Interestingly, one letter writer turned things around and accused a troupe of female impersonators as being responsible.⁴

2 Stewart P. Evans & Keith Skinner; *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Companion*; Carroll & Graf (2001); p. 119.

3 Tony Williams & Humphrey Price; *Uncle Jack*; Orion House (2005); passim.

4 Stewart P. Evans & Donald Rumbelow; *Jack the Ripper: Scotland Yard Investigates*; Sutton Publishing (2006); pp. 271-286.

And, accusing annoying relatives, neighbors and perfect strangers of the crimes accounted for nearly all the remaining letters. It would seem a fair bet that very few mooching cousins, loners living next door, odd-looking train travelers or luckless physicians were not fingered at one time or another during the fall of 1888 by those with enough gumption to take pen to paper. That said, there were a few correspondents who at least ventured into motivation by suggesting that Jack had been cheated by or, worse, made syphilitic by a prostitute and was now wreaking vengeance on the entire class with his murders. That possibility gained little traction at the time but nonetheless the seeds were sown for what would become one vast field of weed-like theories.⁵

Perhaps the first harvest of those weeds was provided by Leonard Matters, initially in a December 26, 1926, article in *People* magazine and later in his 1929 book *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper*. Stripped to its basics, it concerns a once-prominent English physician, "Dr. Stanley" (a pseudonym admitted to by Matters) making a deathbed confession that he was Jack the Ripper. As the tale went, his beloved son Bertie contracted syphilis from one Mary Kelly and upon his death Stanley pere embarked upon the slaughter of street whores to avenge Stanley fils, a killing spree that culminated in the horrors at Miller's Court when Kelly herself was cornered.⁶ It is a story line worthy of a soap opera and full of more holes than the New York Giants' defense, but it has nonetheless spawned enough variations on a theme to keep the minds engaged of many more hopeful Ripper theorists than might comfortably fit into the coach section of a Boeing 747. More to the point, while Matters set the table, so to speak, for the basic motive of punishing prostitutes because of a venereal disease caught from one of the sisterhood, even more he provided two other ideas that would become staples for future seekers after motive: physicians as a part of the plot and the notion that Mary Jane Kelly was the ultimate target of the Ripper.

A further element in so many modern theories of motivation was probably provided by T.E.A Stowell, C.B.E, M.D. in the November 1970 issue of *The Criminologist* magazine, where he all but named Prince Albert Victor the Duke of Clarence and Avondale, more popularly known as Prince Eddy and heir presumptive to the British throne, as having been Jack the Ripper. Dr. Stowell never quite said publicly that Eddy was the Ripper and at his death his papers and notes were destroyed (coincidentally enough for those who see portents everywhere, he breathed his last on November 9, 1970, the anniversary of Mary Jane Kelly's murder) he nonetheless made his suspicions quite clear. As one analyst has written:

If the editors and feature writers had read Stowell's article they would have realized that the author had set

out to convey the impression, though without actually committing himself to a positive statement, that he not only believed, but actually knew, that Eddy and the Ripper were the same.

Stowell had convinced himself that a man of whom he had got some particulars at third hand was Eddy. It is true that certain dates in the lives of both the real Ripper and of Eddy do tally, but Stowell professed to believe that he was hearing about Eddy, rather than about someone of lower social rank. It made a better story.⁷

No question it made for a better story. As Shakespeare established more than 350 years earlier, mixing low comedy with hi-jinks in high places is often a recipe for success. The low comedy element was yet to appear, but you certainly could not have found anyone higher than a member of the Royal family for any hi-jinks and Stowell's article consequently created an immediate sensation. Indeed, some aver that by making Eddy a suspect, the piece in *The Criminologist* was a major element in making the Ripper mystery such a major fascination of the late 20th century. Moreover, if Eddy may now be personally exculpated for the crimes, he remains an important part of many modern motivation theories.

Ironically, perhaps, one of the first to shoot down the idea that Prince Eddy was Jack the Ripper, Michael Harrison in his 1972 book *Clarence: Was He Jack the Ripper?*, did so only at the expense of providing his own peculiar motive for the murders. Harrison's suspect was Eddy's one-time tutor at Cambridge, James Kenneth Stephen. The evidence adduced amounts to little more than the parsing of poems by Stephen, but the motive did add an entirely new avenue for speculation. That is, Harrison posited that Eddy and Stephen had likely been homosexual lovers and Stephen, after a serious head injury, sought to regain Eddy's affection by staging the Ripper murders. There is more to it than that, but this little bit should suffice. As a means of regaining a lost love it strains credulity as much as Paley's vision of Barnett's killing prostitutes in order to keep Kelly off the streets and Harrison's theorizing met with even less acceptance among most Ripperologists than Paley's. Still, it has had one lingering effect - permanently bringing Stephen's name into some modern efforts at explaining motive. In fact, that would seem to provide one axiom for theorists: new characters are constantly added to the drama, but old ones are ever retained.⁸

5 Stewart P. Evans & Donald Rumbelow; *Jack the Ripper: Scotland Yard Investigates*; Sutton Publishing (2006); pp. 271-286.

6 Dave Froggatt; *Ripper Rarities - The Mystery of Jack the Ripper* by Leonard Matters. *Ripperologist* No. 40: April 2002

7 Michael Harrison; *Clarence: Was He Jack The Ripper*; Drake Publishing (1972); pp. 137-8.

8 Harrison; op. cit.; passim.

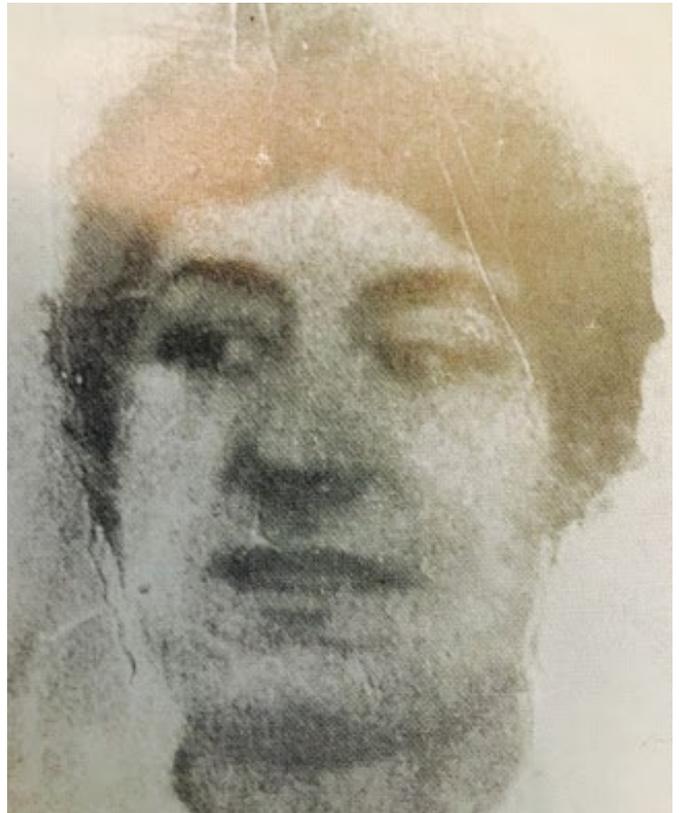
As it was, the low-comedy complement to hi-jinks in high places was incorporated just a few years later with the publication of Stephen Knight's epochal tour-de-force *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*. With the book's publication, the Royal Conspiracy emerged full-blown. Most are familiar with Knight's thesis, but in short the motivation espoused for the murders involved an infelicitous (and putatively illegal) marriage between Prince Eddy and a commoner Roman Catholic, Annie Elizabeth Crook. With the future of the monarchy at stake, a cabal of prostitutes (headed by Mary Jane Kelly) embark upon blackmail. Enter Queen Victoria's physician-in-ordinary Sir William Gull who, abetted by coachman John Netley (here is the low comedy role that truly should be played by Jim Carrey in any modern movie) and artist Walter Sickert, to remedy the situation. If nothing else, Sickert's inclusion in the terrible trio helped revive his flagging reputation. Never, perhaps in the top tier of artists for the period, he nonetheless had real talent but had fallen into the category "and others of interest."

There was one other ingredient in Knight's toxic cocktail of motivation and that was a large jigger of Freemasonry. No matter how sprawling and convoluted Knight's thesis may seem, it actually had a controlling entity and that was composed wholly of Freemasons. Not only do they, as an avowed secret organization, bring a measure of conspiratorial skulduggery to the Ripper mystery, but any theorist looking to incorporate important names without much evidence should be forever in Knight's debt. This is because among the governing types of the LVP membership in the Masons was about as easy and ubiquitous as that for regular folks at Facebook today. Indeed, if there was any sort of Masonic conspiracy in operation back then it was probably running the British empire, but that is a topic for another time and another publication.

As it is, the subsuming of the Masons into the Ripper motivation corpus provided theorists with "explanations" for any number of vexing questions (e.g. the erasure of the Goulston Street Graffito was to protect the Masons from suspicion, the word Juwes don't you know is a part of Masonic lore and so on). And the fact that the explanation is errant nonsense makes no difference to a true-believer. I once came across a fervent apostle of the Masonic conspiracy school and my life has not been the same since. Especially because his final words were "I may already have told you too much and your life, like mine, may now be in danger." Try walking down a strange street at three in the morning with that warning stuck in your memory. Mere muggers are welcomed at those moments so long as they aren't wearing an apron and top hat.

Nor for that matter did it make much difference that Knight's story at its very simplest was a rather flimsy fabrication. Not only wouldn't any alleged marriage to the

Roman Catholic Annie Elizabeth Crook have been legal and thus able to topple the monarchy, but it turns out that Ms. Crook was a Protestant all along-not that there is any compelling evidence whatsoever that Prince Eddy ever met her, far less had any interest in her. More to the point, this theory of motivation, like so many others, would have led Occam of razor fame to grow a beard of knee-length or better. That is, rather than applying the simplest solution to the crimes Knight opted for the most far reaching and silliest of solutions. If Lord Salisbury's government really wanted to silence a few Whitechapel unfortunates would you really believe they would arrange for an aging, stroke-riddled physician, an obscure coachman and the flighty, flakey bohemian artist Walter Sickert to wage their feckless war of attrition on Whitechapel whores or would they just have had the women rounded up and--at the very least - consigned them to Broadmoor, to remain there at her Majesty's pleasure?



Annie Elizabeth Crook

Of course, none of this has kept subsequent theorists in search of a motive from borrowing, in whole or part, from those who conjectured before. Thus, we have had books and magazine articles a-plenty that have reflected, refined and reified the royal conspiracy. In their *The Jack The Ripper Whitechapel Murders* Andy and Sue Parlour kept Dr. Gull, but only as a mastermind while assigning the actual killing to James K. Stephen (remember him?) and Montague J. Druitt, the hapless barrister who apparently drowned himself in December 1888 and first came to the attention

of Ripperologists with the appearance of the Macnaghten memoranda.⁹ Walter Sickert popped up as the Ripper in several books since, most notably Patricia Cornwell's *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed*. Once having come to the public's attention, the suspects encompassed by the Royal Conspiracy are never "out of work" for long. Low comedy and hi-jinks in high places, you understand.

The only basis for motive to rival the Royal conspiracy these days would seem to be the hoary chestnut that dates back at least to the Roman Republic when it was decided by the few that Julius Caesar had outlived his "rule-by date" - that old devil conspiracy. We have already encountered the Masonic conspiracy, but viral as it has proved, it is neither the oldest, nor the most dangerous excuse for Jack's reign of terror. It would seem odd, indeed, if the possibility of Fenian involvement had not occurred to at least a few on the scene in 1888. After all, the Irish nationalists were a real and present danger at the time and besides it was always convenient to blame the Irish because they were foreigners and ...well, Irish. Interestingly, a possible Fenian motive has remerged among modern theorists, aided no doubt by Tumblety's tenuous connection to the cause.

Supposedly, the Irish nationalists abetted, if not actually commissioned, the Whitechapel murders as a means to embarrass and endanger England's government, monarchy and establishment by a wild serial killing spree in London. That reasoning smacks rather strongly of Joe Barnett randomly killing streetwalkers to scare Mary Jane Kelly or the Freemasons' letting slip the terrible trio of Gull, Netley and Sickert. That is, the Fenians at least had much earlier discovered a very effective means of scaring the English public and establishment dynamite. They had no need for proxy murders: and that applies as much today as it did in 1888.

The same argument would seem to rebut the efforts to frame a motive by William Tufnell Le Queux, who at least had the *bona fides* of having covered the Ripper murders for the *Globe* newspaper. Whatever, in 1923 he published one of his many books, *Things I Know About Kings, Celebrities and Crooks*, in which he claimed that a document written by Rasputin named a Dr. Alexander Pedachenko (a name that still defies identification with anyone who ever lived) as Jack the Ripper. He was loosed on London by the Czarist secret police in order to embarrass the English establishment because it was too lax toward Russian immigrants scheming to bring down the Czar.¹⁰

This article is not intended to be a thorough examination of motives that have been put forward to explain the East End murders in the fall of 1888. Instead, it has been an admittedly sketchy look at some of the more enduring theories of motivation and there are many that have not been mentioned. Among those would be the application

of occult practices, usually involving Robert D'Onston Stephenson. Regardless, the need for those on the outside to spin newer and ever more involved motives to explain Jack the Ripper's murder spree is in marked contrast to the view of most law enforcement professionals.

Indeed, those officials who were on the scene and actively involved in the LVP were almost unanimous about the Ripper's basic motivation. Right after the death of Mary Jane Kelly, Dr Thomas Bond undertook, at the behest of Sir Robert Anderson, a detailed examination of the Canonic Five murders and said, in part, that Jack was moved to kill because of "periodic attacks of Homicidal and erotic mania."¹¹ A bit later, City of London Police Inspector James McWilliam said "I have sent officers to all the Lunatic Asylums in London... Many persons being of opinion that these crimes are of too revolting a character to have been committed by a sane person."¹² Sir Robert Anderson was of the opinion that "It is impossible to believe they were acts of a sane man - they were those of a maniac - reveling in blood."¹³ Then there was Sir Melville Leslie Macnaghten who, in his famous memoranda, named as strong suspects Montague J. DrUITT, Aaron Kosminski and Michael Ostrog. He labeled each, in turn, as "sexually insane," "insane" and "a homicidal maniac."¹⁴ These examples are hardly an exhaustive list of what was said by those law enforcement professionals close to the investigation, but it does suggest that for most there was no need to find any motive beyond severe mental derangement. And, while the concept of a serial killer had yet to be advanced, they showed great prescience in the face of a yet to be perceived phenomenon.

Nor have the advances in serial-killer awareness over the past 12 centuries made much difference to the way professionals on the front-line still look at serial killers and their motivation. Mark Fuhrman may not be everyone's first choice for a racial-harmony award, but there are few savvier (and articulate) former law enforcement officials writing these days, so his opinions about the subject are certainly worth looking at:

Ever since the signature/MO distinction was first developed by John Douglas and Robert Ressler of the FBI, there has been a great deal of study and debate on the subject. The theory has helped detectives distinguish between serial sexual psychopaths and

9 Maxim Jakubowski & Nathan Braund (editors.); *The Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper*; Carroll & Graf (2001); pp. 259-79.

10 Paul Begg, Martin Fido and Keith Skinner; *The Jack the Ripper A to Z*; Headline Book Publishing (1994); pp. 258-9.

11 Ibid.; p. 53.

12 Evans & Rumbelow; op. cit.; p. 225.

13 Ibid,

14 Ibid.; pp. 226-7.

common criminals. Too often, the theory has been taken into the less useful realm of attempting to understand the motives of these psychopaths.

Law enforcement professionals, mental health experts, journalists and academics have spent their careers examining the psychological makeup of serial murderers in an attempt to understand what drives them to kill. If they ever do come up with a theory that might explain this, that's fine. But I doubt it will happen. I've always found human nature too perverse and mysterious to fit into the precise formulation of scientific models.

I'm a detective, not a psychologist or profiler. I'm interested in only using the signature to connect victims in order to catch the suspect... Signature is motive. Understanding a serial killer's motive as if I ever could is not going to help me identify the suspect. A detective doesn't need to understand why the suspect kills. The detective needs to know how he kills in order to catch him.

Motive is the one thing you don't have to prove in a criminal trial. It might be important for the criminal profiler or psychologist who is trying to understand how the mind of the serial killer works, and help law enforcement identify him or predict his next moves. For a working detective, trying to figure out motive is a waste of time. It's one thing to try to get into the serial killer's head and to recreate his movements and actions at the crime scene. It's something else entirely to try to understand why he's doing it.

...Murder never makes sense. People kill because of jealousy, anger, greed. Your marriage breaks up, your business partner rips you off, you catch your girlfriend in bed with your next door neighbor - are these good reasons to kill somebody? Even a revenge killing or murder for hire might have a motive that is rational to the suspect, but still incomprehensible to the rest of us.

Detectives often trap themselves into thinking that if they understand the motive, they'll understand the murder and be able to fit everything into a neat little theory that will lead them to the killer. This is a fruitless pursuit that will only frustrate and distract a homicide detective, leading him or her further away from the solution.

Listen to the evidence. Let the evidence say what it is going to say. If you don't understand the motive and in many cases I would be worried if I didn't worry about it. If the motive is obvious, that's fine. But don't waste any time, effort, or energy trying to figure out a killer's motive.

Particularly in the case of serial murder, in which the desire for violent sexual gratification is deeply rooted in the twisted psyche of the killer.

...Sexual psychopaths are, by definition, irrational. A working detective has no hope of understanding what even experts who devote their lives to the study of

criminal psychology can't figure out. The motives of normal humans are mysterious enough. How can we possibly expect to understand the motives of sexual psychopaths?¹⁵

Yet, if the mantra of the real estate business is "Location, location, location!" that for many Ripperologists remains "Motivation, motivation, motivation!" This is so despite the many contemporary police officials and others involved in the investigation of the Ripper murders who were convinced that no motive beyond insanity was at work and modern police professionals like Fuhrman who argue that serial killers' minds are so twisted as to make any attempt at divining a rational motive a waste of time. Still, presenting a motive seems increasingly paramount for most theorists and the question then presents itself as to why this is so.

To begin with, it is entirely possible that some who promulgate motives for the Ripper that go beyond sexual mania of one sort or another truly believe their theories. Nor should the wilder, more incredible motives necessarily be exempt from this possibility. Surely, there are those who do still believe in the Freeman conspiracy. Not many, thankfully, but a few. Moreover, there is the instance of a son of the author of one of the more successful "alien abduction" books confiding to a mutual friend that his father "absolutely believed every word he wrote on the subject." And this was a man most would otherwise consider a paragon of sense and sobriety.

Then, too, one must consider the charming, though doubtless apocryphal, story of the parishioner who found his minister's sermon notes for the coming Sunday with marginalia that read "Argument weak here; shout like Hell."

That is, many suspect-based books and articles are sorely lacking in actual - or even inferential - evidence that points toward the preferred perpetrator. In those cases, you "shout like Hell" or at least drag in what might be a distracting theory of motivation. And if you can make that motive exciting (or even believable) then that is so much the better. It happens all the time in order to sell both books and ideas. And most authors are not quite so honest as Michael Harrison who once said in a BBC interview about Dr. Stowell's theory that Prince Eddy was the Ripper: "I didn't agree. But I couldn't leave the reader high and dry, so what I did was find somebody I thought was a likely candidate."¹⁶

And thus did James K. Stephen become a Ripper suspect and disappointed homosexual love a motive.

15 Mark Fuhrman; *Murder in Spokane*; Harper Collins (2001); pp. 50-51.

16 Begg et al.; op. cit.; p. 446.

Finally, though, there is quirk of human nature that without quite understanding what it is we crave, we do have a great need for some seemingly rational explanation for why things happen that goes beyond whim or insanity. As discussed earlier, this works perfectly well for the writers of detective fiction, but then when we open the pages of such novels there is a willing suspension of disbelief on our part. Our view of the real world is not so easily compartmentalized, however, and while events may happen that suggest there truly is insanity, even mindless evil, in the world we cannot accept such abstractions as explanations of why things occur as they do.

And that is why when a political leader is assassinated the likelihood of a lone, deranged gunman being responsible is rejected in favor of a conspiracy. Or why, after World War I, it was necessary to convene congresses to lay the blame on a cabal of arms merchants rather than the sheer diplomatic ineptitude of most world leaders in the fall of 1914. Or why, in the fall of 1888, the serial murder of East End prostitutes was not the work of a single sexual psychopath, but that it was a front for something more rational, like a bid to save

British monarchy engineered by Freemasons, physicians, artists, poets and amateur cricket players. For whatever reason, that somehow seems a lot more understandable than the depredations of one hopelessly deranged soul.

That said, searching for a motive beyond mania in the Ripper murders seems nothing but a snare and a delusion. If one ever hopes to discover the Who it will not come from chasing after the chimera of Why. Certainly that is the opinion of law enforcement professionals, then and now, so perhaps the final word should be from that famed deputy sheriff of Mayberry, Bernard Fife. No matter how often Fife sought to get through to his personal nemesis, criminally inclined hillbilly Ernest T. Bass, those attempts were ever doomed to failure. And, throwing up his hands in despair, Fife would always declare "He's a nut!" We might do worse than say that about Jack the Ripper's motivation and then move on from there.



This article first appeared in *Ripperologist* 110, January 2010.

THE WHITECHAPEL ALBUM

JACK THE RIPPER'S EAST END IN 1995

This 50-page hardback book features a nostalgic look back at 'Jack's' East End as it was captured, in colour, in 1995 by enthusiastic photographer and Ripperologist, Ray Luff.

True Crime bookdealer Loretta Lay recently acquired Ray's catalogue of over 430 photographs, and with Adam Wood's expertise and in-depth knowledge of the East End, the results have been published in this limited edition book, with 87 carefully-selected photographs to represent the area as it was 21 years ago, along with six rare black/white photographs taken in the mid-1960s.

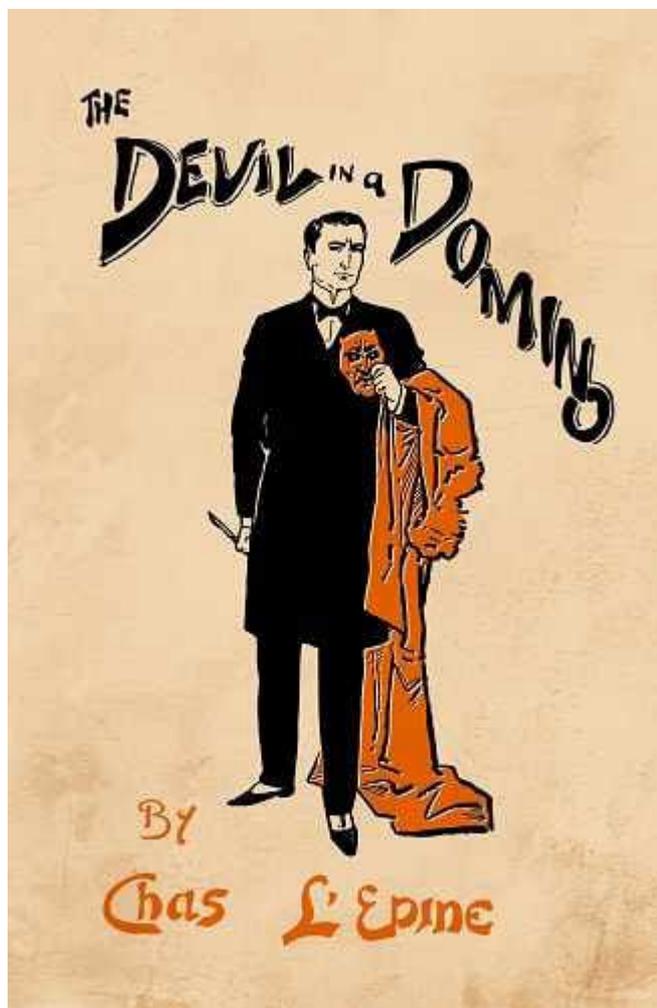
The book's publication is limited to 100 numbered copies, with very few remaining.

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The Devil in a Domino

By SIMON STERN



Published in December 1897, *The Devil in a Domino* was among the first books to be released by Lawrence Greening & Co., which had set up shop at 20 Cecil Court earlier that year.

The book signaled its pseudonymous status giving the author's name as "Chas. L'Epine," in quotation marks, on the title page. Appearing during the first wave of novels based on the Whitechapel killings of 1888, *The Devil in*

a *Domino* is an unusual contribution to this group. Most of the Ripper-themed novels published during this period were either detective stories (such as *The Whitechapel Murders: Or, On the Track of the Fiend* by "Detective Warren" [New York: Munro, 1888] and *The Whitechapel Murders: Or, an American Detective in London*, by A. Frank Pinkerton [Chicago: Laird & Lee, 1889]), or tales of the supernatural (such as *The Curse Upon Mitre Square, A.D. 1530-1888*, by John Francis Brewer [London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1888] and *A Fatal Affinity: A Weird Story*, by Stuart C. Cumberland [London: Blackett, 1889]).

The Devil in a Domino is neither of these; instead, it undertakes a psychological inquiry into the formation of a serial killer. In fact, it is hard to tell whether the Ripper murders inspired the author to write a story seeking to explain the killer's mentality, or whether the author, having already chosen this as his subject, attempted to make the story more topical by locating some of the events in Whitechapel. In any case, the author's concern with a hereditary degenerative disorder as the basis of the killer's illness – a subject that is introduced on the novel's first page, and that is frequently reiterated throughout the novel – makes the tale an intriguing contribution to this early set of novels, predating Marie Belloc Lowndes's *The Lodger* (London: Methuen, 1913). It should be added that the novel's treatment of this question focuses almost entirely on the issue of genetic heredity, rather than with social or developmental factors. This way of posing the inquiry probably helps to account for some of the terrible reviews that the book elicited: the *Edinburgh Evening News* called it a "peculiarly repulsive piece of writing, indicative of the low and morbid type of so-called literature which is purveyed to a half-educated constituency," while the *London Academy Fiction Supplement* observed that if the author meant to "exemplify the most awful workings of

heredity," he had succeeded "only by means too crude for art."

I first came across the novel several years ago, in the course of some research on its publisher. After the first edition, in 1897, Greening judged that the sales warranted a "popular edition," published in 1902, but the latter evidently did not sell rapidly, because we see the title included in Greening's catalogue of available titles, appended to other books they published as late as 1908. Despite the publication of this second edition, there are (as readers of this journal may know), only a handful of libraries that own a copy of either one, and only one library in the United States – the Texas Wesleyan University Library. However, the librarians there kindly agreed to lend their copy, through inter-library loan, and the book's publisher (James Jenkins, of Valancourt Books) and I are very grateful to them for permitting the loan.

The Devil in a Domino. A Realistic Study. By "Chas. L'Epine." (London: Lawrence, Greening & Co. 1897.)—The writer who hides his identity behind the pseudonym of "Chas. L'Epine" is another of those misguided individuals who think they have found a suitable subject for sensational fiction in the nameless atrocities perpetrated a few years ago in the East End of London. To his "Jack the Ripper," however, he gives the name of Aleck Severn; and this is the way he introduces him:—"Aleck Severn's father was gently born; he was also a profligate and a scoundrel. His mother was a drunkard." Less than a twelvemonth after their marriage, her "gentleman husband" having driven her mad, she "slipped a knife up to the haft into his heart. A month later the accursed offspring of their union was born, opening his eyes on prison walls to the shrieking sound of his dying mother's curse." The promise of such a "beginning is but too well kept, and the "realistic study" which follows is as repulsive a tissue of atrocities as was ever woven by a morbid imagination. There is absolutely no redeeming feature about it. It is unmitigatedly horrible.

Edinburgh Evening News, 23rd December 1897

As to the author's identity, Douglas A. Anderson has made a convincing case for C. Ranger Gull, who went on to publish many more novels with Greening, some of them with similar themes. So far as I know, none of the others deal with serial killers, but his fiction often traffics in conspiracy theories, murder, and insanity. For instance, one of his last novels, *Cinema City* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1922), features a crazed and avaricious film director who has built his huge studio on stolen property, and who plans to create a movie in which the true heir to the property will be killed on screen, in a reenactment of Saint Sebastian's death (an early example of the snuff film). In the introduction to the new edition, I say more about Anderson's reasons for assigning the authorship to

Gull; so far, no other plausible candidate has been offered, and we may never be able to identify the author with certainty.

THE DEVIL IN A DOMINO. By Chas. L'Epine. (Lawrence Greening)
This is certainly, in many respects, a remarkable book. When one calls to mind those mysterious murders of unfortunate women that were perpetrated, with such impunity, by that shadowy person known as "Jack the Ripper," in the East End, some years ago, there cannot fail to be a certain curious interest felt in following the adventures of the principal actor in the book—this "Devil in a Domino." We are left in doubt as to whether the tale is to be regarded in the light of a suggestion or not. The author terms his book "a realistic study," but, if gruesomeness, coupled with a strong leaven of the uncanny, constitute "a realistic study," then the book entirely fulfils the author's description. The reader may, however, be pardoned if, at the conclusion, he lays it aside with a shudder. The tale is well told and evinces much vigour and freshness of style, but Mr. L'Epine would have done better to have given a public, always quick to recognise merit, something a little less lurid and blood-curdling.

Book World, January 1898

The novel seemed worth reprinting, to James and me, for several reasons. Not only is it unusual among the early Ripper-themed stories for the reason given above, but its literary affinities are also striking. No one would characterize *The Devil in a Domino* as a work aimed at a cultivated or erudite audience (its reviewers certainly did not), but the novel displays some intriguing links to Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890/91) – both novels that contemporaries also associated with the Ripper murders. (Stevenson's story was related to the killings retroactively – in 1894, a commentator in the London *Athenaeum* called it "an artistic reflex of that mysterious series of crimes" – and one of the first reviewers of *Dorian Gray* described the hero as "half Jack-the-Ripper, half [Piers] Gaveston," presented in a fashion that lacked any "tact and restraint.") In addition, the novel is eminently readable, and it abounds in a kind of dry humor that livens the narrative throughout; on the first page, for instance, after declaring that the protagonist's mother "was a drunkard," the author remarks, "This was a pity, as she had her fine physical points, and was sober at the wedding." Both as a historical artefact and as work of fiction, the novel deserves a wider audience.



The Devil in a Domino, with an introduction by Simon Stern, is available in hardcover, softcover and ebook versions from www.valancourtbooks.com/the-devil-in-a-domino-1897.html



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Sir Arthur, Scotland Yard, Sherlock Holmes and a Serial Killer

A Very Tangled Skein

By DANIEL L. FRIEDMAN and EUGENE B. FRIEDMAN

The late summer of 1888 saw the world's largest city evolve into a modern day Pandemonium, all of it the result of five horrific mutilations, all of them targeting women. During a four-month period, a sociopathic lone wolf toyed with the collective psyche of the people of London and had no difficulty manipulating the press nor the City of London's Police Force and the world-renowned Scotland Yard.

This cunning madman possessed enough audacity to send off hand-written letters to news agencies, vigilance committees, and law enforcement. One of these correspondences became the talk of the town when its sender claimed he had posted it 'From Hell.' In another letter, addressed to the newly formed Whitechapel Vigilance Committee president, George Lusk, the author boasted that he had just finished dining on a portion of his latest victim's kidney, and closed with a simple invitation to 'Catch Me when You Can.' A missive sent to the Central News Agency from mid-September, concluded with a facetious valediction, 'Good Luck, Yours truly. Jack the Ripper.' And so, with a quick twist of his proverbial knife, the Ripper was able to dig the wounds he had inflicted even deeper into the collective hearts of London. From that moment on, this self-assigned eponym, Jack the Ripper, has remained, and will remain, synonymous with fear, terror, murder, and mayhem.

But it wasn't the London press alone that took advantage of the more sensational aspects of these atrocities in order to enrich their purses themselves. Similar tactics were employed by the regional and international press to beef up their circulations. On September 15, 1888, *The Star*, the newspaper with the "largest circulation of any evening paper in the Kingdom," boasted that it had

circulated more than one million newspapers in a single week, a staggering half-million more 'than the number ever circulated in any week by any other evening paper in London.'

Simultaneously, there was frenetic activity in city of London's judicial departments as the courts were forced to confront the challenge of reviewing each bit of the gory details and startling evidence that had been uncovered during this crime spree. Owing to the technical sophistication that accompanied the first four of these mutilations, Police Surgeon Dr Rees Llewellyn held firm in his opinion that the autopsies he had personally supervised on the Ripper's first two victims, the 42-year-old Mary Ann Nichols and 45-year-old Annie Chapman, had sufficiently demonstrated that their killer had been well-trained in surgical procedures and possessed detailed anatomical knowledge of the bodies in question.

When divisional Police Surgeon George Bagster Phillips had been asked at the inquest of Annie Chapman whether the murderer possessed surgical skills, Phillips responded, "Yes, the mode in which the intestines were abstracted showed some anatomical knowledge."

Llewellyn's and Phillips's sentiments paralleled those of the famed Police Surgeon, Dr. Frederick Gordon Brown, who, after he had completed his post mortem examination on the Ripper's fourth victim, emphatically stated that, "Yes, the killer of Catherine Eddowes had shown considerable knowledge of the position of the various organs and how they might be removed".

One of the upshots of these inquests was public consideration of the mystery that lurked behind Jack's motives to exact this terrible vengeance on these unfortunate women. At this juncture, local vigilance

committees sprang up (examples are Spitalfields, Mile End, Jewish, East London Trade and Labourer's Vigilance Committees) and moved themselves to action by setting up neighbourhood watches designed to protect the local citizenry and by offering a reward for the Ripper's capture. There was a general perception that the police seemed incapable of dealing with the situation at hand.

With a panicked public demanding action, Parliament began discussing whether or not to offer a financial incentive to bring the Ripper to justice. At the centre of all this controversy was the British government's steadfast adherence to its traditional no reward policy. During the Mary Ann Nicholls inquest, a disgruntled jury foreman opined that "If a substantial reward had been offered by the Home Secretary in the case of the murder in George-yard, these two horrible murders would not have happened." This statement immediately made Home Secretary Matthews the target for the London press because of his staunch political stance against financial remuneration. It wasn't long before the Lord Mayor of the City of London offered specified sums of money to anyone who could bring the Ripper to justice. Unfortunately, neither pound nor pence were ever paid out.

In the spirit of the day, both the Metropolitan and the City of London Police Forces, decided to adopt a Darwinian approach to what was going on, and an immediate redistribution of manpower was put into effect, on that placed emphasis on the Whitechapel district. Some officers were sent out in groups and worked in plain clothes. Soon, constables were nailing discarded pieces of rubber they had obtained from bicycle tires onto the soles of their clunky regulation boots so that they could move around surreptitiously. In essence, the Ripper investigation led to the invention of today's sneaker. And, although they were never called into action by the Bobbies, two bloodhounds named Barnaby and Burgho, were 'recruited' by Police Commissioner Charles Warren to track down the Ripper's scent.

Unlike any of suspects who appear in Doyle's Holmes tales, Jack the Ripper possessed an uncanny ability to elude detection by anyone who ever tried to catch a glimpse of him, let alone, apprehend him - whether it be the police, vigilance committees, neighbourhood watches, security guards, night watchmen, tradesmen, or anyone else who happened to be out and about. Jack's supernatural ability to foil any attempt to bring him to the gallows served only to add to his mystique and growing legend.

But then, the Ripper killings simply came to end with unexpected suddenness. Paradoxically, this abrupt cessation of activity compounded the apprehension of the people of London. Just how many women the Ripper had

murdered was anyone's guess - as few as four, or, perhaps, as many as a couple of dozen. The inability of the police to assign an exact number of deaths to his hand led to an exponential increase in the fear factor.

Although all of the known Ripper victims had been prostitutes, they should not be subjected to harsh prejudice. After all, most of these unfortunates were so impoverished that, in order for them to subsist, or merely exist, they were given no choice but to ply their trade on the dangerous streets of the East End, to drum up the few shillings they needed to pay their daily rents at the local doss houses. Although both of London's police forces were mobilized to find him, the Ripper remained several steps ahead of them, which made his proper identification impossible.

Four years later, on December 2, 1892, Arthur Conan Doyle, along with fellow luminaries Jerome K. Jerome (author of *Three Men in a Boat* and editor of *The Idler*), Dr. Philip F. Gilbert (medical officer at both Newgate and Holloway prisons) and E.W. Hornung (author of *Raffles* and Conan Doyle's brother-in law), received special invitations to New Scotland Yard's own Black Museum, so they could look through its amazing collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, and relics, 'all connected in one way or another with crime and criminals'¹



Arthur Conan Doyle

1 *Chamber's Journal* 1885, pp 264.



The Black Museum's collection of over 150 grisly and ghastly curiosities was laid out 'to allow free inspection of the various objects.' Plaster casts representing the heads of sundry criminals and hangman's kits containing pinioning gear, halter, and cap were on exhibit, as well as a vast array of criminal work tools, that included crowbars (with names such as the Lord Mayor, the Alderman, and the Common councilman), picklocks, skeleton keys, centre-bits, brass knuckle-dusters, pistols, life preservers, daggers, razors, knives and all other types of weaponry.

Among the other objects that Doyle and his fellow visitors observed were the folding ladder that had been used by Charles Peace during his failed escape attempt from Wakefield prison, the chisel used by the Dalston murderer, the bulls-eye lantern that had been foolishly left behind by Fowler and Milsom (the Muswell Hill murderers), and skin belonging to John Bellingham (the man who murdered Prime Minister Spencer Perceval).

Although relics of the 1872 Wainwright (Whitechapel) murder case were on display (the cigar which Henry Wainwright was smoking when arrested, a piece of the shinbone and a button from the dress of his victim, Harriet Lane, along with the spade he had used to dig her grave), Conan Doyle concentrated primarily on the more recent Whitechapel murder cases of 1888. He scrutinized Jack the Ripper's infamous 'Dear Boss' letter, and when interviewed, he told the world "How 'Sherlock Holmes' Would Have Tracked' the Ripper."

With a bit of false humility, Doyle pronounced that:

I am not in the least degree either sharp or an observant man myself. I try to get inside the skin of a sharp man and see how things would strike him. I

remember going to the Scotland Yard Museum and looking at the letter which was received by the police, and which purported to come from the Ripper. Of course, it may have been a hoax, but there were reasons to think it genuine, and in any case, it was well to find out who wrote it. It was written in red ink in a clerkly hand. I tried to think how Holmes might have deduced the writer of that letter. The most obvious point was that the letter was written by someone who had been in America. It began 'Dear Boss,' and contained the phrase, 'fix it up,' and several others which are not usual with the Britishers. Then we have the quality of the paper and the handwriting, which indicates

that the letters were not written by a toiler. It was good paper, and a round, easy, clerkly hand. He was, therefore, a man accustomed to the use of a pen.

Having determined that much, we can not avoid the inference that there must be somewhere letters which this man had written over his own name or documents or accounts that could be readily traced to him. Oddly enough, the police did not, as far as I know, think of that, and so they failed to accomplish anything. Holmes's plan would have been to reproduce the letters facsimile and on each plate indicate briefly the peculiarities of the handwriting. Then publish these facsimiles in the leading newspapers of Great Britain and America, and in connection with them offer a reward to anyone who could show a letter or any specimen of the same handwriting. Such a course would have enlisted millions of people as detectives in the case.

What is quite important is that Conan Doyle viewed the Ripper as being 'a sharp man', while he shrewdly confessed that he was 'not in the least degree either sharp or an observant man'. With just a single stroke of the pen, Conan Doyle was able to place the Ripper on a plane higher than the rest of us mortals. When he described the ink used by the Ripper as being red in colour and the paper of being of good quality, Doyle was telling his readers that he had actually seen the genuine article up close, and not just a facsimile of that document. After his discussion of the round, clerkly penmanship of the author,² Conan Doyle offered a hypothesis of his own - that the letter had been authored by someone who must have hailed from America. Doyle based it on phrases such as 'Dear Boss'

and 'Fix it Up', perhaps failing to remember that only a half-dozen years before, he had affectionately referred to his mentor, Dr. Reginald Hoare, as 'the boss' whenever he spoke of him, and as "Dear Boss" whenever he wrote to him. Interestingly, the opening line of his 1881 short story, *A Night Among the Nihilists*, is, "Robinson, the boss wants you!" and his *The Stone of Boxman's Drift* (December 1887), has Big Bill Stewart responding to Headley Dean, "All right, boss."

The phrase, 'fix it up' was an old railroad term in common usage in Victorian England and Doyle actually employed it himself in his 1893 Sherlock Holmes tale, *The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk* when Hall Pycroft cries out, "Those are the company's offices into which he has gone. Come with me and I'll fix it up as easily as possible."

It is also an undeniable fact that Conan Doyle wrote *An American's Tale* well before he had ever set foot in the United States, and yet he was able to craft that story with absolute mastery of the vernacular of the Wild West. And so, if Jack the Ripper was truly Doyle's intellectual superior, we would have no reason to doubt that the Ripper would have been reading stories by American authors of the calibre of a Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, or Bret Harte. When Conan Doyle stated that he regarded that Jack the Ripper was no toiler to the art of writing, that opinion was based on the combination of high quality paper and impressive penmanship.

Conan Doyle died in 1930, but years later, his son Adrian recollected that his father was convinced that the Ripper 'had a rough knowledge of surgery and probably clothed himself as a woman to avoid undue attention by the police and to approach his victims without arousing suspicion on their part.' Although plausible, it is improbable that the Ripper could have been a midwife (as the term was used to describe what we now call obstetricians). And, so, Doyle's Jill the Ripper loses all credibility with the tragic events accompanying the first four murders are subjected to a detailed look. The only reliable eyewitness accounts regarding the Ripper's appearance had him wearing a navy pea-coat and deerstalker hat, an outfit strangely worn by Conan Doyle's master detective, Sherlock Holmes.

And so, if Inspector Lestrade had asked for a consultation

from Sherlock Holmes, and had been asked to track down the notorious Jack the Ripper, he and Dr. Watson, would have been out searching for a brilliant American writer (or someone who knew Americanisms) midwife/obstetrician who walked the London streets in a deerstalker hat and navy pea coat and addressed his letters 'Yours truly' and 'Dear Boss'.

2 Perhaps a nod to Charles Lamb; *Harper's Monthly Magazine*; 1855 page 568.

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"Two More Women Horribly Murdered." *London Mid Surrey Times and General Advertiser*, October 6, 1888: 3. Watkins saw a body outside of Taylor and Co, Picture-Frame Makers. He claimed that some intestines stuffed into her neck wound; 'Diemsitiz' returns from Crystal Palace with his wares; col b, Offer of Rewards, Scene of the Crimes (Map); Inquest of the Fifth Victim; col c, List of the East-End Murders (1- unknown, Osborne and Wentworth street, 2- Martha Turner, 3- Nicholls, 4- Chapman, 5- Elizabeth Stride, 6- unknown (Mitre-Square)

"The Whitechapel Horrors." *Evening News* (London), October 2, 1888: 3. A 1,200 pound reward is offered for the Ripper's capture. The *Evening News* asked 'Why weren't the bloodhounds used?' A man named Baskert stated that, 'On Saturday night, about seven minutes to 12, I entered the Three Nuns Hotel, Aldgate. While in there an elderly woman, very shabbily dressed, came in and asked me to buy some matches. I refused and she went out. A man who had been standing by me remarked that those persons were a nuisance, to which I responded "Yes"... He then asked me if I knew how old some of the women were who were in the habit of soliciting outside.'

"Old World News by Cable." *New York Times*, October 7, 1888: 1. 'If it should happen when Parliament meets that the strange assassin is still undiscovered, or if more of these horrible crimes be committed and the perpetrator is tracked by outsiders, there would be a storm of indignation let loose in St. Stephen's under which certainly Mr. Matthew and very possibly his associates would go down.'

Morning Advertiser: November 21, 1888: The Whitechapel Murders. Spitalfields Vigilance Committee mentioned.

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WRITE FOR RIPPEROLOGIST!

We welcome well-researched articles on any aspect of the Jack the Ripper case, London's East End or associated subjects.

Please send your submissions to contact@ripperologist.biz

Jack in Four Colors

By DAVE M GRAY

Do you remember when Jack the Ripper made his Marvel Comics debut by traversing time and space, joined a gang with Blackbeard and Jesse James, only to lose a fight with Captain America? Of course not! No one does. Still, it happened in Timely Comic's *All Select* Volume 1 #7 published in 1945, before our society got collector fever for everything on the planet. Only a handful of copies still exist and all of those are kept in plastic bags stuffed inside vaults that will never allow a wisp of air or single fleeting ray of sunlight penetrate their dark recesses.



If we are to discuss Jack's appearances in comic books we'll simply have to sub-categorize. It's too unwieldy, too farcical, and too serious by turns to be looked at as some sort of whole. We can't talk about a grim and serious approach to, say, the Royal Conspiracy, in the same breath as a Japanese series where Jack is a teenage boy in an obsessive love triangle with teenage Abberline and teacher Mary Kelly, or the time Barnabas Collins and Vampirella teamed up to track down Jack in New York, or Sergio Bonelli Editore's multi-title horror and mystery universe fumetti (All right. Those last two go together pretty well. Throw in his resurrection by the Necronomicon Exmortis and we have something there). Not only would it take far too long to scratch the surface, it would confuse us all. We will focus instead on the most popular form in the medium, Superheroes. While Jack's shadow has stalked the corners of adult fiction, speculation and conversation, it spent just as long festering in the shadows, lurking in the minds of youth and the stories that spoke to them (traditionally, let's not argue about Superheroes being for adults, ok? Thanks).

Jack has shown up in books from all the major publishers, and most of the minor ones too. In these appearances he is usually more monstrous than adult views would allow him to be, an embodiment of the creatures in the dark waiting for the reader.

Jack has had some great appearances in his tussles with costumed crusaders, the height being his tangles with DC Comic's big guns Batman, in the one shot that launched the popular Elseworlds stories *Gotham by Gaslight*, and Wonder Woman, in *Amazonia*, another Elseworlds title. To be honest, Jack has had even more lows, often taking up a lackey role to greater series antagonists.

Let's start with the lows, shall we? Many of those reside with the other big bastard in the industry - Marvel Comics. It's more fun that way... and you'll be desperate to hear me wax lyrical about it by the time I get there (Scoot over, P.T.

Barnum, you mustachioed wonder).

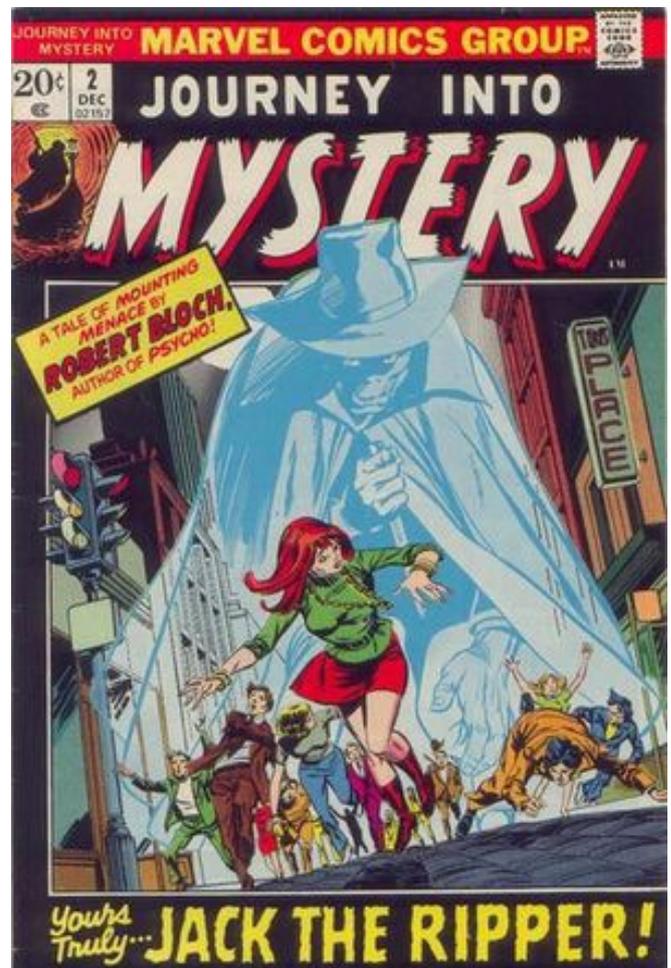
Though Jack's first appearance in Marvel Comics' Earth-616, the main continuity dimension of Marvel and predecessors Timely and Atlas, ended more than a little embarrassingly for him, it would not be his last. The Ripper of Earth-616 would eventually be revealed as a gaggle of soul-corrupting parasites that were a fun little joke the Dark Dimension's sorcerer king Dormammu (you might recall him as the Giant Evil Head from 2016's Doctor Strange movie) decided to play on an English kyphotic named Tom Mulverne. Poor Tom didn't just have a hunch; he also had terrible luck and some psychotic tendencies. He was mentally tormented by the parasites until he succumbed to their madness to sate their lust for bloody terror. In exchange, they did him a solid by giving him a perfectly-formed human body while on the hunt. This is more than you can usually expect from the minions of Dormammu. Wanting to keep his killer form full time, Tom sought out a coven of vampires. The vampires offered to give him eternal life in his killer bod if he consumed human blood before December 31st. This command set Tom out on the killing spree of five increasingly vicious and brutal murders from August to November 1888. These are a slightly sanitized version of the real Ripper murders to meet the comics code requirements still being highly enforced at the time. Tom just couldn't bring himself to drink human blood. His rage at his impotence to consume drove him to increase his brutality on each successive victim, finally culminating with the shockingly vicious butchery of Mary Kelly, the victim whose blood he was determined to taste. Just as he was about to chug her quickly-cooling blood, Tom found himself in the middle of 1977 Manhattan, pulled there by Deviant scientist Zakka's Time Projector.

This sudden unexpected change of venue did nothing to slow Tom down. He immediately took to stalking a young woman in her apartment building. Things would seem pretty dire for her, except you can never underestimate how good Earth-616 superheroes are at timing. Just before Tom could get down to his business, the Eternals, Thena and Ransak the Reject, decided to stick their noses into things. Tom/Jack suffered a complete and thorough defeat at the hands of Ransak. Just before the reject could end his life Tom was pulled back again to 1888, a very short time before the deadline passed.

Like, Tom had terrible luck. Torn apart, discarded in a shallow grave under his *nom de guerre*. Don't weep for our hunchback friend, though, as he occasionally still makes appearances haunting and killing those who dare disturb his grave, as recently as May 2014.



Not that this would be the end of Marvel's Ripper. You simply cannot keep a good demonic parasite down. Not for long anyway. It was the 70s and the Marvel bullpen was too unwilling to let such a plot device go. Not when they had so many fields to run through. So began the migration of Jack side stories that would fill the pages of several Marvel books.



Marvel would fold an old Atlas-released *Astonishing Tales* Jack the Ripper story about an unidentified man digging up Jack's grave and being attacked by the corpse inside to set the groundwork for his return. This story was returned to continuity in *Journey into Mystery* volume 2 #2, an authorized, but changed to fit in universe, retelling of Robert Bloch's *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper*. This issue explained that every host assumed the same physical form when on the hunt or engaging in other illicit activities.

In an industry that has never been very bothered with fully explaining chronology, the more open the easier to fill in a decade on a whim, Earth-616's Jack would soon turn up in modern day Chicago, finding a succession of new hosts, as the lackey of Sax Rohmer's racist caricature supervillain Fu Manchu in the pages of *The Hands of Shang-Chi Master of Kung Fu* #100. The equally racist caricature hero of the book would have a number of dealings with Jack the Ripper in many host bodies, most notably the body of Fu Manchu's daughter's lover, Philip, who would use the name The Mad Slayer. Each time Shang-Chi would emerge victorious with a kick to the head, which must have been terribly frustrating for the parasites, but I'm not sure they can get concussions.



During this period, Marvel's Jack the Ripper dabbled with similar themes as Matt Wagner's *Grendel* series, the idea of violence and psychosis as an actual spreadable disease. Though unlike *Grendel*, Marvel only seems to have toyed with the idea instead of using it to embrace and expand into deeper questions on our humanity. Of course, one could argue that Master of Kung Fu wasn't the place for that kind of thinking. With the title's popularity beginning to fade and Marvel losing the license to the Fu Manchu character - which makes collecting these older Shang-Chi storylines a bit tricky even though Shang-Chi still kicks around - the Ripper parasite started to show up in other places.

In *Thor* #317, one parasite's host is an actor named Brad Wolfe who is working on a horror movie titled *Zaniac* (Get it? That is a reference to William Lustig's *Maniac*, which features an incredibly sincere and daring performance by the late Joe Spinell.). Wolfe, who already has his own issues with women, gets super strength after being caught in an explosion of some rather vague radioactive something that probably shouldn't have been

on a movie set in the first place, but apparently OSHA doesn't exist on Earth-616. Taking the name Zaniac for his own, having a small little killing spree where he targets women with his "Knife of Love" and simply beats men to death with his "Fist of Hate" (I couldn't make this stuff up), he is quickly subdued by the God of Thunder and for the first time carted off to prison. Being a superbeing in this form means that he still doesn't stand trial, but who needs a justice system that works when you have Norse gods? That's right, we all would even more than ever.



Zaniac would return in *Thor* #372 & #373, where we learn in one of the endless possible distant futures that Zaniac has managed to kick off a world war. Time travel shenanigans ensue, Thor saves the day, and that future is possibly avoided. Unless they decide to dip back into that specific well, which would make a ton of sense as Thor is now the name being used by the original's 40-year-long off and on and off and on and off and on again romantic interest Jane Foster. It could be a real blast to see her pummel Zaniacs over multiple issues. Or not. That kind of idea is probably why Marvel doesn't return my calls and calls security when I root through their trash.

Jack would sit on the bench for almost twenty years, making only a handful of tertiary appearances. These included being a minion of Mister Sinister in the fifth season of Fox's 1990s *X-Men* cartoon, being one of a gaggle of Hell Pirates that hunted both the *X-Men* and *Ghost Rider* in the early 2000s for a few panels, and a couple of issues of an Italian *Wolverine* series. It was a long wait before being called back into major service for the 2007 six-issue *Wisdom* mini-series released under the MAX imprint. Pete Wisdom is a mutant secret-agent working for the British Secret Service MI-13 division, working alongside Captain

Midlands (the UK's answer to Captain America) and an Intergalactic type Alien John Lennon impersonator (before you ask - yes, the other Beatles also have alien imposters), and served as primary government contact of the long running UK-based superhero group Excalibur.

In *Wisdom* issue #4, "Too Man Jacks", every Marvel iteration of Jack the Ripper make their return bringing with them every other version of Jack that anyone has ever thought of for good measure. Or so it claims. I know I didn't see my personal pet theory in the mix - an Albino Turtle Clown with a glass eye and razor-lined bowler hat. The Jacks reappear again in the sixth and final issue as well. This is, arguably, Jack's finest hour from the House That Stan Built.

Confession - I skipped one. A major one, but there are reasons for this. Jack the Ripper's penultimate major hurrah for Marvel was May 1988 with the Cloak & Dagger one-shot graphic novel titled *Predator & Prey*. This book fills in details of Jack arriving in the United States and the reason so few of the parasites are running around. Honestly, it's not a very good story. It is rushed and makes all the nonsense before it look more reasonable. Cloak & Dagger are getting their own TV series on the teenager focused Freeform cable network in the near future, and despite mind-numbingly epic amounts of goofiness it is actually fairly important to the characters, so there are decent odds that Marvel's Jack the Ripper will be making his way to the MCU. There is no other reason to bother with it. Your humble guide through these tales is unable to give proper treatment here and prefers not to try.

All of that is offered to illustrate how superhero comics usually handle most topics. While occasionally brilliantly, it is usually a convoluted mess that can barely be deciphered by the casual reader and appears to be mostly the worst gibberish to those without the barest level of initiation.

There is no arguing that Marvel's fumbling with Jack the Ripper is breathtaking in its wrongness. For once, it is the complete opposite of DC Comics'. DC has mostly held the urge for completely crass exploitation in check. Keeping Jack the Ripper to their more horror thriller and adult-themed Vertigo imprint titles, usually just a passing reference, and to their Elsewhere titles that exist outside of main continuity. Not that they haven't given into the temptation to have Saucy Jack make a pair of appearances.

Spoiler - in the main DC continuity Jack the Ripper is Joseph Barnett. His first appearance can be found in *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane* volume 1 #108 published in February 1971. After interviewing an English emigrant who claims Jack the Ripper to be the rotten fruit on his family tree, Lois is attacked by a group of thieves. For the first time in the history of her existence she is not saved by the Man of Steel. She is saved by a ghost. The ghost really

takes a shine to our intrepid reporter, using his otherworldly powers to protect her at all cost and driving ol' Supes away with visions of his dead mother. Caspar he isn't. Before it's all over the ghost whisks Lois back to 1888 Whitechapel and prepares to make her the next Ripper victim. Yeah, it's a dream. You spotted that, huh? 'Course ya did.



Jack wouldn't make another main continuity appearance until July 2001 in *Supergirl* volume 4 #58. While trying to get help for her demon guide Buzz, Supergirl - the third one by the way - learns his history. A demon that has been around since Caligula's rule over Rome. She also learns that Buzz has been pretty busy with his casual evil. Name pretty much any event and Buzz probably had a hand in it. The assassination of Lincoln? Yeah, Buzz talked John Wilkes Booth into it. Jack the Ripper? Also Buzz's fault. He cajoled, guided, and worked as a partner in Joe's killings.

Multiple universes are not a new concept to comic books. DC Comics has played with them since the 1940s as a way to get around creative restrictions. Going under the banner of "Imaginary Stories", these out of continuity stories, most prevalent in the early 1960s in Superman titles, allowed their creators to write about the deaths of characters, have bad guys win, and place their hero in new histories. Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent could be raised together, Superman could be Communist or Tarzan or Buck Rogers. Clark Kent

and Lois Lane could get married... which they did... a lot... every freaking month or two... so often that when they would pull a similar stunt, usually as a sting for some article they were writing, in the main continuity DC would have to put disclaimers on the cover that this issue was not an Imaginary Story. Imaginary Stories fell out of favor through out most of the 1970s and '80s before being relaunched in a major way.

In February 1989 *Gotham by Gaslight* hit the shelves of comic shops. The 52-page one-shot was written by Brian Augustyn, his first solo written title after only three years as an editor in the industry, illustrated by Mike Mignola, who would soon go on to create cult favorite Hellboy for Dark Horse Comics, and edited by Mark Ward, whose best-known work would be an acclaimed eight-year run on *The Flash* edited by Augustyn, with an in-universe introduction written in the style of a Ripper letter by Robert Bloch. Set in an alternate 1889, Bruce Wayne is returning home to Gotham at the end of his final training trip where he studied under a "famous London detective" and some guy in Vienna named Freud. After being given a rundown on the current state of crime in the city by Inspector Gordon, who sports a very Teddy Roosevelt-inspired look, Bruce soon dons the cowl and takes to the streets for a little nighttime hunting. Jack begins his own hunt, complete with taunting postcards, soon afterward. It is understandable to assume that a character like Batman would immediately spring-heel into action against a well-known and brutal serial killer appearing in his city. This Batman doesn't. Instead, he chooses to stay out of it, preferring to err on the thinking that stopping the Ripper would make the public less afraid of the Bat himself. Which is perception he definitely does not want to endanger. Of course, he won't be allowed to stay out of it for too long. Finding himself framed for the Ripper murders, Bruce soon owns his Greatest Detective moniker as it takes him four and a half pages, less than half the space it took Judge Dredd, several million dollars less than Patricia Cornwall and fifteen years faster than Bruce Robinson, from his cell using newspaper clippings and local police reports. Quickly followed by a denouement and some head scratching questions about how no one figures out Batman's identity after looking at his cell.

While it isn't as well-researched or as deep an exploration of crime and theme as another Jack the Ripper comic that started publication in early 1989, *Gotham by Gaslight* is a good read. It moves along quickly and doesn't bog itself down in theories, suspects or rationalization. Mignola's art style is a fantastic complement to the setting. Its simple styling with a strong command of form and shade, richly-textured backgrounds and strong use of establishing shots bring this version of Gotham to moody life. Augustyn's dialog is to the point and era appropriate... as far as I know

at least - my knowledge is only based on Johnny Depp movies, Beatles interviews and BBC costume dramas from the 1980s. It steadfastly refuses to indulge in the steampunk sci-fi trappings that so many works set in the Victorian era have recently indulged in (can not say the same for the sequel, *Master of the Future*, which is included in the most recent editions). Tucked away in it's panels are some nods to actual suspects and theories. Prince Eddy and William Gull have a brief walk on cameo, Sickert is name checked.



To underestimate *Gotham by Gaslight's* influence and legacy is a mistake. Not only has it remained one of the most popular one-shots in the publisher's history, though usually coming behind *The Killing Joke* and *Batman: Red Rain* (Dracula vs Batman), it has served as an opening to many interests in the Ripper case and true crime in general. It is a common first step for many of my generation and those behind us before *From Hell* and *Rumbelow*. It spawned a flood of other alternate universe titles, a temporarily canceled video game adaptations (developer THQ was run by brain-damaged donkeys who forgot to pay their bills and went bankrupt, the rights are still tied up in the liquidation), and the world it built still makes appearances in the mainstream DC continuity.

Gotham by Gaslight is also the just-announced next release in Warner Brother's successful DC animated film

franchise. Scheduled to be released in 2018, the film will take the same basic premise, but greatly expand on the story. Using an Agatha Christie-inspired fair-play mystery approach to the story, it promises to bring in more characters and Bat lore to the Victorian age. Tragically, it also appears to have fallen into the steampunk trap. Though you can't not expect that at least a bit when focusing on a guy who wears his Underoos on the outside and wears a funny balaclava like that. There has been little actual news on it, but a hype video is available on YouTube, where you can see the screenwriter dressed like he robbed a vampire working at Hot Topic. The adaptation will be a huge success; unlike their live-action travesties DC can do some damn fine cartoons, and probably worth keeping an eye out in your store or digital platform of choice.



Batman wouldn't be the only DC hero to take on Saucy Jack in an Elseworlds book. It was too successful the first time. You have to hit wells until they run dry in this industry. No, Jack would have two more run chances to prove himself against more of The World's Greatest Superheroes.

Published in 1997, *Wonder Woman: Amazonia*, written by William Messner-Loebs and illustrated by Phil Winslade, is the story of what happens when Queen Victoria and almost the entire English royal family burns to death one night in 1888, leaving only a brain-damaged and wheelchair-bound due to his recovery from his illness Prince Eddy and their mysterious American cousin Jack Planter. When cousin Jack assumes the throne things go very, very poorly for the women of the kingdom. King Jack's hate for women spreads through his subjects. Women must be chained to their spouses when out, females of the lower classes disappear every night never to be seen again. All rights are suspended in a crushing patriarchy.

So it makes perfect sense for this to be the society that discovers the Amazonian's Paradise Island. Diana Prince is the star attraction in Steven Trevor's Museum of Oddities. She has been such a draw that Mr Trevor's station in life is improving dramatically. Diana remembers her years on Paradise Island as if they were a dream, and lives with the belief that she is just another street urchin from the streets

of Whitechapel. By the end of the books that belief is shattered; there is some garbage about a drug that removes the femininity from men, and a lot of Englishwomen get powers that are not explained or given any satisfying use that you would think would happen in such a society.

While the book is mostly a painfully heavy-handed slog to read that confuses depth with convolution and illustrations that are muddled or difficult to follow the action of. That doesn't mean it is not without some interesting ideas and winks. It does spare Mary Kelly's life, so there's that aberration of time for a couple of winking comments and a cameo. Please don't ask me to talk about the ending; it's too goofy even for this overview.

Actually, so is the final DC Elseworlds Ripper book, *JLA: The Island of Dr Moreau*. Dr Moreau makes his usual people/animal hybrids, but this time they are all reworkings of Justice League members. Moreau brings his menagerie to London, swears they will catch Jack the Ripper. They do. It turns out he's another creation of the Doc. Everyone dies. Being terribly written by legend in the medium Roy Thomas only makes it all that much more disappointing. Thomas' Dracula series for Marvel is worth reading for any fans of the Count. This book's only real positive is that it is well-illustrated by Steve Pugh. There's really no reason to bother with it.

There you have it. A very exhausting, for your far-from-humble guide anyway, look at how the major publishers have worked Jack the Ripper into their worlds with varying degrees of success. The low-lights and the mid-lights. If you enjoy kung-fu goofiness from the 70s, *Master of Kung Fu* does have some collected volumes, but character rights issues and general modern cultural views on representation make them rare with some rather large gaps and I don't think any of the Ripper storylines are completely collected. *Wisdom* is a lot of fun. *Gotham by Gaslight* is legitimately good and should make for an interesting expanded movie adaption. *Amazonia* has its heart in the right place, even if it lacks the necessary skill to pull it off.



DAVE M GRAY lives with two out of three loves of his life, a flat-coat retriever named Phineas and an American Shorthair named Elvira Grace. He can be heard every week on Raiders of the Podcast, discussing a wide spectrum of movies with a multinational group of miscreants and snobs. Dave is a former heavyweight sumo wrestler, fusion chef and pet psychic. Forged in a 1970s experiment to create the ultimate warlord, based on an amalgam of Leonardo Da Vinci plans and Zeppo Marx patents, he instead chose to follow his dreams of floral arrangement and became a jackass of all trades. When asked to talk about himself he invariably and heavily lies. He can usually be found in Maryland areas not nearly close enough to the Bay for his taste.

Mayweather vs. McGregor Victorian style

How John L. Sullivan and Paddy Ryan put on the first “super fight” between America and Ireland

By BRIAN YOUNG

The whole world was talking about it. Media outlets on both sides of the Atlantic would not stop promoting it. The Irish-born “fighter” was about to take on the American who many considered the greatest boxer of his era. The boxer got to choose the rules, and it would take place on American soil. The public passionately backed their man each side believing they could not lose. The fans of the Irishman thought, being a grappler and naturally bigger, he would simply outsize his opponent. The backers of the American knew his skills, as a “pure boxer” would give him a decided advantage. This was after all his sport, his rules and his country.

Sound familiar? Of course I’m talking about the much-hyped mega fight between Connor McGregor and Floyd Mayweather Jr. right? Well, yes and no, because 135 years ago, on February 7th 1882, Irish-born Paddy Ryan entered the prize ring against American John L. Sullivan in the Victorian Era’s version of this Super Fight.

Paddy Ryan was born on March 15th 1851 in Thurles, Tipperary, Ireland, but moved to Troy, New York at an early age. Here he earned the nickname “The Trojan Giant”. Ryan ran a saloon in Troy in 1874, and once, while “dealing” with some drunks, he was spotted by Jim Killoran, the Athletic Director of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Killoran decided to take it upon himself to train Ryan and turn the brutish saloon keeper into a prizefighter. Ryan, a naturally gifted athlete at 6 feet 2 inches tall (according to some sources, 5 foot 11 by others, but what is a few inches when it comes to larger-than-life figures) and in peak shape weighing between 180 and 200 pounds was a “fighter” in the purest sense of the word, more a grappler

or wrestler than a boxer. However, this was before the Marquis of Queensberry Rules for boxing¹ were the accepted rules for the prize ring. Boxing was still fought in most places under the London Prize Rules,² which allowed a fighter to throw his opponent, or even wrestle him to the ground wherein winning a round. And unlike today, Boxing rounds were not timed under these rules, and a round lasted until one or both men were knocked to the ground in accordance with the rules.

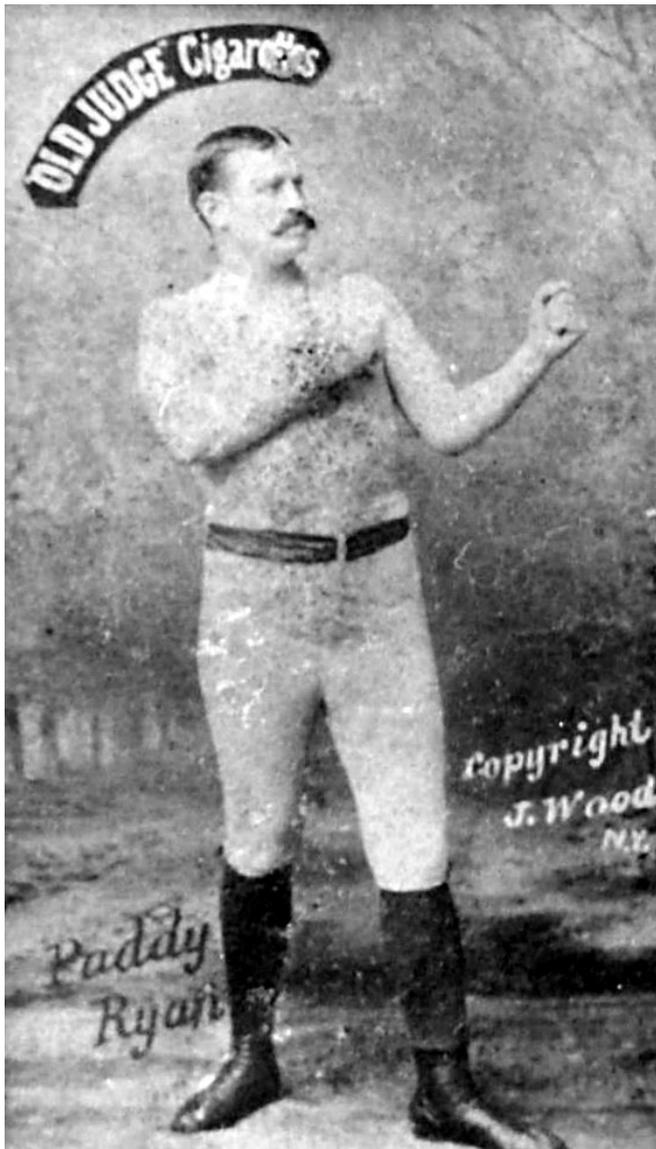
Ryan was a quick learner, and under the tutelage of Killoran, was ready in three short years to square off against Joe Goss, who at the time was recognized as heavyweight champion. On May 30th 1880 in Collier’s Station, West Virginia, after 87 rounds (a full 90 minutes of fighting), Paddy Ryan, the “Trojan Giant”, was victorious and crowned Heavyweight Champion (of America or of the World, depending on the source at the time).

John L. Sullivan, “The Boston Strong Boy,” is considered by most historians to be the first sporting hero of the United States. He was born in Boston, Massachusetts on October 15th 1858 to Irish immigrant parents who wanted their boy to become a Catholic priest. In 1875, Sullivan was enrolled at Boston College. Rather than studying for the priesthood he began playing the newly-professional sport of Base-ball (baseball was a strictly amateur game until 1869). By 18 years of age John Sullivan was earning

1 Established in 1867 by John Sholto Douglas, the Marquis of Queensberry.

2 Established in 1838, later revised in 1853) drafted by Jack Broughton in 1743.

up to \$40 a week (approximately \$700 a week by today's standards) playing base-ball. In an interview with the *Denver Tribune* in 1883 Sullivan said "...I threw my books aside and gave myself up to it. This is how I got into the base-ball profession and I left school for good and all. From the base-ball business I drifted into boxing and pugilism."³ As a professional boxer, Sullivan is credited with 44 fights (40 wins, 1 loss and 2 draws with 34 knockouts and 1 no contest), but the Great John L. also went on "touring exhibition" tours, where he would offer people money to fight him. It is estimated that Sullivan fought between 400 and 500 of these non-sanctioned fights!



Paddy Ryan

By 1881, John L. Sullivan was quickly earning a reputation as the best fighter in America. It was only a matter of time before the public demanded that champion Paddy Ryan face the Boston Strong Boy in a sanctioned match for the title. At this time in the United States, boxing was still illegal in most parts of the country, including

Mississippi, where this fight was to take place. That "technicality" did not stop the media from talking openly about the fight. The public was enthralled with the sport and with John L. Sullivan in particular. Law or no law, this fight would take place and the papers would write about it.

A headline from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* from Sunday, January 29th 1882 reads:

SULLIVAN AND RYAN

How the Heavy Weights Are Preparing for the Meeting a Week from Tuesday

This article goes on to discuss, in detail, the training camps, where the fighters were staying and many other facts that could have clued anyone in law enforcement in on how to prevent this "spectacle".

A *New York Times* headline from February 7th 1882 (the day of the fight) reads as follows:

THE EXPECTED PRIZE-FIGHT:

THE PRINCIPLES ON THEIR WAY TO THE FIGHTING GROUND

Again, no secrets. The only thing not reported was the exact location of the event, making one wonder why it was not stopped after Governor Lowry of Mississippi issued a proclamation ordering all local sheriffs to do "whatever was necessary to stop the fight."

The event was to be a bare-knuckle contest under the London Prize Ring Rules, in a 24-foot ring; each side putting up \$2,500 on their man in a winner-take-all contest. By today's calculations, the winning fighter would receive approximately \$114,000. This came at a time where the average manufacturing job paid \$345 per year, and an average teaching job paid less than \$75 per year (less than \$55 for female teachers).⁴

Accordingly to the *New York Times* of February 9th 1882:

The spot finally agreed upon, therefore, was on the sea shore, in front of Barnes's Hotel, at Mississippi City. This is a point 70 miles from New Orleans and 60 miles from Mobile, in Harrison County, Miss., and just abreast of Ship Island, of war fame. Sullivan and Ryan arrived on the ground at 8 o'clock this morning, and went to Barnes's and Tegarden's hotels, respectively. Both were in superb condition.

³ The Champion Slugger: John L. Sullivan Tells the Story of his Life (*Denver Tribune*).

⁴ *Wages and Earnings in the United States, 1860-1890* by Clarence Dickinson Long.

The excursion train, which consisted of 14 coaches and carried about 1,000 people, left New Orleans at 5 o'clock this morning and reached the ground at 10:30. At 11:30 the stakes were driven, about 1,500 people having assembled. Sullivan was the first to get in the ring. He had on a cap, and was wrapped in a blanket. He looked very pale. Fifteen minutes later Ryan appeared, smiling serenely. Ryan got the choice of corners, and after considerable bickering Alexander Brewster, of New Orleans, and Jack Hardy, of Vicksburg, were chosen joint referees. The ring was cleared at 11:50 A.M.

FIGHT TIME!!

Under the rules of the time, a fighter was to pick two "assistants." They would act as trainer/caretaker, and be in charge of carrying the fighter back to his corner in case of a knock down. There they would provide water and help revive the fallen warrior. Sullivan chose as his trainers the former heavyweight champion Joe Goss, the man who Ryan defeated for the title, and Billy Madden. Goss was to be in charge of the physical training and Madden in charge of attending to Sullivan's other interests, whatever they may be, Ryan for his team picked a very capable, but less well-known team of Johnny Roche and Joe Connick.

At 11:58am the combatants shook hands for the start of the first round. Ryan was the first to throw a punch, a lead right that was short, and for his efforts he was caught by a counter left from Sullivan that landed cleanly to the face of the Irishman. What followed were a series of short but fast punches by both men until Ryan was put down by a vicious right hand to the cheek, round 1 was in the history books with John L Sullivan winning it in 30 seconds.

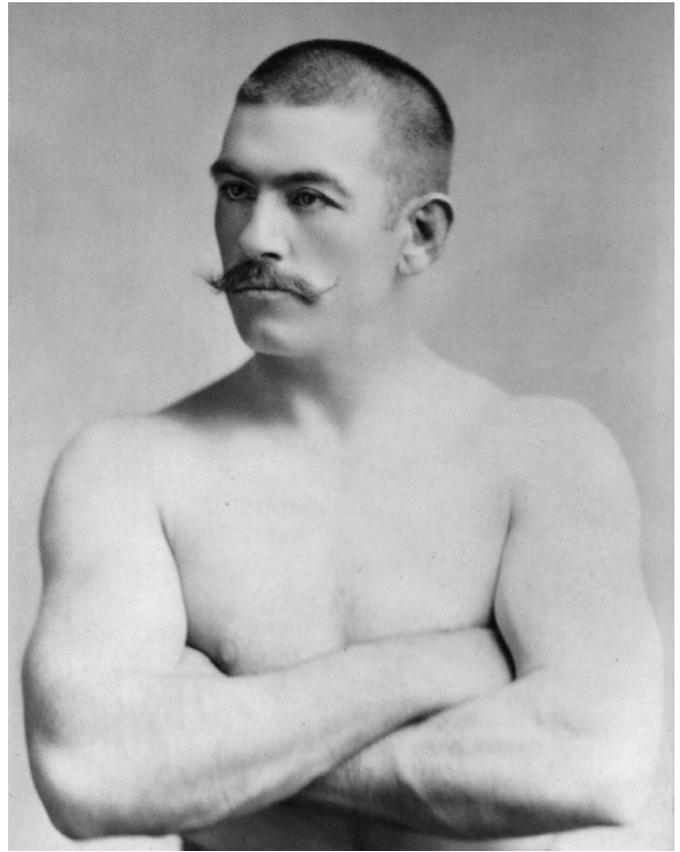
Round 2 began with Sullivan charging right at Ryan catching him with a left hand. Ryan grabbed and wrestled Sullivan to the ground, landing on top of the challenger at 25 seconds of the 2nd round.

The third round would have been missed if anyone blinked. The fighters rushed at each other from their corners and Sullivan put Ryan down once again with a powerful right hand to the chest just four seconds into the round!

Both men came out cautious for the fourth, feinting (a boxing term describing faking a punch), and looking for an opening. It was Sullivan who opened up first, landing again flush to the face of Ryan. Both men began slugging, but Sullivan was the stronger and pushed Ryan to the ropes and then down once more; this time again in under 30 seconds.

According to accounts, round 5 was almost exactly like the previous round, only this time it was Sullivan who was

brought to his knees at rounds-end. Through five rounds Sullivan was leading 3 to 2, but it was obvious to all that he was inflicting far more damage.



John L. Sullivan

Sullivan came out smiling for the sixth round; by now he knew he was in control of the fight. It appeared that Ryan now seemed afraid of the Boston Strong Boy. Sullivan went in for the attack, but Ryan slipped and struck Sullivan across his backside, putting him down to end the round.

The seventh round was another quick one. As the men approached each other, Sullivan unloaded on the game but overmatched Ryan, putting him down hard to end the round. Sullivan was reported to be smiling on his way back to the corner, and to the shock of most observers, Ryan was not only able, but willing to continue.

The eighth round began with both men coming out of their corners quickly, but Ryan appeared to have no strength left. With sheer guts he tried to put up a fight. Sullivan boxed him over to the corner the umpires were in and pushed Ryan over the ropes. They were separated, and when Ryan came off the ropes, he made one last effort to attack Sullivan. It was not to be. Another shot from Sullivan put the champion down to one hand and knee. Ryan's assistants tried calling for a foul as Sullivan raised his right to strike his fallen opponent, but Sullivan pulled back, allowing Ryan to stand. Both men thought that the round was over, but for some reason it had not been called a knock down by the umpires, possibly due to

the confusion of Ryan's corner calling foul. Either way, the two fighters started making their way to their respective corners when both corners were heard to yell "Go For Him!" the two fighters had to turn around and go at each other once more. They clinched, and after some time, both fell to the grass finally ending the round, and the fight. Ryan was unable to come out for the ninth round and the fight was officially awarded to John L Sullivan.

The New York Times reported the aftermath of the fight as follows:

Ryan and Sullivan were visited after they had gone to their quarters. Ryan was laying in an exhausted condition on his bed, badly disfigured in the face, his upper lip being cut through and his nose disfigured. He did not move but lay panting. Stimulants were given him to restore him. He is terribly punished on the head. At the conclusion of the fight Sullivan ran to his quarters at a lively gait, and laughing. He lay down for a while as he was a little out of wind, but there is not a scratch on him. He chatted pleasantly with his friends. The fighting was short, sharp, and decisive on Sullivan's part throughout, Ryan showing weariness after the first round.

The Sullivan vs. Ryan fight is historic not for the fact that it was it the night John L. Sullivan became Heavyweight champ, as most boxing historians do not consider this to be true. The fact that Ryan, nor Goss ever defended this title internationally cause historians to claim that this should only be considered the Heavyweight Title of America, and not the World. According to boxing historians, Sullivan did not become Heavyweight Champion of the World until either 1888, when he defeated Charley Mitchell in France, or more likely when he knocked out Jake Kilrain in the 75th of a scheduled 80 rounds in 1889.

The historical significance of this fight is that it was the very last time that the title "heavyweight champion" would be won (not defended) in a bare-knuckle fight under the London Prize Ring Rules. The boxing world was about to change. The Queensberry Rules were to become the preferred method of sanctioned fighting. This included gloves being worn by the pugilists. The rule change made John L Sullivan the last bare knuckle Heavyweight champion. Sullivan would go on to defend that title 31 times, winning 28 with 1 no contest and 2 draws.

Paddy Ryan, who after this night considered retiring from the prize ring, continued to fight on until 1897, including two more official fights against Sullivan. The first of those happened on January 19th 1885 in New York, NY, officially ending as a "no contest" as the police raided and put an end to the fight after one round. The two fought once again on November 13th 1886 in San Francisco, California, where

Ryan was knocked out in three brutal rounds by his now legendary rival. The knockout came just before the police stormed the ring and tried to put an end to the contest. According to the *Wheeling Intelligencer* from November 15th 1886:

The police rushed in, but it was too late. There was nothing for them to do. The fight was ended. Sullivan waived the timekeepers back so as to see if Ryan had anything more to say. When time was called Ryan was still on the floor. Sullivan then stooped down, raised him up and carried him to the corner. The crowd quickly dispersed amid shouts for Sullivan.

Very little is written about the shared history of these two men after this. We do know that the Trojan Giant and the Boston Strong Boy put on a series of three-round exhibition bouts between 1891 and 1897 (nine that we know of for sure, with a tenth scheduled for October 5th 1895 in Cleveland, Ohio, that was cancelled when Mayor Mckisson refused to allow the bout to take place.) There were likely several more of these exhibitions that are now lost to time.

Paddy Ryan slipped through the cracks of history and has become little more than a footnote to boxing historians. Although he continued fighting until 1897, he never again gained the credibility or respect he had before the first Sullivan fight. He died on December 14th 1900 in Green Island, New York. He was elected to The Ring Magazine Boxing Hall of Fame in 1973, but is yet to be inducted into The International Boxing Hall of Fame, unlike his most famous opponent and conqueror Sullivan, who was inducted in the inaugural class.⁵

One interesting side note is that when Robert Emmet Odlum, the brother of the famous American women's rights reformer Charlotte Odlum Smith, jumped to his death off the Brooklyn Bridge on May 19th 1885, allegedly attempting to be the first person to successfully dive off the bridge into the East River in New York, Paddy Ryan was one of the members of Mr. Odlum's party at the event. Ryan assisted in unsuccessful resuscitation efforts.⁶

John L. Sullivan, on the other hand, went on to be part of American folklore; part sports-hero, part tall-tale, all legend. Sullivan remained undefeated as a professional until losing the title (under Marquis of Queensberry rules) to Gentleman Jim Corbett on September 7th 1892. It took 21 rounds for the much younger and faster Corbett to defeat the ageing Champ, who was by this time out of shape and

5 1990: International Boxing Hall of Fame: Canastota New York

6 *The Life and Adventures of Prof. Robert Emmet Odlum: Containing an Account of His Splendid Natatorium at the National Capital* by Catherine Odlum



Believed by some boxing historians to be the fight between John L. Sullivan and Paddy Ryan

already ravaged by alcohol and over indulgence. After the loss, Sullivan retired back to his home state of Massachusetts but still fought exhibitions for the next 12 years. Many of these exhibitions were against his old foe Paddy Ryan. The final bout of his career was a two-round exhibition against Jim McCormick in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1905. When it was all over, John L. Sullivan was the first athlete to earn over one million dollars in his career!

Long after his boxing career was over, Sullivan remained one of the biggest celebrities

in America. He was a sought-after public speaker, an occasional stage actor, a widely-read sports reporter and even a “celebrity” baseball umpire enjoying the love and admiration of a country that looked upon him as something more than a mortal. Sullivan, though, was all too mortal. Albeit able to give up his long addiction to alcohol later in life, even becoming a prohibition lecturer for a time, the many years of hard living and drinking caused the Great John L. to die almost penniless at the age of 59. He is buried in the Old Calvary cemetery in Boston, Massachusetts.

In death John L. Sullivan became even more revered, the subject of numerous books including *John L. Sullivan and His America* by Michael T. Isenberg, *John L. Sullivan, Champion of Champions* by Nat Fleischer (founder and first editor of *The Ring Magazine*) and *Strong Boy: The Life and Times Of John L. Sullivan, America’s First Sports Hero* by Christopher Klein to name a few. He was even the subject of a 1945 Hollywood movie, *The Great John L.*, where he was portrayed by Greg McClure.

The Sullivan vs. Ryan contest of 1882 not only created an American icon, but it also paved the way for the August 26th 2017 “mega fight” between Connor McGregor, the bigger, Irish grappler and Floyd Mayweather Jr., the American boxer considered to be the best of his era. This time, however, both fighters were winners, each taking home over \$100 million dollars, whereas poor Paddy Ryan took home nothing more than what he had in his pockets before the fight, that and a severely battered body and face to show for it.

OTHER SOURCES

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, January 29th 1882; *The New York Times*, February 9th 1882; *The Wheeling Intelligencer*, November 15th 1886; *Reminiscences of a 19th Century Gladiator: The Autobiography of John L. Sullivan* by John L Sullivan with James Bishop; *John L. Sullivan, Champion of Champions* by Nat Fleischer; *John L. Sullivan and His America* by Michael T. Isenberg.



BRIAN YOUNG is a musician, writer, historian, researcher, sports nut, and cigar smoker from the Buffalo, New York area. He has appeared on numerous radio shows and podcasts as both a Victorian era historian and also as an expert boxing analyst/historian. He has been researching projects surrounding Francis Tumblety for the past year and a half with Michael Hawley and is always working on one project or another.

OBITUARY

Richard Gordon

15 September 1921 - 11 August 2017

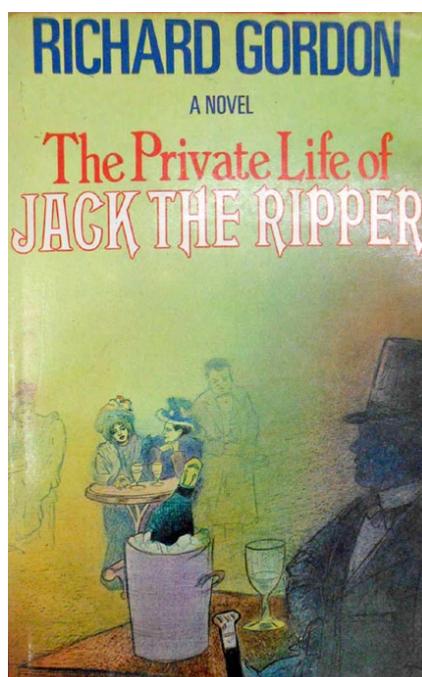
Gordon Stanley Ostlere, better known as author Richard Gordon, died on 11 August 2017 aged 95.

He was born in London on 15 September 1921, studied at Selwyn College, Cambridge, and St Bartholomew's hospital medical school. He would claim to have an intense dislike of patients and therefore became an anaesthetist at St Bart's and at the Nuffield department of anaesthetics in Oxford. He was briefly editor of the *British Medical Journal* and was afterwards a ship's doctor, which is when he started writing the comic novel, *Doctor in the House*, for which he is justly famous.

In 1980 he wrote *The Private Life of Jack The Ripper* in which he argued that the murderer was a doctor, and because none of the victims had made a sound, specifically an anaesthetist experienced in the use of chloroform.

However, he is best known as the author of the extraordinarily popular 'Doctor' series of comic novels. Based on his own experiences and on stories he heard from friends in the medical profession, *Doctor in the House* concerned the misadventures of a group of medical students at the imaginary St. Swithin's hospital, where the scary chief surgeon, Sir Lancelot Spratt, ruled like an autocrat. The book was published in 1952 and two years later it was filmed, starring Dirk Bogarde as Simon Sparrow.

Gordon followed this up with *Doctor at Sea* - he had been a seagoing medico himself - and this was later filmed with Brigitte Bardot as Bogarde's co-star. More books and films followed, as did a radio series with Richard Briers and a TV series starring Barry Evans and Robin Nedwell (Barry Evans ended up a probable murder victim: acting



roles dried up and he was working as a mini-cab driver when the police visited his home in 1997 in connection with a stolen vehicle report. They found him dead. He'd sustained a blow to the head and there were high levels of alcohol in his blood. Rumoured to be bisexual, stories circulated that Evans had been killed by an 18-year-old man he'd befriended and who could not be charged because of a lack of evidence.)

It was in 1978 that Gordon began his trilogy of "Private Life" books, beginning with the controversial *The Private Life of Florence Nightingale*, which suggested that she was a lesbian. This was followed by *The Private Life of Jack the Ripper* and *The*

Private Life of Dr Crippen.

Richard Gordon tended to remain in the shadows, claiming to be "pathologically shy", an excuse he offered for exclaiming "Oh balls!" when confronted with the big red book and Eamon Andrews declaring "Richard Gordon, this is your life". The programme was broadcast live and following Gordon's exclamation the plug was pulled, screens went blank and a standby programme was broadcast instead. Gordon's wife prevailed on him to relent and he recorded a programme that was broadcast later.

He leaves a wife, two sons, and two daughters.



We were also saddened to learn of the passing on 11 August of Fred J. Abbate, organiser of the philosophical conference "Jack the Ripper Through a Wider Lens," the first ever philosophical conference themed around the case, which was held at Drexel in 2011.

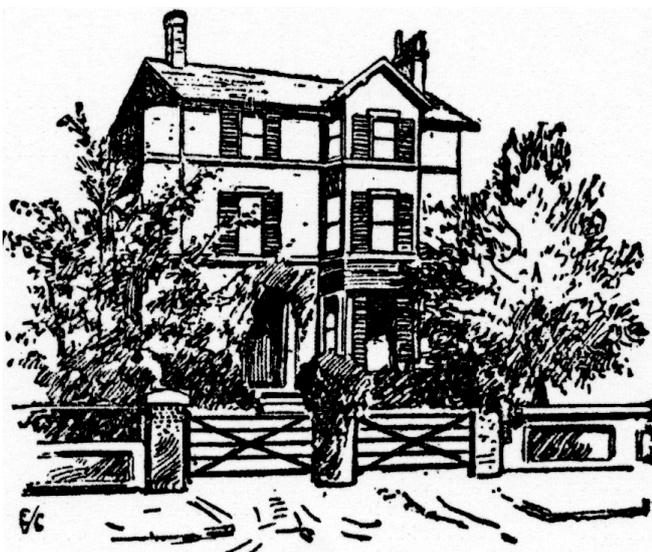
From the Casebook of a Murder House Detective

The Blackheath Mystery and The Tooting Horror

By JAN BONDESON

THE BLACKHEATH MYSTERY, 1898

The 60-year-old Mrs Arabella Charlotte Tyler was the widow of Mr William John Tyler, the late Secretary of the India-rubber and Gutta-percha Telegraph Works Company Ltd, of Silvertown. After her husband had died in early 1897, she lived on in their elegant detached villa at No. 67 Kidbrooke Park Road, Blackheath, just opposite St James's Church. On one side of No. 67 was a similar villa, on the other the Manor Park Farm. The large rear garden overlooked the Kent County Cricket Ground. Mrs Tyler lived in comfortable affluence, together with her spinster daughter Maud and her recently widowed daughter Mrs Violet Huxham. They normally had two domestics, but the housemaid had just left, and Mrs Tyler was waited on by her general servant Ann Gusterson.



A drawing of the murder house at No. 67 Kidbrooke Park Road, from Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, August 21 1898.



The mystery servant Mary Ann Gusterson, from Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, August 21 1898.

On the evening of Sunday August 13 1898, Mrs Tyler had seemed uncommonly energetic, saying that she would rise at 5.00am the next morning, to do some hard graft in the garden. Both her daughters were away, and Ann Gusterson was the only other person who slept in the large house. On Monday morning, Ann Gusterson woke up at 6.30. She was surprised to see that the doors from the kitchen to the garden were open, and looked if her mistress was working out there, but Mrs Tyler was nowhere to be seen. She lit the stove and prepared the glass of hot water that her mistress liked to drink each morning. But when the domestic entered Mrs Tyler's room, carrying her frugal repast, she saw her mistress lying on the floor



A photograph of the Blackheath murder house, from Harmsworth's Magazine, December 1898.

at the foot of the bed, wearing her night clothes. Her face was quite livid, and her head thrown back. Realizing that she was dead, the servant girl ran out into the road and screamed for assistance. Two workmen came to her aid, one of them going for the police and the other guarding the house, as Ann Gusterson herself went for the doctor.

Dr Clifford, the local practitioner, declared that Mrs Tyler had been dead for several hours. Her neck had strangulation marks from powerful fingers, her face was blue, and her eyes were starting from the head. This was clearly a case of murder by strangulation. The police made a thorough search of the murder house. They saw marks that might indicate that the murderer had tried to force the large French doors to the dining room. There were also signs that the intruder had entered the house through climbing up some trellis work leading from the porch to Mrs Tyler's bedroom window. Ann Gusterson said that her mistress used to leave her window open by about a foot, due to the August heat; thus the intruder would have found it easy to enter the room. But Mrs Tyler had woken up and confronted the intruder, who had strangled her to

death. There were some open drawers in the bedroom, and also signs that some of the downstairs rooms had been searched, but nothing valuable had been stolen. The police suspected that the intruder had intended to burgle the house. Rather adventurously, they presumed that the reason he had not stolen more was that a large hayrick at nearby Manor Park Farm had mysteriously caught fire the very same night, and that the intruder had been alarmed by the sound of people running along Kidbrooke Park Road to extinguish the flames. In the garden, several footprints were found, indicating that the murderer had opened the kitchen doors to the garden and fled through the flower beds. The Scotland Yard detectives were busy making plaster casts of these footprints.

Mr E. Negus Wood, the deputy coroner for West Kent, was communicated with, and the inquest on Arabella Charlotte Tyler began on August 17, in the Kidbrooke Mission Room. Mrs Tyler had told friends that she was fearful of burglars, since the house was quite isolated, and annoyed at local youths stealing fruit from the garden. Her son-in-law Samuel Childs said that the house at No. 67

Kidbrooke Park Road had contained plate valued at £220, although he was not sure whether Mrs Tyler's jewelry was worth much. Ann Gusterson seemed quite distraught and had to sit down while giving evidence. Mrs Tyler had had only one visitor the day before the murder, the neighbour Mrs Georgina Jackson. The police surgeon Dr Cooper agreed with his fellow practitioner that Mrs Tyler had been strangled by a powerful intruder.

The inquest was adjourned until September 15, and then until October 12. Chief Inspector Conquest, who was in charge of the police investigation, told the jury that further time was needed, since the Blackheath Mystery was an extremely complex case. A writer in the *Illustrated Police News* commented that "Nothing transpired as to the nature of the evidence which will then be forthcoming, but rumour has that it will be of an extremely interesting character."

But when the inquest was finally resumed on October 12, the result was a damp squib. The coroner announced that Chief Inspector Conquest had given him a full account of the murder investigation, and that he had decided that there was not significant evidence to make out a *prima facie* case against any person. The jurymen were not happy about this. One of them said that many a crime had been traced through the detective work of jurymen: they were not dummies, but should be allowed to question the witnesses themselves. The coroner reluctantly agreed. The jurymen insisted that he must ask the servant Ann Gusterson, about whom many rumours had been abounding, some probing questions. She denied having been visited by any sweetheart while residing at No. 67 Kidbrooke Park Road. The only person who had come to see her there had been a female cousin. She had been surprised to see the kitchen doors to the garden open the morning after the murder, she said. But clearly not surprised enough to investigate whether a burglary had occurred before she brought her mistress her breakfast, the suspicious jurymen retorted. Nothing more came of this attempt to incriminate Ann Gusterson, however: the coroner had his way, and the jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.

It is possible to discern three different murder scenarios in the Blackheath Mystery. The first one agrees with the police hypothesis: a burglar intends to rob No. 67 Kidbrooke Park Road and misadventently enters Mrs Tyler's bedroom. To prevent her from giving the alarm, he strangles her, before ransacking the house. But would a burglar really choose the hazardous route up to the first-floor bedroom, without knowing who was there? Why go to the extreme of murdering Mrs Tyler, instead of just knocking her on the head? And why did the intruder make sure it looked like the house had been burgled, through

opening drawers and cupboards, while not stealing anything valuable? In Mrs Tyler's bedroom, two valuable rings were kept in an open drawer, but neither was stolen. And was it not a remarkable coincidence that when the 'burglar' struck, none of Mrs Tyler's daughters were in the house, and only one of the domestics?

The second scenario involves an old enemy of Mrs Tyler coming to settle the score with her, before doing his best to make the murder look like a burglary gone wrong. Mrs Tyler's daughters and remaining son-in-law denied that she had any enemies, but would they have known everything about her past?



The murder house at No. 67 Kidbrooke Park Road, as it stands today.

In the third scenario, Mrs Tyler's son-in-law hires an assassin to murder her, to make sure that, through his wife, he gets a share of her wealth. The burglary was a cover-up and Ann Gusterson an accomplice. In her will, Mrs Tyler left a total of £5,869. But the son-in-law in question, Mr Samuel Childs, who had married young Margaret Mary Tyler in 1891, appears to have been a respectable gentleman, who stayed away from criminal conspiracies, and earned his income by more conventional means than murdering his mother-in-law. Mrs Tyler had changed her will in September 1897, to leave the bulk of her estate to the three daughters. What had the earlier will contained,

and why did she change it? Might it have had anything to do with George Trevor Huxham, who died from what was supposed to be diabetes in 1895, aged just 33, after being married to Violet Tyler for just two years? And why did Samuel Childs, when interviewed by a journalist just after the murder, claim that the cause of death had been heart disease?

The Blackheath Mystery would have been a match even for Sherlock Holmes. It is quite an interesting and anomalous crime, which I would suspect has a more adventurous solution than the 'burglar' hypothesis favoured by the police. It is a great pity that the police files on the case, which should have been kept at the National Archives, have been lost or stolen. The murder house at No. 67 Kidbrooke Park Road still stands, just opposite St James's Church at the crossing with Wricklemarsh Road. The large house has been subdivided into several small flats. There is no longer any trellis work near the porch, leading to the first floor bay window.

This is an edited extract from Jan Bondeson's *Murder Houses of South London* (Troubadour Publishing, Leicester 2015).



THE TOOTING HORROR, 1895

In 1880, the 24-year-old plasterer Frank Taylor married Martha Hocking, the 21-year-old daughter of a well-to-do manufacturer. It was a runaway match, and Martha would receive no further support from her family, since they considered that she had married beneath her station in life. Frank was a steady, industrious man, however. Although he remained a humble labourer, he was able to keep poverty from the door, and put food on the table for their steadily increasing brood of children.



Frank and Martha Taylor,
from *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* March 17 1895.

In 1894, the Taylors were living in a small terraced house at No. 12 Fountain Road, Tooting. They had no less than

seven children alive, ranging in age from the 14-year-old Frank Jr. to little Georgie aged just twenty months. Later the same year, Frank Taylor lost his job. He tried getting another one, but was struck down with influenza. Due to the severe winter, work was scarce, and once he had recovered, he could not find employment. His family was soon destitute, and they barely had food for the children. In between visiting various shops to look for work, Frank scrambled on the ice for pennies and farthings thrown by well-to-do skaters who made the most of the cold snap. The children were regular visitors to the penny paupers' suppers provided by the Tooting Graveney parish church. Frank Jr. earned a few pennies by carrying fresh water to neighbours whose pipes had frozen, but his father remained unable to find paid employment. For every day that went by, Frank Taylor became increasingly bitter and morose. The family now owed six weeks rent, and in spite of the freezing cold weather, none of the children had boots.

At half past five in the morning of March 7 1895, there was a knock at the door of Mr Richard Henry Hockins, a house-painter living at No. 9 Fountain Road. When he looked out of the window, he could see Frank Jr. standing by the door. Bleeding profusely from the throat, arm and hands, he called out 'Father cut all our throats and mother is dead!' Realizing that something terrible must have happened, Mr Hockins came downstairs, bandaged young Frank's wounds, and made sure the police was called in. The front door to No. 12 Fountain Road was locked and bolted, but the constables broke it down. Inside the cramped little house they met with the grossest scenes. In the back bedroom, they found all six children dead in a bloodbath, with their throats cut. In the front bedroom, they found the body of Martha Hocking with injuries from a terrible struggle; her head was nearly severed from the body. Frank Taylor himself was the only person alive, in spite of a large gash in the throat, but he expired on the way to the Wandsworth & Clapham Infirmary. He had succeeded in exterminating his entire family, apart from Frank Jr.

From his bed at St Thomas's Hospital, Frank Jr. gave his account of the 'Tooting Horror', as the mass murder was called in the newspapers. At about half past five in the morning, his father had come into the tiny bedroom shared by the seven Taylor children, saying 'Frank, where are you?' 'I am here, father', the sleepy lad had replied. His father had then leapt at him like a madman, slashing at him with a large razor. In spite of the deep wounds on his hands and arm, Frank kept fighting back. The other children woke up, and started shrieking and crying. Frank Taylor let go of his severely wounded son, and instead began cutting the throats of all the smaller children, one by one, except the seven-year-old Florrie. He lurched out of the room, sharpened the razor, and dispatched Florrie as well. Frank

THE-TOOTING-HORROR

MURDER OF A WIFE AND SIX CHILDREN — SUICIDE OF THE HUSBAND



Sensational Scenes of the Tooting Horror, from the Illustrated Police News March 16 1895.



VIEW OF THE HOUSE.

SCENE OF THE TOOTING TRAGEDY.
NO. 12, FOUNTAIN ROAD.

Three views of the Tooting murder house, from *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* March 17 1895, the *Penny Illustrated Paper* March 16 1895 and from the *Illustrated Police Budget* March 16 1895.

Jr. heard his father exclaim 'Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!' and saw him reel out of the room. With considerable presence of mind, the wounded lad took on his mother's jacket, unbolted the front door, and went to seek assistance from Mr Hockins. His father pursued him downstairs, but did not venture out into the road, preferring to bolt the door and cut his own throat as well.

The Tooting Horror was widely reported in the newspapers. Although the irrepressible *Illustrated Police News* exploited the tragedy in some 'thrilling' illustrations, the majority of the press struck a more sombre note. The tragedy caused widespread revulsion throughout Britain. Some people blamed the Tooting authorities for their lack of charity: was it really right that an honest workman should become completely destitute, and driven to desperation, once he had lost his job? The relieving officer for the parish of Tooting retorted that Frank Taylor had been offered work as a stonemason a few weeks before the tragedy, and that he had recently been fined two shillings and sixpence for failing to send his children to school. The local people, who had done very little to help Frank Taylor when he was alive, now sang his praises and those of his family. Frank had been a very honest, upstanding citizen, his wife a hard-working, respectable woman, and the children very well behaved. In particular, golden-haired little Florrie had been a very pretty girl, and quite the pet of the neighbourhood.

The inquest on the murdered Taylors was opened at

Tooting Vestry Hall on March 9. The coroner, Mr Braxton Hicks, said that this was one of the most painful and dreadful affairs that had happened in England for many years. Visibly moved, the jury then viewed the bodies. The police constables who had searched the murder house had found a bundle of religious hymns, and also an envelope on which Frank Taylor had written "I love my wife and children too dearly to allow people to jeer. They are all pure." There were also two letters with confused statements about false accusations against Frank Taylor being washed away in the Lord's precious blood. His enemies, who hated him with a cruel hate, had destroyed his life. A writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* pointed out that the Tooting Horror was the worst family tragedy in Britain since 1834, when the German Johann Nicholas Steinberg had murdered his common-law wife and four children in a bloodbath, at No. 17 Southampton Street [today Calshot Street; the house no longer stands]. Rather flippantly, the journalist commented that the German had fallen short of Taylor's record by two victims.

Amidst loud applause, the Rev. D.H. Morton, Rector of Tooting Graveney, offered to have the murdered Taylors buried free of charge. A gentleman stood up to say that if the Rector had not made his generous offer, he and his friends would have paid for the funeral, so that the Taylor children were spared the indignity of a pauper's grave. There was more applause among the spectators; the Taylors were clearly more popular dead than alive. Commenting that



The terrace of houses in Fountain Road, Tooting.

such unseemly and raucous behaviour did not suit this sombre occasion, the coroner went on to read a number of letters from ladies and gentleman all over the country, offering to take care of the boy Frank, who was still recovering in hospital. In a strange ceremony of exorcism, all the furniture, clothes, and other effects of the murdered family was dragged out of the murder house, and burnt to ashes in a field to the rear of the house.

The last we hear of Frank Jr is that having recovered from his wounds, he was taken to the King's College Convalescent Home. Various charitable individuals had made sure that his future education, and a fair start in life, had been secured for the orphaned lad. In spite of a plaque being sold to commemorate the Tooting Tragedy, with the names of the eight dead members of the Taylor family, it is well-nigh forgotten today, even by the locals. No local history book mentions it, but the Surrey folk singer 'Pop' Maynard has rescued a contemporary song on the subject, which he has performed more than once:

Once in Tooting did reside,
 With his children by his side,
 Frank Taylor and with him his loving wife.
 But from life they are now gone,
 Little Frankie left forlorn,
 To tell how father robbed them of their life.

O it was just before the dawn,
 On that fatal Thursday morn.
 It was early there the lad they did behold,
 He was crying there with fear:
 'O come to mother, dear,
 For father's killed them, they are dead and cold.'

'Then, where is my father?' little Frankie cried,
 'With your mother and the babies he has died.'
 'O here I must remain
 and suffer grief and pain,
 But we'll all meet up in Heaven side by side!'

So, is Tooting's House of Horrors still standing? This question has been debated on the Tootinglife internet homepage, but without any constructive deductions being made. Interestingly, one of the contributors could remember lodging in a haunted house in Fountain Road, where doors opened and shut on their own accord, and no tenant stayed longer than eight months. Even for an experienced murder house detective, finding the House of Horrors was quite a challenge, particularly since the contemporary accounts gave two different numbers for the house (No. 8 and No. 12). The houses in Fountain Road were renumbered a few years after the Tooting Horror, and the present-day No. 12 (and No. 8) are clearly innocent, since they are of a later style than the murder house.

Two vital clues come from the *Penny Illustrated Paper*'s drawing of the House of Horrors: it is situated next to a slightly wider house without a fence, a shop carrying the name J. Lee. Since the Post Office directories put Joseph Lee's grocer's shop at No. 11 Fountain Road, it makes good sense for No. 12 to be next door, and thus it is impossible that the murder house was at No. 8. Secondly, the illustration shows open fields on the opposite side of the road, indicating that the murder house is in the longer terrace of twenty houses seen on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map of Tooting, near the Blackshaw Road end of Fountain Road. The images in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* and *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* also show that the murder house is on the western side of Lee's former shop (which can still be seen to be wider than the other houses in the terrace). Importantly, this shop is on a

slightly higher level than the houses to the west of it, again agreeing with the original illustrations. The murder house is today's No. 159 Fountain Road, situated just to the west of Lee's former shop at No. 157. It has not changed much since the time of the Tooting Horror.

This is an edited extract from Jan Bondeson's *Murder Houses of South London* (Troubador Publishing, Leicester 2015).



JAN BONDESON is a senior lecturer and consultant rheumatologist at Cardiff University. He is the author of *Rivals of the Ripper*, *Murder Houses of London*, *The London Monster*, *The Great Pretenders*, *Blood on the Snow* and other true crime books, as well as the bestselling *Buried Alive*.



The house of horrors at No. 12 [today No. 159] Fountain Road, Tooting, where Frank Taylor murdered his wife and six of his children in 1895, before committing suicide. It is the house to the right, just west of Lee's old shop, which is still wider than the other houses in the terrace.

Dragnet!

An American Actor out to apprehend the Ripper while Dressed in Women's Clothes (Part One)

By NINA and HOWARD BROWN

Case researchers encounter many strange stories when trawling the contemporary newspapers. Along with the number of hoaxes (false alarms), phony confessors, and letter writers, one thing observers will come across if they stick around long enough is a published article featuring a 'solution' to the crimes, usually composed by an individual using a *nom de plume*. The average Ripperologist would be hard-pressed to find one of these elaborate but error-ridden tales in which the true name of the author is given.

We've seen the number of books written on the heels of the Kelly murder... some of the fictional works require intestinal fortitude to finish, cover to cover. Decades later, these fictional column fillers reappear, sometimes with minor modification, sometimes with none at all, but all with the same gist.

One example of these stories, possibly the most well known, involves an American named 'Charles Kowlder'. Since the discovery of this story, which was published in more than one paper less than two weeks after the Mary Kelly, murder, no-one has been able to find anyone named Kowlder either in the UK or US or the Antipodes. It is highly unlikely that a Charles Kowlder existed, but someone using that name certainly did. 'Kowlder' soliloquizes being the Whitechapel Murderer in an eerie, elaborate tale culminating with him leaving 'Martins Court' (sic) and departing from London.

Kowlder's tale is probably the most elaborate of them all, which is sort of like boasting of being the leper with the most fingers. Another story, which we located and have yet to post on JTR Forums, revolves around a 'Strange Little Frenchman' who points the finger of guilt at a British Earl, who, the author points out, is still out and about.

Others, such as the 20th century article in which the killer is named (Andrew Kramer) are usually of the 'He said, she said' variety, reliant on handed-down hearsay and rumored revelations to the identity of the Ripper.



MR. J. T. SULLIVAN, ACTOR.

When I first saw the story and before actually reading it, you can imagine that I knee-jerked and assumed it would be just like the stories above. An anonymous

author... a drawn-out drama... and a heap of errors in the piece. Useful only in collecting ephemera relative to the Whitechapel murders but not of any evidentiary value.

I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered that the author of the piece not only existed and was using his real name, but he was famous. His name was John T. Sullivan, a well-respected and renowned thespian from County Cork, Ireland. And, importantly, he was in London at the time of the murders.

Sullivan's resume was presented in the July 13th, 1889 issue of *The Theatre*, a New York-based magazine published fortnightly. The following material is from that piece.

John T. Sullivan was born in 1859 at Bere Island, Castletown, County Cork. He had predilections for the stage - reciting pieces while a mere child and 'spouted' while attending school in Detroit, Michigan.

He was a man of some business prominence, holding an important business position in the Michigan Central Railroad; an expert stenographer and telegrapher and a thorough mathematician.

Had he never played before, Mr. Sullivan, as Langham in *Robert Elsmere*, would have been instantaneously appreciated as an actor of no mediocre talent.

Our first impulse is to give praise to Mr. Sullivan was when we saw him a few years ago in a weird melodrama at Niblo's Gardens... it must stand to his credit as a student of the abstract.

The season of '86-'87 saw him the leading juvenile man to Edwin Booth, during which he played a round of splendid parts, some 12 in all.

In July of 1887, he appeared at Madison Square Theater (later Garden) alongside Richard Mansfield in *Monsieur* and remained with him for two years, during which time he portrayed Gabriel Utterson in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

He accompanied Mansfield to England as his leading man, sailing on the City Of Rome, July 11, 1888 arriving on July 18th and opening at the Lyceum Theater, London under the management of Henry Irving August 4th in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. This ran for six weeks.

September 20th, a one act piece called *Lesbia* was produced in which he played the Roman poet Catullus. October 1st, he appeared in *Parisian Romance*. He portrayed 'Joseph Surface' in *School For Scandal*, considered the most successful part he portrayed in London when there in 1888 and according to the eminent theater critic, Clement Scott, was the finest ever presented on the English stage.

Sullivan's obituary appeared in the June 21st edition of the *Detroit Free Press*:

After suffering for two weeks with inflammatory rheumatism, which finally affected his heart, John T. Sullivan, for fifteen years one of the most popular actors on the American stage and a former resident of

Detroit., died Sunday night (June 19th) at his hotel in New York.

Sullivan was once married to the eminent British actress, Rose Coghlan, from 1890 to 1893, their marriage ending in an amicable divorce.



The story, due to its length, will appear in this and the next issue of *Ripperologist*. The reader will find factual errors which may, in defense of Mr. Sullivan, be attributable to the 13 years which had transpired between the murders and the publication of this article. Persons mentioned, such as C. H. Fox, perruquier or wig maker, of Covent Gardens, did exist.

With no further ado, this, then, is the story of John T. Sullivan's 'Hunt For The Ripper' disguised, so he described, as a 'plain country hussy'. Sullivan apparently decided to share his experiences in Whitechapel because of the then current brutal assaults upon women in Denver, Colorado.

*Salt Lake Herald- Sunday
August 25, 1901*

HUNTING "JACK THE RIPPER" Thrilling Experiences of a Man Who Posed as Decoy In Women's Garb

The recent scare among Denver women because of the raids of the Capitol Hill thug reminds me of the reign of terror among the denizens of the Whitechapel district, London, during the months of September and November 1888. I had been in London for some months, playing at Henry Irving's Lyceum Theater and during the months mentioned was appearing as Joseph Surface with Kate Vaughn, in *School For Scandal*.

'Jack the Ripper' at that time was a common phrase around the town. Those three words, Jack the Ripper, were enough to blanch the cheek of every woman and send children shrieking into their homes. No one can understand the reign of terror that there existed, and strangely for among that class fear is an unusual emotion.

No one had ever met the creature and lived to tell the tale, so that impenetrable mystery seemed to surround him. It was this element that assisted him in making his murders so successful.

The first murder was that of a woman described as a bleary-eyed hag. She was found on an embankment in the Whitechapel district, her throat cut from ear to ear, her body frightfully mutilated.

The second victim was Martha Turner, a hawker. Her body was found on the first floor landing of the George-

yard buildings, in Commercial road, Spitalfields, Tuesday, August 7th.

The third was Mary Ann Nichols. This murder occurred two days later in Bucks Row near the house of Mrs. Green.

The fourth victim was Annie Chapman, who was killed in the backyard of a Mr. Richardson, 29 Hanbury street.

The fifth was on September 23, when an unknown woman was found dead at Gateshead, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The sixth was Hippity Lip Annie, Sept. 30, on Berners street. Her throat was cut, but before he could mutilate her the murderer was frightened away.

The seventh happened fifteen minutes later on the southwest corner of Mitre square. The murdered woman was unknown.

The eighth victim was found October 1 on the site of the intended Metropolitan opera house. She was unknown and the body was decomposed.

The ninth occurred Nov. 9. Jane Lawrence was the unfortunate. She was killed in her room on Dorset street.

The tenth crime was committed Nov. 28th and the victim was without a name.

During the ten days prior to February 9, 1889, ten crimes of an identical nature to those in Whitechapel were perpetrated in Managua, Nicaragua.

July 17, 1889, a doctor in London, at times demented, confessed that he had used surgical instruments at times when he was unconscious and had not assisted in any operation.

Victims All of One Class

This was the data obtainable. the victims were all dissolute women and the same sort of mutilation characterized each case. The throat was invariably cut - as a rule from ear to ear - and the body was savagely slashed and mutilated.

It was the night of September 30, 1888 that made London, great as it is, roar with indignation from center to circumference. In Berners street, Commercial road, Whitechapel, the body of a woman, identified as 'Hippity Lip Annie' was found by a teamster, still warm and cut and mutilated as in the other cases, thus adding another to the crimes of 'Jack the Ripper'.

Twenty minutes later, at a distance of a mile, a policeman stumbled over the body of a woman in Mitre square. She had been similarly murdered.

When you take into consideration the fact that on that very night, in Berners street, there was a social gathering of the Workingmen's club, an organization in Whitechapel, and that these men were continually going back and forth

to the 'pub' adjoining the archway where the woman was found. It seems almost incredible that a murder could have been committed without noise or screams that could have been heard by the revelers. It was only twelve feet from the body to the door of this saloon.

Murders Deeply Mysterious

Still more incredible seems the next murder. The Berners street body was found at 11:20 p.m. The Mitre square body was found at 11:40, yet the policeman, at 11:33, had passed down Mitre street within twenty-five feet of Mitre square and had looked in and seen nothing wrong.

On his return at 11:40, in passing the square under a gas lamp at the immediate corner, the policeman saw a woman lying on the ground. Running to her assistance he discovered that another victim of 'Jack the Ripper' was in evidence. He had the body taken to the Old Jewry station house.

When you consider that it would take twenty minutes, as it took me, to walk from Berners street to Commercial road; up that road to Whitechapel; west on Whitechapel to Mitre square; one wonders how this thing was done.

The next morning London rang with the news. The papers devoted pages to it, calling on the police to suppress this scourge. Scotland Yard put in its best men, and Sir Charles Warren, since famous in the Boer war, then London's chief of police, called upon the guards and volunteers to patrol Whitechapel thoroughly. At least 200 men were serving as detectives in that celebrated district.

Interest Was Universal

Naturally, all classes were interested; particularly so were the American residents of London of who there were a great number at that time. We used to meet, probably twelve to twenty of us, after the performances at the theaters at the Victoria hotel. A number of the boys felt like volunteering.

I might say, incidentally, that the City of London had offered £1,000 reward for the apprehension of the murderer. Sir Charles Warren offered another additional £1,000. The board of aldermen had offered another £1,000 and at last the reward aggregated £ 5,000. This was to be paid to anyone producing 'Jack the Ripper', dead or alive. No one could give any description of him, as none who had met him had ever lived to describe him. Various theories were offered as to his identity, but all were faulty and useless.

The only thing to be done was to catch him red-handed - but how was this to be done? Well, we Americans thought we could solve the problem. During the month

of August a number of us attended a garden party given by Lady Mackenzie at her charming villa on the Surrey side. In presenting a charade I appeared in a burlesque of a vivandiere masquerading as a guardsman, but still a woman. It was a very clever conceit, and William King of Buffalo, son of millionaire King, suggested a plan for catching 'Jack the Ripper'.

Jack's Jolly Prospect

We all exclaimed, "What is it, Billy?"

"Well," he said, turning to me, Jack, its up to you - it concerns you principally."

Answering my look of inquiry and turning to the boys, he said:

The plan is this: Jack, here, looked so like a woman the other day that he could easily pass for one. Now, let him dress as a woman - not too swell, but like the Whitechapel women - and patrol the streets and alleys and yards.

We will follow him up - have our guns ready, watch, and if he is accosted, close in on the man - and that is the only way 'Jack the Ripper' will ever be caught.

Needless to say, I didn't look at the scheme in quite the same optimistic light that my friend King did, as the

fact was evident that the women who had been killed had never had time to even utter a cry.

I was not so sure whether it would be 'Jack the Ripper' or I who would 'get it'.

Well, we sat discussing the plan until daylight and they finally persuaded me that it was my duty to go masquerading through Whitechapel - a perilous errand, mind you - provided I was given permission by Sir Charles Warren to carry a revolver or a knife to defend myself. Incidentally too, there was the question of the \$25,000 (£5,000 in 1888) reward, beside the glory and renown to be attained.



Next issue: The Hunt Is On.....

Sources: *The Theater*, July 13, 1889 edition, *Salt Lake Herald*, August 25, 1901, and *Detroit Free Press*, June 24, 1904



NINA and HOWARD BROWN are the proprietors of JTRforums.com.

A FORENSIC FORUM

BY ROBIN ODELL

A FORENSIC FORUM aims to bring together accounts of the development of forensic disciplines forged over several decades.

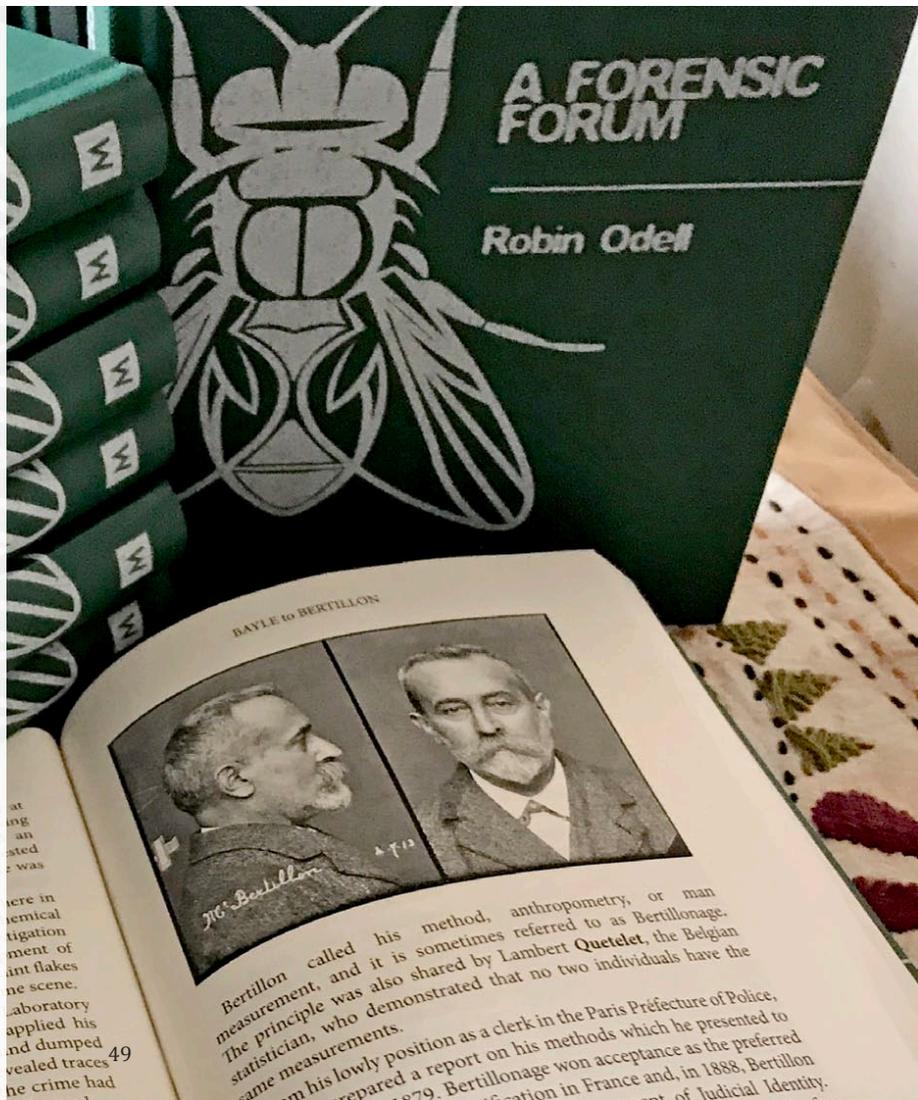
Its purpose is to pay tribute to those pioneers and innovators who left an indelible stamp on the advances which made possible modern science-based criminal investigation. Theirs was a collective genius which created a civilising force serving knowledge, understanding and justice.

They deserve to be recognised and honoured for their achievements.

PART ONE features eight forensic essays on Forensic Medicine, Chemistry, Ballistics, Odontology, Entomology, Anthropology, Botany and Psychiatry.

PART TWO comprises over 100 biographies of these forensic pioneers, set out in A-Z form and cross-referenced.

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Victorian Fiction

The Voice in the Night

By William Hope Hodgson

Edited with an introduction by Eduardo Zinna

INTRODUCTION

Reverence and fear have always informed humankind's visions of the sea. Men who go down to the sea in ships are thrust into a confined world of waves and winds, tides and tempests, forced comradeship and pervading loneliness. Round them is the rough, wide sea, which in early times was believed to be the abode of fearsome monsters. Lôtan, the fugitive serpent, dwelled in its waters, and so did Leviathan, the tortuous serpent that will be killed at the end of time. Off the shores of Greenland and Norway, the massive, many-tentacled Kraken would rise to the surface of the waters, and plunge again, dragging along with it ships and their crews.

Monsters from the deep feature in many tales, both ancient and modern. Fleeing from the Lord, Jonah boarded a ship leaving on a sea voyage. But the Lord sent a great wind into the sea, and a mighty tempest ensued. The sailors were afraid and cast lots to know for whose cause that evil was upon them. The lot fell upon Jonah. He admitted he was the source of their misfortune and told them to cast him forth into the sea. They did as they were told and the sea ceased raging. A great fish came and swallowed up Jonah, and he was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord and the fish vomited out him into the dry land.

Many years later, Pinocchio the puppet was swimming in the sea when he saw, rising up out of the water and coming to meet him, the horrible head of a sea-monster with a wide-open cavernous mouth and three rows of enormous teeth. Pinocchio swam away as fast as he could, but in vain. The monster overtook him and swallowed him up with such avidity that Pinocchio fell straight into its stomach, where he found himself in total darkness. Unlike Jonah, he did not resign himself to his fate but began immediately to explore his surroundings. With the logic of fairy tales, he soon befriended a philosophical tuna fish and, to his great happiness, found in the belly

of the monster his adoptive father Geppetto. The old man was consuming the last of his provisions at a table lit by a candle stuck in a bottle. It was not long before puppet, father and tuna fish effected their escape taking advantage of the monster's sleep.

For ten years after the fall of Troy, Odysseus, the wily King of Ithaca, was unable to return home through the enmity of Poseidon, the god of the earthquake and the ruler of the seas. In his wanderings Odysseus heard the Sirens' voices and steered his ship between Scylla, the monster with twelve feet and six long necks, each ending in a head with triple rows of teeth, and Charybdis, the whirlpool that sucks the waters down together with any ships that may be passing by. Sindbad the Seaman – who was actually not a sailor but a merchant – went to sea seven times and was shipwrecked, left behind or cast away seven times. As he crossed and re-crossed the seas, he encountered sleeping whales, sea-stallions and the formidable Old Man of the Sea, who captured lost travellers and turned them into his slaves.

In his narrative, Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket recounted how he had survived tempests, mutiny, shipwreck and the attentions of cannibals to find himself sailing ever farther south through Antarctic waters. At the close of his story, Arthur and his companions rush into the embraces of a limitless cataract, where a chasm throws itself open to receive them. But there arises in their pathway a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. The last words of Arthur's narrative are: 'And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow.' White is also the colour of Moby Dick, the White Whale pursued by Ahab, the scarred, one-legged Captain of the Pequod, into death and the deep.

Many are the story-tellers, great and small, known and unknown, who have conjured up the wonders and horrors of the sea: the anonymous authors of the Bible and the

Arabian Nights, Homer, Daniel Defoe, Coleridge, Byron, James Fenimore Cooper, Jules Verne, Frederick Marryat, Arthur Rimbaud, Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, Jack London. A place among them can certainly be granted to William Hope Hodgson.



Hodgson was born on 15 November 1877 in Blackmore End, Essex. He was the second of the 12 children of Samuel Hodgson, an Anglican priest, and Lissie Sarah Brown. Reverend Hodgson was an ascetic, grim and sternly religious man. For 21 years he dragged his family through 11 different parishes throughout Britain. In 1887 they arrived at Ardrahan, in County Galway, Western Ireland – which the Church of England then considered as little better than a pagan land. The encounter of the English Anglican priest and the Irish Catholic community was, to say the least, problematic. There were disputes, threats and confrontations, and one night a stone thrown by persons unknown struck the Rev Hodgson in the head. Years later these incidents inspired his grown-up son to write his novel *The House on the Borderland*, whose protagonist gallantly defends his home against monstrous creatures swarming from the depths of the earth.

Even at an early age Hodgson had a difficult relationship with his father, which drove him to a lifelong profession of atheism. Moved by a strong fascination with the sea, he ran away to become a sailor several times, but was always returned to his family. Finally, in 1891, at the age of 14, he began a four-year apprenticeship as a cabin boy. In 1895,

he qualified as a seaman and shortly thereafter became an officer in the Merchant Navy. During his service, he sailed three times round the world.

A young man short in stature and possessed of fine, delicate features, Hodgson found himself amid coarse and sometimes brutal shipmates. To protect himself he undertook an intense programme of physical development which turned him into an exceptionally powerful man. It was said at one point that he could lift a full-grown man over his head with one hand. Hodgson also became an accomplished photographer, kept journals of his experiences at sea and wrote poetry which remained unread and unpublished for many years. On 28 March 1898, off Port Chalmers, New Zealand, he dived into shark-infested waters to save a sailor who had fallen overboard. For this act of heroism, he received a medal from the Royal Humane Society. Yet he grew disenchanted with his life as a seaman – the pay, the food, the conditions – and developed a strong aversion for the sea which he had once so loved.

By 1899, Hodgson was back in Blackburn. His father had died in 1892, leaving the family impoverished and dependent largely on charity. An inheritance from his paternal grandfather in 1900 improved their situation and allowed him to open his School of Physical Culture in early 1901. He offered personal training to his customers, who included members of the local police force. Despite his growing reputation, he found that he could not earn a living from the School, and eventually shut it down.

In need of a new income, Hodgson began writing articles for magazines and journals and used his own photographs to illustrate them. In one of his earliest pieces, entitled *Health from Scientific Exercise*, published in *Cassell's Magazine* in November 1903, he expounded his physical health theories. He also contributed an article to *The Grand Magazine* on the topic *Is the Mercantile Navy Worth Joining?* His answer was a categorical 'No'. He laid out in detail his negative experiences at sea, including facts and figures about salaries. This led to a second article in *The Nautical Magazine*, an exposé on the subject of apprenticeships, which had given rise to much abuse.

Hodgson also wrote fiction. In April 1904, he published his first short story, *The Goddess of Death*, in *The Royal Magazine*. Inspired by a statue of Flora in Corporation Park in Blackburn, he crafted a tale about a statue of the goddess Kali that stands in a small English town. The statue seems to come alive to strangle one by one those who seized it from an Indian temple. In the end, it all turns out to have a rational, if improbable, explanation. *A Tropical Horror* – which features a vast slobbering mouth from whose huge dripping lips hang great tentacles – followed in June 1905 in *The Grand Magazine*. In 1906, *The Monthly Story Magazine* (later *The Blue Book*) published

From the Tideless Sea, opening for Hodgson the profitable American market. He would continue to sell stories to both American and British magazines for the remainder of his writing career.

In 1907, while Hodgson was still living with his family in relative poverty, his first novel, *The Boats of the Glen Carrig*, appeared. In *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, H P Lovecraft wrote

...we are shewn a variety of malign marvels and accursed unknown lands as encountered by the survivors of a sunken ship. The brooding menace in the earlier parts of the book is impossible to surpass, though a letdown in the direction of ordinary romance and adventure occurs toward the end. An inaccurate and pseudo-romantic attempt to reproduce eighteenth-century prose detracts from the general effect, but the really profound nautical erudition everywhere displayed is a compensating factor.

Hodgson's second novel, *The House on the Borderland*, appeared in 1908. Michael Moorcock, James Cawthorn and Sir Terry Pratchett have all praised it highly. Lovecraft considers it as 'perhaps the greatest of all Mr. Hodgson's works' and adds '[it] tells of a lonely and evilly regarded house in Ireland which forms a focus for hideous other-world forces and sustains a siege by blasphemous hybrid anomalies from a hidden abyss below.' He concludes: 'But for a few touches of commonplace sentimentality this book would be a classic of the first water.'

The Ghost Pirates followed the next year. Lovecraft describes it as 'a powerful account of a doomed and haunted ship on its last voyage, and of the terrible sea-devils (of quasi-human aspect, and perhaps the spirits of bygone buccaneers) that besiege it and finally drag it down to an unknown fate.'

Hodgson's last novel to see publication, *The Night Land*, appeared in 1912. Lovecraft took exception to its archaic language, verbosity and sentimentality, but still considered it as 'one of the most potent pieces of macabre imagination ever written.' Hodgson considered *The Night Land* his masterpiece and was terribly disappointed when it did not sell well. For the remainder of his life he wrote only short stories, never to return to the novel format and rarely to phantasy or horror.

Like Conan Doyle and other contemporary authors, Hodgson wrote short stories featuring recurring characters: the occult detective Carnacki the Ghost-Finder and Captain Gault the smuggler. The Carnacki stories, including *The Gateway of the Monster*, *The Whistling Room* and *The Horse of the Invisible*, appeared in *The Idler* in 1910. He also tried his hand at other genres, including *Judge Barclay's Wife*, a tale of adventure in the American

West, non-supernatural mysteries and war and light sea stories.



On 26 February 1913, Hodgson married Bessie Farnworth, who wrote the 'agony' column for a women's magazine. The newlyweds moved to the south of France, largely because the cost of living there was lower than in Britain. When war broke out, they returned to Britain.

Despite his experience at sea and his Third Mate certificate, Hodgson declined to join the Navy. Instead he entered the Officer Training Corps of the University of London. In July 1915 he was commissioned to the rank of Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. In June 1916, while training new soldiers, he was thrown from his horse and suffered a broken jaw and concussion, as a result of which he was gazetted out of the army. But he recovered sufficiently to re-enlist on 18 March 1917. He first saw action at Ypres in October 1917. Six months later he was killed by a direct hit from mortar fire and his remains were buried at the foot of the eastern slope of Mont Kemmel in Belgium. His Commanding Officer wrote:

...He was the life and soul of the mess—always so willing and cheery. Of his courage I can give no praise that is high enough. He was always volunteering for any dangerous duty, and it was owing to his entire lack

of fear that he probably met his death on April 17. He had performed wonders of gallantry only a few days before, and it is a miracle that he survived that day. I myself am deeply grieved, having lost a real, true friend and a splendid officer.

William Hope Hodgson is commemorated at the Tyne Cot Memorial in the British cemetery at Passchendaele.

Although Hodgson's stories contain their share of frightful monsters, none is present in our *Victorian Fiction* offering for this issue, which is in fact a gentle story showing instances of courage, kindness and self-sacrifice. Yet I believe that once you read it you will not easily forget it.

The Voice in the Night first appeared in print in the November 1907 issue of *The Blue Book*, an American magazine. From a strict viewpoint, its date of publication fell after the Victorian era had ended. Queen Victoria had vacated her throne six years earlier and Edward VII was more than halfway through his short reign. But Hodgson was born in 1877 and was a grown



man by the time of Victoria's death. His background, formation and sensibility were undoubtedly Victorian. The language and the values of the present story confirm it.

Because they were published both in Britain and America, Hodgson's novels and short stories exist in varying versions. *The Voice in the Night* as presented here follows closely British spelling and usage. The text is unabridged and unedited, with one exception. As is known, language has a life of its own, and over time words may come to mean something totally different from what they originally meant. To retain a word whose meaning is no longer what it once was may affect, even though slightly, the immediate perception of the reader, and distort the intent of the text. Our *Victorian Fiction* feature is not designed for the scholar but for the reader willing to visit or revisit these tales of a bygone era. I have accordingly replaced two terms currently tainted by ambiguity by more appropriate ones.

The Voice in the Night

By William Hope Hodgson

It was a dark, starless night. We were becalmed in the northern Pacific. Our exact position I do not know; for the sun had been hidden during the course of a weary, breathless week by a thin haze which had seemed to float above us, about the height of our mastheads, at whiles descending and shrouding the surrounding sea.

With there being no wind, we had steadied the tiller, and I was the only man on deck. The crew, consisting of two men and a boy, were sleeping forward in their den, while Will—my friend, and the master of our little craft—was aft in his bunk on the port side of the little cabin.

Suddenly, from out of the surrounding darkness, there came a hail:

'Schooner, ahoy!'

The cry was so unexpected that I gave no immediate answer, because of my surprise.

It came again—a voice curiously throaty and inhuman, calling from somewhere upon the dark sea away on our port broadside:

'Schooner, ahoy!'

'Hullo!' I sang out, having gathered my wits somewhat. 'What are you? What do you want?'

'You need not be afraid,' answered the strange voice, having probably noticed some trace of confusion in my tone. 'I am only an old—man.'

The pause sounded oddly, but it was only afterwards that it came back to me with any significance.

'Why don't you come alongside, then?' I queried somewhat snappishly; for I liked not his hinting at my having been a trifle shaken.

'I—I—can't. It wouldn't be safe. I—' The voice broke off,



and there was silence.

'What do you mean?' I asked, growing more and more astonished. 'What's not safe? Where are you?'

I listened for a moment; but there came no answer. And then, a sudden indefinite suspicion, of I knew not what, coming to me, I stepped swiftly to the binnacle, and took out the lighted lamp. At the same time, I knocked on the deck with my heel to waken Will. Then I was back at the side, throwing the yellow funnel of light out into the silent immensity beyond our rail. As I did so, I heard a slight, muffled cry, and then the sound of a splash as though someone had dipped oars abruptly. Yet I cannot say that I saw anything with certainty; save, it seemed to me, that with the first flash of the light there had been something upon the waters, where now there was nothing.

'Hullo, there!' I called. 'What foolery is this?'

But there came only the indistinct sounds of a boat being pulled away into the night.

Then I heard Will's voice from the direction of the after scuttle:

'What's up, George?'

'Come here, Will!' I said.

'What is it?' he asked, coming across the deck.

I told him the strange thing that had happened. He put several questions; then, after a moment's silence, he raised his hands to his lips, and hailed:

'Boat, ahoy!'

From a long distance away there came back to us a faint reply, and my companion repeated his call. Presently, after a short period of silence, there grew on our hearing the muffled sound of oars, at which Will hailed again.

This time there was a reply: 'Put away the light.'

'I'm damned if I will,' I muttered; but Will told me to do as the voice bade, and I shoved it down under the bulwarks.

'Come nearer,' he said, and the oar-strokes continued. Then, when apparently some half-dozen fathoms distant, they again ceased.

'Come alongside,' exclaimed Will. 'There's nothing to be frightened of aboard here.'

'Promise that you will not show the light?'

'What's to do with you,' I burst out, 'that you're so infernally afraid of the light?'

'Because—' began the voice, and stopped short.

'Because what?' I asked quickly.

Will put his hand on my shoulder.

'Shut up a minute, old man,' he said in a low voice. 'Let me tackle him.'

He leaned more over the rail.

'See here, mister,' he said, 'this is a pretty strange business, you coming upon us like this, right out in the middle of the blessed Pacific. How are we to know what sort of a deceitful trick you're up to? You say there's only one of you. How are we to know, unless we get a squint at you—eh? What's your objection to the light, anyway?'

As he finished, I heard the noise of the oars again, and then the voice came; but now from a greater distance, and sounding extremely hopeless and pathetic.

'I am sorry—sorry! I would not have troubled you, only I am hungry, and—so is she.'

The voice died away, and the sound of the oars, dipping irregularly, was borne to us.

'Stop!' sang out Will. 'I don't want to drive you away. Come back! We'll keep the light hidden if you don't like it.'

He turned to me.

'It's a damned strange rig, this; but I think there's nothing to be afraid of?'

There was a question in his tone, and I replied.

'No, I think the poor devil's been wrecked around here, and gone crazy.'

The sound of the oars drew nearer.

'Shove that lamp back in the binnacle,' said Will; then he leaned over the rail and listened. I replaced the lamp, and came back to his side. The dipping of the oars ceased some dozen yards distant.

'Won't you come alongside now?' asked Will in an even voice. 'I have had the lamp put back in the binnacle.'

'I—I cannot,' replied the voice. 'I dare not come nearer. I dare not even pay you for the—the provisions.'

'That's all right,' said Will, and hesitated. 'You're welcome to as much grub as you can take—' Again he hesitated.

'You are very good,' exclaimed the voice. 'May God, who understands everything, reward you—' It broke off huskily.

'The—the lady?' said Will abruptly. 'Is she—'

'I have left her behind upon the island,' came the voice.

'What island?' I cut in.

'I know not its name,' returned the voice. 'I would to God—' it began, and checked itself as suddenly.

'Could we not send a boat for her?' asked Will at this point.

'No!' said the voice, with extraordinary emphasis. 'My

God! No!' There was a moment's pause; then it added, in a tone which seemed a merited reproach: 'It was because of our want I ventured—because her agony tortured me.'

'I am a forgetful brute,' exclaimed Will. 'Just wait a minute, whoever you are, and I will bring you up something at once.'

In a couple of minutes he was back again, and his arms were full of various edibles. He paused at the rail.

'Can't you come alongside for them?' he asked.

'No—I DARE NOT,' replied the voice, and it seemed to me that in its tones I detected a note of stifled craving—as though the owner hushed a mortal desire. It came to me then in a flash that the poor old creature out there in the darkness, was SUFFERING for actual need for that which Will held in his arms; and yet, because of some unintelligible dread, refraining from dashing to the side of our schooner, and receiving it. And with the lightning-like conviction there came the knowledge that the Invisible was not mad, but sanely facing some intolerable horror.

'Damn it, Will!' I said, full of many feelings, over which predominated a vast sympathy. 'Get a box. We must float off the stuff to him in it.'

This we did, propelling it away from the vessel, out into the darkness, by means of a boat hook.

In a minute a slight cry from the Invisible came to us, and we knew that he had secured the box.

A little later, he called out a farewell to us, and so heartfelt a blessing, that I am sure we were the better for it. Then, without more ado, we heard the ply of oars across the darkness.

'Pretty soon off,' remarked Will, with perhaps just a little sense of injury.

'Wait,' I replied. 'I think somehow he'll come back. He must have been badly needing that food.'

'And the lady,' said Will. For a moment he was silent; then he continued, 'It's the strangest thing ever I've tumbled across, since I've been fishing.'

'Yes,' I said, and fell to pondering.

And so the time slipped away—an hour, another, and still Will stayed with me; for the strange adventure had knocked all desire for sleep out of him.

The third hour was three parts through when we heard again the sound of oars across the silent ocean.

'Listen!' said Will, a low note of excitement in his voice.

'He's coming, just as I thought,' I muttered.

The dipping of the oars grew nearer, and I noted that the strokes were firmer and longer. The food had been needed.

They came to a stop a little distance off the broadside,

and the strange voice came again to us through the darkness:

‘Schooner, ahoy!’

‘That you?’ asked Will.

‘Yes,’ replied the voice. ‘I left you suddenly, but—but there was great need.’

‘The lady?’ questioned Will.

‘The—lady is grateful now on earth. She will be more grateful soon in—in heaven.’

Will began to make some reply, in a puzzled voice, but became confused, and broke off short. I said nothing. I was wondering at the curious pauses, and apart from my wonder, I was full of a great sympathy.

The voice continued: ‘We—she and I, have talked, as we shared the result of God’s tenderness and yours—’

Will interposed, but without coherence.

‘I beg of you not to—to belittle your deed of Christian charity this night,’ said the voice. ‘Be sure that it has not escaped His notice.’

It stopped, and there was a full minute’s silence. Then it came again:

‘We have spoken together upon that which—which has befallen us. We had thought to go out, without telling anyone of the terror which has come into our—lives. She is with me in believing that tonight’s happenings are under a special ruling, and that it is God’s wish that we should tell to you all that we have suffered since—since—’

‘Yes?’ said Will softly.

‘Since the sinking of the *Albatross*.’

‘Ah!’ I exclaimed involuntarily. ‘She left Newcastle for ‘Frisco some six months ago, and hasn’t been heard of since.’

‘Yes’ answered the voice. ‘But some few degrees to the North of the line, she was caught in a terrible storm and dismantled. When the day came, it was found that she was leaking badly, and, presently, it falling to a calm, the sailors took to the boats, leaving—leaving a young lady—my fiancée—and myself upon the wreck.’

‘We were below, gathering together a few of our belongings, when they left. They were entirely callous, through fear, and when we came up upon the decks, we saw them only as small shapes afar off upon the horizon. Yet we did not despair, but set to work and constructed a small raft. Upon this we put such few matters as it would hold, including a quantity of water and some ship’s biscuit. Then, the vessel being very deep in the water, we got ourselves onto the raft and pushed off.’

‘It was later, when I observed that we seemed to be in the way of some tide or current, which bore us from the

ship at an angle; so that in the course of three hours, by my watch, her hull became invisible to our sight, her broken masts remaining in view for a somewhat longer period. Then, towards evening, it grew misty, and so through the night. The next day we were still encompassed by the mist, the weather remaining quiet.

‘For four days we drifted through this strange haze, until, on the evening of the fourth day, there grew upon our ears the murmur of breakers at a distance. Gradually it became plainer, and somewhat after midnight, it appeared to sound upon either hand at no very great space. The raft was raised upon a swell several times, and then we were in smooth water, and the noise of the breakers was behind.

‘When the morning came, we found that we were in a sort of great lagoon; but of this we noticed little at the time; for close before us, through the enshrouding mist, loomed the hull of a large sailing vessel. With one accord, we fell upon our knees and thanked God; for we thought that here was an end to our perils. We had much to learn.

‘The raft drew near to the ship, and we shouted on them to take us aboard; but none answered. Presently the raft touched against the side of the vessel, and seeing a rope hanging downwards, I seized it and began to climb. Yet I had much ado to make my way up, because of a kind of grey, lichenous fungus which had seized upon the rope, and which blotched the side of the ship lividly.

‘I reached the rail and clambered over it, on to the deck. Here I saw that the decks were covered, in great patches with grey masses, some of them rising into nodules several feet in height; but at the time I thought less of this matter than of the possibility of there being people aboard the ship. I shouted, but none answered. Then I went to the door below the poop deck. I opened it and peered in. There was a great smell of staleness, so that I knew in a moment that nothing living was within, and with the knowledge, I shut the door quickly; for I felt suddenly lonely.

‘I went back to the side where I had scrambled up. My—my sweetheart was still sitting quietly upon the raft. Seeing me look down, she called up to know whether there were any aboard of the ship. I replied that the vessel had the appearance of having been long deserted; but that if she would wait a little I would see whether there was anything in the shape of a ladder by which she could ascend to the deck. Then we would make a search through the vessel together. A little later, on the opposite side of the decks, I found a rope side ladder. This I carried across, and a minute afterwards she was beside me.

‘Together we explored the cabins and apartments in the after part of the ship; but nowhere was there any sign of life. Here and there within the cabins themselves, we came across odd patches of that queer fungus; but this, as my



sweetheart said, could be cleansed away.

‘In the end, having assured ourselves that the after portion of the vessel was empty, we picked our ways to the bows, between the ugly grey nodules of that strange growth; and here we made a further search, which told us that there was indeed none aboard but ourselves.

‘This being now beyond any doubt, we returned to the stern of the ship and proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Together we cleared out and cleaned two of the cabins; and after that I made examination whether there was anything eatable in the ship. This I soon found was so, and thanked God for His goodness. In addition to this I discovered a fresh-water pump, and having fixed it, I found the water drinkable, though somewhat unpleasant to the taste.

‘For several days we stayed aboard the ship, without attempting to get to the shore. We were busily engaged in making the place habitable. Yet even thus early we became aware that our lot was even less to be desired than might have been imagined; for though, as a first step, we scraped away the odd patches of growth that studded the floors and walls of the cabins and saloon, yet they returned almost to their original size within the space of twenty-four hours, which not only discouraged us but gave us a feeling of vague unease.

‘Still we would not admit ourselves beaten, so set to work afresh, and not only scraped away the fungus but

soaked the places where it had been, with carbolic, a canfull of which I had found in the pantry. Yet, by the end of the week the growth had returned in full strength, and in addition it had spread to other places, as though our touching it had allowed germs from it to travel elsewhere.

‘On the seventh morning, my sweetheart woke to find a small patch of it growing on her pillow, close to her face. At that, she came to me, as soon as she could get her garments upon her. I was in the galley at the time, lighting the fire for breakfast.

“Come here, John,” she said, and led me aft. When I saw the thing upon her pillow I shuddered, and then and there we agreed to go right out of the ship and see whether we could not fare to make ourselves more comfortable ashore.

‘Hurriedly we gathered together our few belongings, and even among these I found that the fungus had been at work; for one of her shawls had a little lump of it growing near one edge. I threw the whole thing over the side, without saying anything to her.

‘The raft was still alongside, but it was too clumsy to guide, and I lowered down a small boat that hung across the stern, and in this we made our way to the shore. Yet, as we drew near to it, I became gradually aware that here the vile fungus, which had driven us from the ship, was growing riot. In places it rose into horrible, fantastic mounds, which seemed almost to quiver, as with a quiet life, when the wind blew across them. Here and there it took on the

forms of vast fingers, and in others it just spread out flat and smooth and treacherous. Odd places, it appeared as grotesque stunted trees, seeming extraordinarily kinked and gnarled—the whole quaking vilely at times.

‘At first, it seemed to us that there was no single portion of the surrounding shore which was not hidden beneath the masses of the hideous lichen; yet, in this, I found we were mistaken; for somewhat later, coasting along the shore at a little distance, we descried a smooth white patch of what appeared to be fine sand, and there we landed. It was not sand. What it was I do not know. All that I have observed is that upon it the fungus will not grow; while everywhere else, save where the sand-like earth wanders oddly, path-wise, amid the grey desolation of the lichen, there is nothing but that loathsome greyness.

‘It is difficult to make you understand how cheered we were to find one place that was absolutely free from the growth, and here we deposited our belongings. Then we went back to the ship for such things as it seemed to us we should need. Among other matters, I managed to bring ashore with me one of the ship’s sails, with which I constructed two small tents, which, though exceedingly rough-shaped, served the purpose for which they were intended. In these we lived and stored our various necessities, and thus for a matter of some four weeks all went smoothly and without particular unhappiness. Indeed, I may say with much happiness—for—for we were together.

‘It was on the thumb of her right hand that the growth first showed. It was only a small circular spot, much like a little grey mole. My God! how the fear leapt to my heart when she showed me the place. We cleansed it, between us, washing it with carbolic and water. In the morning of the following day she showed her hand to me again. The grey warty thing had returned. For a little while we looked at one another in silence. Then, still wordless, we started again to remove it. In the midst of the operation she spoke suddenly.

“‘What’s that on the side of your face, dear?’” Her voice was sharp with anxiety. I put my hand up to feel.

“‘There! Under the hair by your ear. A little to the front a bit.’” My finger rested upon the place, and then I knew.

“‘Let us get your thumb done first,’” I said. And she submitted, only because she was afraid to touch me until it was cleansed. I finished washing and disinfecting her thumb, and then she turned to my face. After it was finished we sat together and talked awhile of many things for there had come into our lives sudden, very terrible thoughts. We were, all at once, afraid of something worse than death. We spoke of loading the boat with provisions and water and making our way out onto the sea; yet we were helpless, for many causes, and—and the growth had

attacked us already. We decided to stay. God would do with us what was His will. We would wait.

‘A month, two months, three months passed and the places grew somewhat, and there had come others. Yet we fought so strenuously with the fear that its headway was but slow, comparatively speaking.

‘Occasionally we ventured off to the ship for such stores as we needed. There we found that the fungus grew persistently. One of the nodules on the main deck soon became as high as my head.

‘We had now given up all thought or hope of leaving the island. We had realized that it would be unallowable to go among healthy humans, with the thing from which we were suffering.

‘With this determination and knowledge in our minds we knew that we should have to husband our food and water; for we did not know, at that time, but that we should possibly live for many years.

‘This reminds me that I have told you that I am an old man. Judged by years this is not so. But—but—’

He broke off, then continued somewhat abruptly:

‘As I was saying, we knew that we should have to use care in the matter of food. But we had no idea then how little food there was left of which to take care. It was a week later that I made the discovery that all the other bread tanks—which I had supposed full—were empty, and that (beyond odd tins of vegetables and meat, and some other matters) we had nothing on which to depend but the bread in the tank which I had already opened.

‘After learning this I bestirred myself to do what I could, and set to work at fishing in the lagoon; but with no success. At this I was somewhat inclined to feel desperate, until the thought came to me to try outside the lagoon, in the open sea.

‘Here, at times, I caught odd fish, but so infrequently that they proved of but little help in keeping us from the hunger which threatened.

‘It seemed to me that our deaths were likely to come by hunger, and not by the growth of the thing which had seized upon our bodies.

‘We were in this state of mind when the fourth month wore out. When I made a very horrible discovery. One morning, a little before midday, I came off from the ship with a portion of the biscuits which were left. In the mouth of her tent I saw my sweetheart sitting, eating something.

“‘What is it, my dear?’” I called out as I leapt ashore. Yet, on hearing my voice, she seemed confused, and turning, slyly threw something towards the edge of the little clearing. It fell short, and a vague suspicion having arisen within me, I walked across and picked it up. It was a piece

of the grey fungus.

'As I went to her with it in my hand, she turned deadly pale; then rose red.

'I felt strangely dazed and frightened.

"My dear! My dear!" I said, and could say no more. Yet at my words she broke down and cried bitterly. Gradually, as she calmed, I got from her the news that she had tried it the preceding day, and—and liked it. I got her to promise on her knees not to touch it again, however great our hunger. After she had promised, she told me that the desire for it had come suddenly, and that until the moment of desire, she had experienced nothing towards it but the most extreme repulsion.



'Later in the day, feeling strangely restless and much shaken with the thing which I had discovered, I made my way along one of the twisted paths—formed by the white, sand-like substance—which led among the fungoid growth. I had, once before, ventured along there, but not to any great distance. This time, being involved in perplexing thought, I went much farther than hitherto.

'Suddenly I was called to myself by a queer hoarse sound on my left. Turning quickly, I saw that there was movement among an extraordinarily shaped mass of fungus, close to my elbow. It was swaying uneasily, as though it possessed life of its own. Abruptly, as I stared, the thought came to me that the thing had a grotesque resemblance to the figure of a distorted human creature. Even as the fancy flashed into my brain, there was a slight, sickening noise of tearing, and I saw that one of the branch-like arms was detaching itself from the surrounding grey masses, and coming toward me. The head of the thing— a shapeless grey ball, inclined in my direction. I stood stupidly, and the vile arm brushed across my face. I gave out a frightened cry, and ran back a few paces. There was a sweetish taste upon my lips where the thing had touched me. I licked them, and was immediately filled with an inhuman desire. I turned and seized a mass of the fungus. Then more, and—more. I was

insatiable. In the midst of devouring, the remembrance of the morning's discovery swept into my amazed brain. It was sent by God. I dashed the fragment I held to the ground. Then, utterly wretched and feeling a dreadful guiltiness, I made my way back to the little encampment.

'I think she knew, by some marvellous intuition which love must have given, so soon as she set eyes on me. Her quiet sympathy made it easier for me, and I told her of my sudden weakness, yet omitted to mention the extraordinary thing which had gone before. I desired to spare her all unnecessary terror.

'But, for myself, I had added an intolerable knowledge, to breed an incessant terror in my brain; for I doubted not that I had seen the end of one of these men who had come to the island in the ship in the lagoon; and in that monstrous ending I had seen our own.

'Thereafter we kept from the abominable food, though the desire for it had entered into our blood. Yet our drear punishment was upon us; for, day by day, with monstrous rapidity, the fungoid growth took hold of our poor bodies. Nothing we could do would check it materially, and so—and so—we who had been human became—Well, it matters less each day. Only—only we had been man and maid!

'And day by day the fight is more dreadful, to withstand the hunger-lust for the terrible lichen.

'A week ago we ate the last of the biscuit, and since that time I have caught three fish. I was out here fishing tonight when your schooner drifted upon me out of the mist. I hailed you. You know the rest, and may God, out of His great heart, bless you for your goodness to a— a couple of poor outcast souls.'

There was the dip of an oar—another. Then the voice came again, and for the last time, sounding through the slight surrounding mist, ghostly and mournful.

'God bless you! Good-bye!'

'Good-bye,' we shouted together hoarsely, our hearts full of many emotions.

I glanced about me. I became aware that the dawn was upon us.

The sun flung a stray beam across the hidden sea, pierced the mist dully, and lit up the receding boat with a gloomy fire. Indistinctly I saw something nodding between the oars. I thought of a sponge—a great, grey nodding sponge— The oars continued to ply. They were grey—as was the boat—and my eyes searched a moment vainly for the conjunction of hand and oar. My gaze flashed back to the—head. It nodded forward as the oars went backward for the stroke. Then the oars were dipped, the boat shot out of the patch of light, and the—the thing went nodding into the mist.

Reviews

Included in this issue:

*Ripperland, American Jack,
The Face of Jack the Ripper and more*

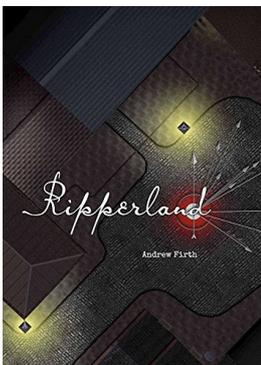
Unusually, this time round we have quite a few Jack the Ripper books and related titles for review, but the news has pretty much been dominated by the announcement that the so-called Maybrick diary was definitely found underneath some floorboards in the Maybrick home, Battlecrease House, where they've laid for many years. This caused something of a tizzy on both Casebook and JTR Forums; nobody knew what the evidence for this was, yet otherwise perfectly sane people vehemently argued that it couldn't be true. Other news was American Ripper. The 8-part television series on the History Channel touting H.H. Holmes as the Ripper, came to its rather predictable end – no really credible evidence emerged that Holmes was in Britain when the murders took place, a photo in a box allegedly having belonged to Holmes had a 64% match to a photo of Elizabeth Stride, except it wasn't a photo of Elizabeth Stride but a sometime dressmaker's model named Catherine who lived in Portsmouth. And if any of the claims made in the programme had Holmes turning in his grave, the exhumation certainly showed that's where he was.

But we've a lot to look forward to this issue, not least a much-awaited illustrated book by Andrew Firth, and, a surprise to me, a revamped and sprightly Whitechapel Society Journal.

PAUL BEGG

RIPPERLAND

Andrew Firth
Foreword by John Bennett
London: Mango Books, 2017
www.mangobooks.co.uk
hardcover
130pp; biblio
ISBN:978-1-911273-22-6
£25.00



Now, I know I'm mean. And I don't have too much cash to spare. When it comes to what I spend it on, I'm fairly careful. So, when I say that a book costing £25 is a must have, you can take it that I mean it.

Andrew Firth's *Ripperland* is a must have.

There are some provisos though. I'm not a big fan of coffee-table books. You know, those large, glossy books with loads of pictures that look really pretty but generally lack substance and are more for decoration than anything else? Well, an illustrated book has to have something about it that lifts it above the level of a coffee-table book.

Having said that, I like illustrated books and I have

reviewed quite a few over the years. I also have a particular fondness for the "then and now" collections which show how a place looked back in time – usually attractive and interesting - and how it looks today – usually demolished with a large and bleak road running through it.

Usually the "then and now" photographs are two photos side by side and the reader has to try and mentally superimpose the two. What sets Andrew Firth's book aside is that he has cleverly inserted a photograph of how the place used to look into a photo of the place today. If you haven't seen one of these montages – many have generously been put online – then I should explain that he hasn't just done a photo-in-photo job, he's matched the two images perfectly so that pavements, walls, roofs, and so on all match perfectly.

Apparently, this means going to the site, working out where the original photographer stood, and the angle at which the photograph was taken, and later matching the old with the new. I'm brilliant with a camera – brilliant at taking a really bad photograph – so to me Andrew Firth's montages are works of genius.

I used to say that a lot of Ripper folk look at the East End and see it as it used to be in 1888, usually they see it in black and white too! With Andrew Firth's montages, that becomes as real as it ever could be. And it can be shared.

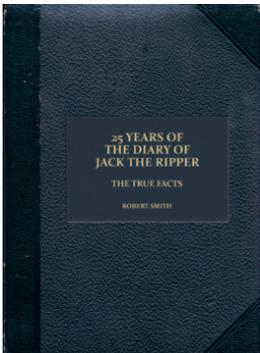
But my enthusiasm for Andrew Firth's photographic magic mustn't let me forget to mention that this is a reading book too, the illustrations being accompanied by an interesting and informative text.

And finally, as John Bennett says in his introduction, this book is also a record of how the East End is changing. Some of the "now" photographs will be "then" photographs in a few years time, buildings having been demolished, the skyline altered, and the look and feel totally changed. Mr Firth will have to produce a now and then and then book!

So, if you are into suspect theories or Victorian social history or big reading books, you might not think it worth investing your money in *Ripperland*, but if you would enjoy a comfy armchair; a big mug of tea (regularly replenished), and several hours looking at how the Victorian world fits into ours, *Ripperland* is definitely a must have.

25 YEARS OF THE DIARY OF JACK THE RIPPER: THE TRUE FACTS

Robert Smith
London: Mango Books, 2017
www.mangobooks.co.uk
hardcover
154pp; principal sources; acknowledgements; index.
Limited to 500 copies, signed and numbered by the author
£25.00



Warning! This book, which is a high-quality facsimile of the so-called Maybrick diary, is limited to 500 copies, signed by the author, and the last I heard it had sold out. So, there's a very good chance that you are currently reading about a book you already have, or you'll have to wait until they start creeping onto the second-hand market to

grab a copy.

The so-called Maybrick diary is guaranteed to raise temperatures and hackles, and usually among those who believe it is a "modern" (post-1988) forgery. Which seems odd to me, because you'd expect those who are certain it's a fake to settle back, put their feet up, and leave people who think otherwise to defend their lost cause. Maybe it's just the frustration of not being able to make people see what they can see so clearly themselves? But I guess that's the bug that gets into so many theorists.

I suspect that this book will have been bought by people who are a more flexible in their thinking about the origins of the diary. This book is primarily a high-quality facsimile of the diary. Having seen the original many times, I can honestly say that it's probably about the closest you'll get

to seeing the real thing. It's reproduced on glossy paper, of course, whereas the paper of the original is thick, rough, and cheaply made, but otherwise it shows the writing clearly and legibly. There's a transcript too.

This isn't wholly new. The diary was reproduced in Shirley Harrison's book, which also contained a transcript, so you don't really have to drop a pile of dosh for this edition. But if you'd like a copy as close to the original as possible, then this is the best you'll probably ever get. The transcript in Shirley's book also contained spelling and punctuation "errors" and these have been corrected here.

The text is also fully annotated, which sets what the diary says in context, as far as possible, and explains what the diarist is talking about.

The shortest part of the book is Robert Smith's text, an introduction followed by four chapters: The Physical and Scientific Evidence, Michael and Anne Barrett, The Diary's Provenance, and Controversial. For many the most important and likely the most discussed of these will be the provenance, including as it does the story of the electricians.

Like it or not, the diary is one of the most controversial artefacts in Ripper history, a significant part of Ripper studies over the past quarter century, spawning several books, a documentary, millions of words on message boards, and quite a bit of ill-feeling. If you want a copy of what the fuss was all about, this is the book you either have or will be kicking yourself for not ordering. The quality of the facsimile is excellent and you probably won't get to see it this good anytime soon. The transcript and the annotations are particularly valuable, and Robert Smith's text is honest and informative. If you want a facsimile of a little bit of history, this is a must have.

AMERICAN JACK: JACK THE RIPPER AND THE UNITED STATES

Simon Webb
The Langley Press, 2017
tinyurl.co.lpdirect
softcover & ebook
164pp; biblio
ISBN:197397830X
softcover £6.91, ebook £2.30

How many associations can you make off the top of your head between Jack the Ripper and the United States? I must confess that my immediate thoughts produced a rag-bag that numbered three: that practitioner of herbal medicine, Francis Tumblety, of course. Then I thought of the unidentified Philadelphia doctor whose alleged need for uteri to accompany a book he's written may have inspired the murderer, or so voiced coroner Wynne Baxter.

**AMERICAN
JACK**
JACK THE RIPPER
AND THE
UNITED STATES
SIMON WEBB



And not a bad idea, but one that has been misunderstood and caused Baxter to be ridiculed ever since. And finally I thought of the Chicago Whitechapel Club that may or may not have been responsible for the famous story about psychic Robert Lees and the insane doctor, and all the implications and ramifications arising therefrom.

It's strange how the mind works. For a few seconds though I couldn't think of anything else. Then a ramshackle train of thought rattled through my mind, as I suspect a similar one must have passed through Simon Webb's, leading to a list that became surprisingly long.

The list includes the aforementioned Francis Tumblety, then Arbie La Bruckman, George Chapman, Dr Thomas Neill Cream, Jack Gibson (identified as Jack the Ripper by Robert Graysmith in *The Bell Tower*), H.H. Holmes (real name Herman Webster Mudgett and absent from Webb's book; I bet he's kicking himself over that moment of forgetfulness), James Kelly (who, mad as a box of frogs, murdered his wife and was committed to Broadmoor, from which he escaped and fled to America, where he managed to live a comparatively normal life), James Maybrick, and Donston Stephenson.

Then there's Buffalo Bill, Mexican Joe, some Indians (or Native Americans as I'm told we should call them), and Colorado Charley, a real-life cowboy who really did come under suspicion of being Jack, although he's not mentioned by Simon Webb. Another omission – deservedly, as it's about as likely as Jack being the Loch Ness Monster – is Thomas 'Boston' Corbett, the chap who shot the assassin of Abraham Lincoln. He was another madman who escaped from an asylum – Corbett, I mean, not Lincoln – vanishing in 1888.

I don't mean to mention the names omitted from Webb's book, it's just that when you start thinking about American connections – the Servant Girl Annihilator is another (it's in the book; Shirley Harrison suggested that it may have been James Maybrick!) – it's amazing how many you come up with.

Simon Webb writes lightly and with humour, and there's nothing deep here, but it's an enjoyable and short enough read for the lightweight concept not to become boring. There is some very stiff competition for your spare cash this time round, but if you are happy with the ebook then it's modestly priced at about the cost of a coffee-shop latte, so I recommend that you save the waistline and have

a read instead.

JACK THE RIPPER (HISTORY'S WORST)

Michael Burgan

New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2017

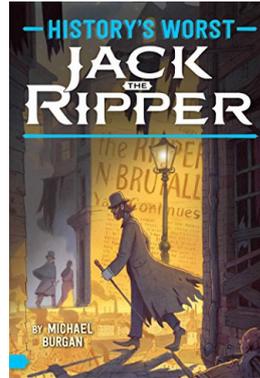
www.simonandschuster.com/kids

hardcover, softcover & ebook

198pp; timeline; notes; glossary; further reading; recommended websites; select biblio

ISBN: 978-1-4814-7945-5

hardcover £14.75, softcover £6.21, ebook £4.99



I think it must be very difficult to write a book about Jack the Ripper for young people. Not only is there the problem of discussing disembowelment, mutilation, murder, prostitution, and the grim realities of East End life in Victorian Britain, but there is getting the balance right between describing the crimes and running the risk of glamorising Jack the Ripper as someone who outfoxed the police and became an international man (or woman) of mystery.

As far as I recall, everyone who has undertaken the task has done so very well, including Michael Burgan, who has written a refreshingly clear and balanced account of the crimes and the tireless and generally tiresome theorising about Jack's identity. Tough as it was, Burgan clearly likes a challenge, having launched the series called "Histories Worst" with a book about Adolf Hitler!

The book pretty much follows the traditional pattern, first discussing the crimes and then the suspects, but with enjoyable diversions here and there to take a very brief look at topics as varied as the use of bloodhounds to London fog.

The book plunges into the murder of Polly Nichols without preamble. The details of the injuries are kept to a minimum. The second chapter has a brief look at the East End - the book is written primarily for an American audience, so it explains that London is the capital of Great Britain, and that Great Britain is composed of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. This doesn't happen too often. It then discusses the earlier murder of Miriam Angel by Israel Lipski – soon to be the subject of a book launching the very exciting re-birth of the Notable British Trials series – before returning to the murder of Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddwes, and Mary Kelly.

Throughout the book certain words are highlighted,

which means that their meaning is explained in the glossary. The ebook doesn't need this, of course, as you can define every word as you read.

The examination of the suspects begins with a look at Thomas Cutbush, arguably the earliest named suspect, and moves on to the Macnaghten memorandum and the three suspects named therein, Druitt, Kosminski and Ostrog. Other suspects examined include George Chapman, "Jill the Ripper", the Royal conspiracy, Dr. Tumblety, and James Maybrick. Burgen moves briefly to look at Jack in fiction and films, before returning to look at some of the sillier of the more recent theories, such as Jose Luis Abad's theory that the Ripper was Inspector Abberline, Trevor Marriott's now apparently withdrawn theory that the murderer was Carl Feigenbaum, Wynne Weston-Davies theory that the Ripper was Francis Spurzheim Craig, and Bruce Robinson's heavyweight thoughts about Michael Maybrick.

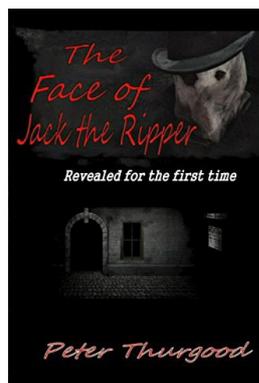
There are quite a few minor errors, such as repeating what appears to be a canard that Thomas Cutbush was the nephew of Superintendent Charles Cutbush, describing Montague Druitt as the "headmaster of a private school that helped boys with bad grades prepare for exams". Druitt, of course, wasn't the headmaster – that was Mr Valentine. He also writes that Kosminski "was actually released in 1894", rather confusingly adding, "although he went to another facility for the mentally ill". Kosminski wasn't "released", but was transferred from one asylum to another

Michael Burgen has made extensive use of Casebook: Jack the Ripper, which is a fantastic resource for material like transcripts of the inquests and press reports about the crimes, but he also appears to have balanced this by reading a good many of the books, so overall he gives a pretty solid foundation of the case for young adults.

THE FACE OF JACK THE RIPPER: REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME

Peter Thurgood
Independently published, 2017
softcover & ebook
199pp;
ISBN:1549514865
softcover £9.95, ebook £5.00

I often wonder why anyone writes a book about Jack the Ripper, especially when they don't have anything to add to the subject. And so few do. Is it because they are interested in the subject and just want to add another to the 200 or so we already have? Or is it because they see a book about Jack as a potential money-spinner no matter what it contains? And then they look for a hook on which to hang a standard narrative, such as offering yet



another theory or questioning some piece of long-accepted evidence?

I asked myself this question for the umpteenth time as I read through Peter Thurgood's book. Now...

Spoiler Alert! If you don't want to know who Peter Thurgood thinks was Jack the Ripper, go to the next review.

Now!

Still here?

On 10 September 1888 a group of concerned businessmen and ratepayers met at The Crown, a pub in the Mile End Road, with a view to doing something about the murders. Sixteen men formed a committee and a painter and decorator named George Akin Lusk was appointed president.

Mr. Lusk, whose photo, looking every part the dapper businessman, I was able to publish for the first time back in 1988, is the man Peter Thurgood proposes as Jack the Ripper. "No other suspect in the last 129 years comes even close to Lusk," writes Mr Thurgood.

Really?

In some respects Lusk is not a bad candidate – nobody would have batted an eyelid if they'd seen him out on the streets late at night, and if he was found lurking down a dark passage, well, that was his job. And he would have been known to the local prostitutes and probably been trusted by them.

Or would he? Did Lusk go out on the streets. He seems the timid sort, alarmed by the boxed piece of kidney that arrived in his mail. Assuming he didn't send it to himself, as Thurgood implies. But even if we accept that he was out on the streets, peering into and out of dark alleys, and nodding to the ladies of the night, the theory seems to go downhill. There's no motive. Peter Thurgood tries to give one to Lusk, but it's made up.

Thurgood appears to get carried away with his narrative at times, such as when he describes George Lusk's emotions in March 1888 when his wife Susannah died: "Lusk was grief-stricken; what would he do - how would he cope without the love of his life, the woman who had shared the last 25 years with him and helped raise their beautiful family together?"

Lusk probably was grief-stricken, Susannah may have been the love of his life, and he may have looked at a bleak future, but how does Peter Thurgood know? He doesn't cite any source, so I guess it's just imagined to add a little

colour and perhaps pad out a rather thin scenario. And it starts to irritate when Mr Thurgood very briefly explains what men talked about in pubs and claims that the “big news” was the attack on Emma Smith. In fact, there is no reason to think this incident was widely known about, let alone that it was the topic of the day, and I suspect that it is Mr Thurgood daubing the colour again. He overloaded his brush, however, when he explained that the consensus of opinion blamed foreigners, but Lusk argued in favour of a gang. He has no idea what Mr Lusk thought about the death of Emma Smith, or even that he gave her death much thought at all.

And it is in this vein that Mr Thurgood suggests that George Akin Lusk lost his faith in God. God had taken Lusk’s beloved Suzannah, God had forsaken Mr Lusk himself, and so it was that Lusk exacted his terrible revenge. But it’s all supposition. In fact, it’s probably all imagination.

No notes, no sources, no bibliography, no index. And the face of Jack the Ripper is only revealed metaphorically – no illustrations. And as far as I am concerned, no sense.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JACK THE RIPPER: YOU PLAY DETECTIVE TO REVEAL THE REAL KILLER

Alan Robson

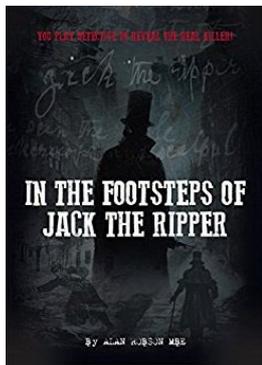
London: Britain’s Next Bestseller, 2017

www.bnbsbooks.co.uk

ebook

111pp

£2.99



The trouble with an ebook is that you can’t put it to good use when the last sheets of Andrex come free from the roll and you’ve forgotten to buy more.

This book is bad. Really bad. I’m used to the amateurish twaddle some people serve up in Ripper books. There’s not a lot that causes me to shake my head in utter disbelief, but I did at this book. I may even have uttered a squeaky, girly giggle of semi-hysteria. In my head, of course. Or at least I hope so.

Robson tells us that Montague Drutt “loved sex with prostitutes” - which is not something often said about Drutt, who was dismissed from a boys school for a serious offence and is therefore often described as a homosexual and child molester — and that his “vigorous and violent sex acts with them included sodomy and choking, which brought him to the attention of the police.” Robson also tells us that the “only evidence against him were a set of faked documents, created by a journalist.”

How wrong is it possible to get?

“The police believed the killer had to be a doctor, nothing could sway them until the name of William Bury fell across their desk...”

That’s news to me. I don’t think anyone knows who the police believed was the murderer, but Bury doesn’t seem to have loomed large on the guilt horizon

Walter Sickert was a suspect because he was in the same Masonic Lodge as Sir William Gull, lived next door to a vet, and went walking late at night.

Did everyone who lived next door to a vet get suspected?

Or who went for a late night stroll?

I wondered who the faintly theatrical sounding Frederick Downing was. Then I realised Robson meant Frederick Deeming.

Inspector Abberline thought James Kenneth Stephen and Montague Drutt worked together...

“Over the years we have watched countless movies all claiming to reveal the killer..”

There haven’t been “countless” movies about Jack the Ripper and those that try to offer a real solution to the mystery of the killer’s identity can probably be counted on the fingers of Captain Hook’s right hand.

Robson says that an unnamed woman, supposedly the lover of Dr Roslyn D’Onston claimed to have found a box of blood-stained ties belonging to him and told the newspapers that he admitted to having chloroformed his victims and cut

their throats from behind. Also, Robson says, the police “admitted that the journalist had told them she had been created to give credence to a theory.”

Robson doesn’t tell us who this journalist was or if he does I missed it, but I assume it’s George Marsh, who along

with Inspector Roots and the story found by Stephen Knight in the case papers at Scotland Yard, is otherwise unmentioned. The woman’s name was Mabel Collins, and was not unknown at all, and neither Marsh nor Donston nor any other journalist told the police she’d been “created” to sell a theory.

This book has 33 chapters in 111 pages and every page probably contains an error, probably more than one, and often a gross one. I’m baffled that anyone could possibly have done any research on the Ripper and understood so little. This travesty is supposed to be the first of a series that will include titles on Robin Hood, King Arthur and Adolf Hitler. I can’t wait to see how Robson screws those up.

Actually, I can wait. I can wait a very long time.

WHITECHAPEL SOCIETY JOURNAL

Edited by Samantha Hulass
 Membership Manager: Susan Parry susanparry@hotmail.com
 www.whitechapelociety.com

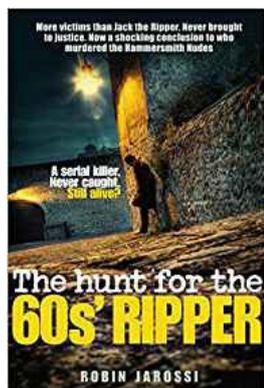
There aren't many journals dedicated to the subject of Jack the Ripper and related topics. In fact there's *Ripperologist* and the *Whitechapel Society Journal*. The latter was born when the former parted company from the Cloak & Dagger Club, as the Whitechapel Society then was, to become an independent publication. It's kind of frightening to me, therefore, to see that the *Journal* has reached its 75th issue!

Not only that, it has a new editor and has undergone a revamp with a somewhat period front cover and some new and interesting content, two notable articles being "The Cooneys of Spitalfields and Marie Lloyd" by Rowan Lennon, and "Dr Forbes Winslow and the Drowned Doctor Theory" by Wolf Vanderlinden. Other contributors include Joe Chetcuti, Rosie Loffredo, Ian Parsons, Ed Stow and Amanda Harvey Purse.

The *Whitechapel Society Journal* has been looking a little tired for a while, so this revamp was needed, and it looks pretty good. Exciting issues ahead, I hope.

THE HUNT FOR THE 60s RIPPER

Robin Jarossi
 London: Mirror Books, 2017
 www.mirrorbooks.co.uk
 www.robinjarossi.com
 softcover & ebook
 283pp; illus (some colour); sources
 ISBN:1907324659
 softcover £7.99 & ebook £3.85



On the north-side of the River Thames, where it bends at Chiswick, is Duke's Meadow, a pleasantly tranquil parkland around which a police car designated Foxtrot 4 was routinely patrolling on 17 June 1959. There were three policemen inside, P.C. Mills was driving, and as the car approached the towpath alongside the river he spotted a woman's bare legs protruding around the trunk of a willow tree. Her name was Elizabeth Figg. She was a prostitute. And she had been murdered.

On 8 November 1963, another prostitute was found murdered. Gwynneth Rees' body had been left at a rubbish dump run by Barnes Borough Council in Mortlake. This was about one mile from Duke's Meadow and close to the same Thames towpath.

Almost three months later, on 2 February 1964, the body of another prostitute, Hannah Tailford, was found murdered, again the body being found on the Thames foreshore. By 16 February 1965 there had been five more prostitute murders, the victims were Irene Lockwood, Helen Barthelemy, Mary Flemming, Margaret McGowan, and Bridget O'Hara.

The murders were called the Hammersmith Nudes Murders and the murderer was dubbed Jack the Stripper. The murderer was never caught, although a number of suspects have been advanced over the years. Chief Superintendent John Du Rose, a very well-respected detective into whose hands the investigation was put, in later years voiced his belief that the killer was a man named Mungo Ireland. A number of the victims bore flecks of a spray paint used at the Heron Industrial Estate, where Ireland was a security guard. He committed suicide and the murders ceased. In recent years research has suggested that Ireland may have been away from London when the murder was committed.

Speculation has sometimes got out of hand, one highly unlikely suspect seriously advanced was Superintendent Tommy Butler, who headed the Flying Squad at Scotland Yard. Persistent rumors also circulated about light-heavyweight boxing champion and entertainer Freddie Mills, who shot himself in 1965. (*The Secret Life of Freddie Mills: National Hero. Boxing Champion. Serial Killer* by Michael Litchfield has just been published by Blake, and Pitch Publishing has brought out *Fearless Freddie: The Life and Times of Freddie Mills* by Chris Evans. Both will be reviewed in the next *Rip*, but if you're interested in the life and death of Freddie Mills you can get them now).

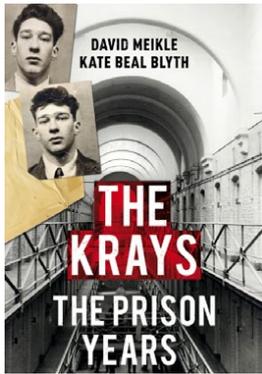
The story of the Nudes murders and the arguments for and against the various suspects has been recited many times, notably in David Seabrook's *Jack of Jumps* (2006) and Dick Kirby's *Laid Bare: The Nude Murders and the Hunt for Jack the Stripper* (2016) (see *Ripperologist*, 152, October 2016, for a review), and frankly Robin Jarossi doesn't really bring anything new to the table. What he does do, however, is to give you a readable and reliable introduction to the subject.

It's a real story of the '60s. Prostitution was rife and highly visible, as was crime, and the "Swinging Sixties" had a deeply sordid side that bubbled to the surface with the Profumo Affair. The Stripper's victims were women who had sunk into the depths of that world and to be brutally honest it's very difficult to treat sympathetically. Jarossi manages to do this, or at least he does a better job of it than one or two of his predecessors. Otherwise, Jarossi keeps up the pace and tells the story well, concluding that the police were simply overwhelmed by the amount

of information generated and possibly hindered by the murderer being one of their own! The softcover is available at a seriously discounted price on Amazon.

THE KRAYS: THE PRISON YEARS

David Meikle and Kate Beal Blyth
 Century (2017)
 ISBN-10: 1780896832
 ISBN-13: 978-1780896830
 Hardback: 384 pages
 £12.99



This is not the first book devoted to the Krays' lives in jail, having been preceded by works from Robin McGibbon in 2011 and Steve Wraith and Stuart Wheatman in 2015, but this aspect of the twins' legendary lives is one of the less frequently covered, no doubt due to the limitations of access during their incarceration. Nonetheless, for a

complete overview of their lives, such an examination is necessary.

The Krays: The Prison Years is a satisfying look at the twins' lives behind bars, written in an easy, informal style common to most books in the genre. Dwelling only briefly with their activities before they received their life sentences in 1969 (strangely devoting much time to the murder of Jack McVitie) the book is at its best when devoting itself to the subject in hand. It reveals a very vulnerable Krays, subjected to all the rigours of the prison system, in some ways stripping them of the image of the powerful and intimidating crime overlords we have always been told about. The authors do not flinch when it comes to regaling the reader of the real horrors of life in maximum security prisons, and the twins fell foul of it all. Tales of violence and abuse reveal that Reg and Ron, despite numerous concessions made to them whilst inside, did not always have it easy. Interviews with friends who visited them regularly show that, despite their lack of freedom, they tried hard to maintain their business interests and their integrity within the system, exposing their drive to survive against all odds.

Naturally, there are lighter touches, especially in regards to Ron, whose strange behaviour and quirky humour was still intact, particularly during his years in Broadmoor, and this makes for a balanced account, which also fascinates with its insight into the twins' characters and how they coped with the possibility of never living free lives again.

All in all, this is an accessible and rewarding portrayal of a relatively obscure part of the Krays' history which,

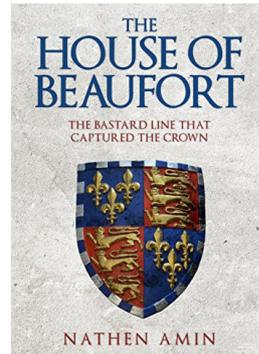
when one thinks about it, consisted of nearly half of their eventful lives. Recommended.

Review by John Bennett

THE HOUSE OF BEAUFORT:

THE BASTARD LINE THAT CAPTURED THE CROWN

Nathen Amin
 Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2017
 hardcover & ebook
 467pp;
 ISBN:
 hardcover £20, ebook £13.60



The fourteen-year-old boy was safely aboard the small ship, the coastline of south-west Wales receding as the vessel drew out to sea. It was a frail safety and for the rest of his life he would never rest easy, for the threat of harm and death would be very real and ever present. His name was Henry.

The events that put young Henry on that ship pulling away from Tenby harbour had their beginning in a royal wedding. When King Edward III married his teenage bride, Philippa of Hainault - not the stop on the Central Line in North East London but the province in Belgium - the retinue that accompanied Phillipa included a man called Paon de Roet.

He's pretty much a man of mystery, apart from the fact that he had three daughters: Isabel, a nun and in due course the Canoness of a convent in Hainaut. Philippa, who married Geoffrey Chaucer, who penned the Canterbury Tales. And Katherine, who married a knight named Hugh Swynford, had two or three children by him, and was appointed governess to daughters of John of Gaunt, King Edward III's third son. Katherine got on a little too well with John of Gaunt and they had four children (John, Henry, Thomas, and Joan), all being born on the wrong side of the duvet, they were all illegitimate, although John and Katherine would one day marry and the children would be legitimised.

Oddly enough, John of Gaunt (he was born in Ghent, hence the name) may not have been legitimate either. Funnily enough, when I briefly took my nose from *The House of Beaufort* it was to be with Professor Turi King. Turi led the team of geneticists at Leicester University which confirmed that the remains of the body buried in the car park were those of the body of Richard III. You may recall that it emerged that there looked like there might have been a break in the genetic links between John of Gaunt and Richard III, and Turi was widely quoted as

saying that “If, and it is a very big if” that’s where the break lay “historians could theoretically ask questions about the inheritance of a number of Plantagenet monarchs.” If that is where the break lay, then eye’s looked at John of Gaunt being illegitimate, evidence, perhaps, that Philippa of Hainault wasn’t adverse to a little extra-marital rumpty-tumpty either.

Anyway, the thing is that the eldest offspring of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford, John, became 1st Earl of Somerset, and had a son, also called John, who became 1st Duke of Somerset, and he had a daughter name Margaret. Margaret married four times. She was only a child when married to her first husband and a mere twelve years old when she married her second, the half-brother of King Henry VI, Edmund Tudor. She quickly became pregnant, but was widowed before the child was born when Edmund died from the plague then sweeping the country. Margaret gave birth to his son. The boy was named Henry and he was that young teenager sailing from Tenby.

He would return. It would be his army that would defeat that of Richard III and who would unceremoniously dump his body in the hole that would one day be covered by a car park. He would be Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor dynasty, whose number included Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

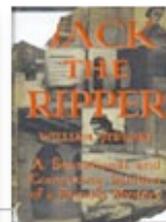
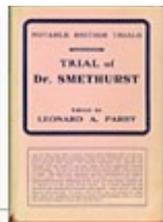
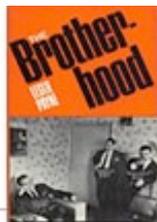
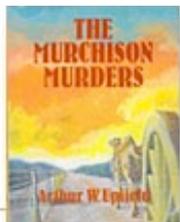
The convoluted story of the Beauforts, from their beginnings with Paon de Roet to Henry Tudor, is the subject of this book by Nathen Amin, who amongst other things is the founder of the Henry Tudor Society, a challenge to the more famous Ricardians.

It’s not a light-weight story, and I am a very, very long way from being knowledgeable about this period of history, which is about a 1,000-years ahead of my comfort zone, but I am reliably informed that Nathen Amin knows his stuff. Certainly, this book seems to have been thoroughly researched, the evidence carefully assessed, and the conclusions cautiously reached. He’s managed to pull together the threads of a complex story and present it in an understandable and, I must say, a thoroughly entertaining way.

Tudor history is very popular right now, maybe inspired by the discovery of Richard III’s remains, maybe by the popularity of Hilary Mantel’s *Wolf Hall* (or not, as Ms Mantell might say), so if you can squeeze one book on the Tudors into your busy Ripper-reading schedule, this one should be it. And if you search around you’ll find some discounts on the cover price too! There’s really no excuse not to make *The House of Beaufort* your “proper history” reading.

All reviews by Paul Begg except “The Krays: The Prison Years”

Loretta Lay
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Fiction Reviews

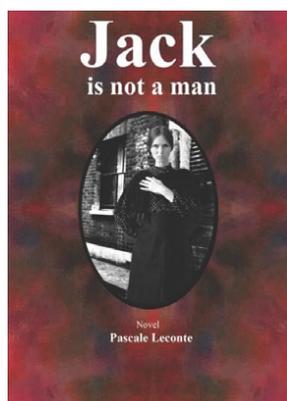
By DAVID GREEN

Included in this issue:

Jack Is Not A Man, Broken Window, The Whitechapel Midwife and more

JACK IS NOT A MAN

Pascale Leconte and Laurent Thompson
Owl Hollow Press, 2017
ISBN-10: 194565404X
Paperback, 292pp
£11.62



Here at last is an English language edition of Pascale Leconte's 2014 novel about Florence Maybrick and the Jack the Ripper murders, nicely timed to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the publication of Shirley Harrison's *The Diary of Jack the Ripper*.

Jack Is Not A Man starts out as historical biography, recounting the courtship and the unhappy marriage between Florence Chandler and James Maybrick. By degrees, though, the plot turns violent, blood-drenched, and sickening. There are decapitated chickens; corsets and dresses are slashed with scissors. In a flashback we see Florence as a child being sexually molested by her stepfather, the Baron von Roques. We see her being strangled by her husband. There are fantasies of tearing babies from the womb and feeding them to the hounds. She christens her new bay horse 'Haemo' (short for haemorrhage), which made me laugh (but nervously).

Florie disguises herself as a maid so that she can secretly follow her husband on his supposed business trips into the East End. There she spies him consorting with Mary Jane Kelly, and that evening, incandescent with rage, she begins jotting down her private thoughts into a Victorian scrapbook. Gradually, her mind turns to murder, and Florence's narrative merges with the text of the Ripper Diary and with the legend of Jack the Ripper.

It's a rather gloomy work, like the interior of the Paris

bookshop where the novel opens and closes. 'Entertaining' is hardly the best word for it. It will make you wince, which is perhaps not a bad thing in a novel dealing with serial murder. In places it is so self-consciously outrageous you can almost hear the author jeering in the background as she offends good taste. Pascale Leconte has a habit of staring at battlefield casualties long after other writers would have turned away.

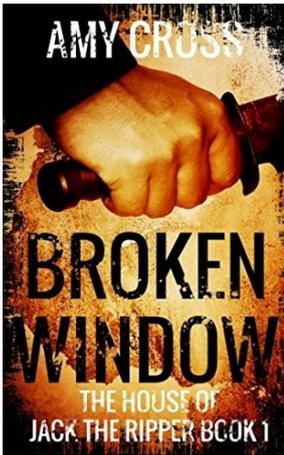
Readers who have already dirtied their hands delving around in the innards of the Ripper Diary are perhaps best placed to appreciate the author's scheme. She has merged fake news with biography, true crime with fantasy, to produce a strange, searching novel that explores the meaning of identity and the nature of innocence and guilt. It's not a Ripper novel as such, but a reconstruction of a life that straddles both fiction and nonfiction genres. Towards the end the author explains that this whole business – the Maybrick story, the Jack the Ripper murders – is essentially a saga about women: Florence Maybrick, the murder victims, Anne Graham, Nurse Yapp, Jill the Ripper. And, of course, Pascale Leconte.

BROKEN WINDOW

(THE HOUSE OF JACK THE RIPPER BOOK ONE)

Amy Cross
2017
Kindle Edition, 202pp
£0.99

Broken Window is the first volume in a new horror story series titled *The House of Jack the Ripper*. The house in question is No. 9 Cathmore Street in Whitechapel, an abandoned three-storey Victorian townhouse with boarded-up windows and an over-grown front garden. It has such an evil reputation even squatters won't go near the place. Yet one dark and stormy evening homeless teenager Maddie Harper opts to take refuge in the house and crawls inside through a broken window round the back.



The house is full of richly unsettling material – creaking floorboards, scurrying rats, doors that open without human agency, and bells that sound mysteriously from upstairs rooms. In the basement there is an old operating theatre, and in one of the bedrooms she finds a stash of tattered papers and notebooks (with diagrams) detailing gruesome medical

procedures. The remnant of something nasty, at least a century old, still lingers in the property.

Meanwhile, in alternating chapters, we learn that the house was once the residence of Jack the Ripper. He is Dr Charles Grazier, a retired surgeon, who ventures out at night into Whitechapel to slaughter prostitutes in order to harvest their organs for transplant into his dying wife. We watch as he manacles his wife into a wheelchair and takes her down into the basement theatre for emergency surgery...

Broken Window may not be entirely suitable as bedtime reading. Amy Cross has crafted a superior horror tale which inflicts its macabre and creepy effects without restraint. It is abundant in grisly incidents, and timid readers need to be warned that things are only going to get worse (i.e. scarier, more ghastly, even bloodier) in later volumes. *Book One* ends in spectacular style with a ferocious twist I didn't see coming.

This is a series definitely worth following.

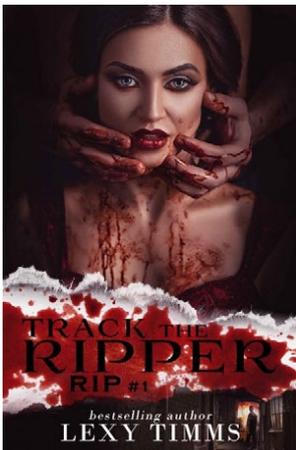
TRACK THE RIPPER

Lexy Timms

2017

Kindle Edition, 213pp

£0.99



Lexy Timms is an American author best known for her erotic romance and historical fantasy novels. Her books are full of bad boy cage fighters, panty-melting motorcycle leaders, hunky firefighters, and playboy bosses. Occasionally, she'll turn her hand to hospital love stories.

Now she offers a medical soap opera of a different kind. She has written a trilogy of Jack the Ripper themed

novels (the RIP series) that are being marketed (slightly misleadingly) as 'paranormal murder mystery romances'. I approached the first volume rather cautiously, but I was quickly won over by this compelling and highly original detective story.

Set in 2017 in an alternate London, *Track the Ripper* offers an exciting fusion of noir thriller, near-future science fiction and supernatural horror. While the style and the décor may remind you at times of *Hill Street Blues*, the novel's descriptions of the sordid underbelly or East London low-life mark this out as taut study of sexual distress and violence.

The East Edge is a sprawling, rotten district of butcher shops and high-rise apartment buildings that have been gutted and turned into opium dens. The pubs are dim and smoky, lit only by candles because electricity is too expensive. Surveillance helicopters patrol the skies, and police officers use a voice-activated knowledge database called Blue. Out of this off-kilter metropolis crawls Jack the Ripper. So far he has struck three times – Emma Smiley, Martha Taberm, and now Mary Nickels – and his crimes are becoming increasingly bestial. Terrible rumours pullulate through the slums of Whitechapel telling of a race of creatures – half-man, half-animal, part human, part wolf or dog – dwelling in the basements of the city.

Inspector Frank Abberline is assigned to the case, teaming up with rookie PC John Thain and Inspector Spratling.

The novel teems with well-drawn characters. There is Blazarius, the chain-smoking serial arsonist, who sets fire to the London docks on the night Mary Nickels is murdered; a gaunt and very creepy Dr Llewelyn who works only at night and always in the morgue; a morbidly obese slaughterman called Leather Chest. Mary Kelly put her knowledge of Japanese rope bondage and erotic macramé to good use in a number of intriguing ways. There is a cameo by 'Ivan' Lipski who we first meet passed out under the bed from alcohol.

Beautifully written, smart and well-researched, this is a remarkable cross-genre novel that impressed me deeply. Happily, the series continues over two further novels, and I can't wait to get back to the grim streets of East Edge.

THE WHITECHAPEL MIDWIFE

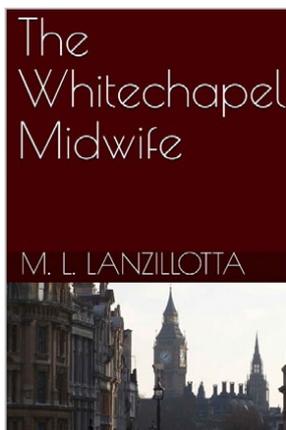
M.L. Lanzillotta

2017

Kindle Edition, 5pp

£0.99

Here's a short sharp shocker about a midwife abortionist working among the poor in Whitechapel. A spoonful of laudanum, a few slashes of the surgeon's



knife, and another unborn baby is spared entry into the cruel world. Until a botched operation on Mary Ann Nichols results in carnage, and a new vocation is inspired...

Coming in at fewer than 800 words, this bloodthirsty little horror tale barely gets to introduce Jill the Ripper before the curtain falls. There's just enough time

for the heart to miss a beat and for the sickening stench of death to pervade the room. I don't know anything at all about the author, but she has produced something unsettling and rather sinister.

1888 – THE RIPPER FILE

Lora Edwards

Purple Press, 2017

Kindle Edition, 246pp

£0.99



Teagan Faelyn lectures on the Whitechapel Murders at Duke University. When her grandfather discovers a never-before-seen journal written by Jack the Ripper in a dusty old box in the basement of the British Museum, she journeys to London to investigate the artefact. But things don't go according to plan. She learns that her mother is a witch and her father heir to the Faery

Throne; she is inculcated into a secret organisation, the Paranormal Research and Rescue Institute, and travels back in time to put a stop to a rogue supernatural entity who has knocked off Montague Druiitt and intends on murdering prostitutes.

1888 – The Ripper File is crowded with witches and dragons, unicorns, vampires, and Valkyries. While it's competently written, I found the whole thing inane and vacuous. A romance between Teagan and a fellow agent struck me as contrived and predictable. At one point, during the height of the Ripper scare, Teagan and a friend from the Institute spend a girls' night in scoffing mint chocolates and watching *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* on a flat-screen TV. I think that tells you all you need to know about this novel. *1888 – The Ripper File* should be put at the back of the filing cabinet.

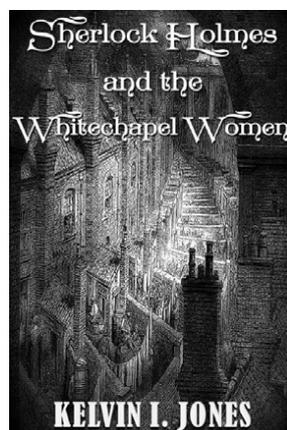
SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE WHITECHAPEL WOMEN

Kelvin I Jones

2017

Kindle Edition, 218pp

£2.30



Kelvin Jones is the author of the Inspector Ketch series of detective stories set in and around Cromer on the Norfolk coast. He has also written several novels featuring Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, and a nonfiction study of Conan Doyle's career as a psychic investigator.

Sherlock Holmes and the Whitechapel Women pits the

famous consulting detective against the infamous serial killer. Of course, these adversaries have met many times before, most recently in Mark Sohn's novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Whitechapel Murders* (reviewed in *Ripperologist* 155). Does Kelvin Jones bring anything new to the story?

He's written a sort of cross between John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* and 'A Study in Scarlet'. It's the kind of book which in the 1970s might have been mailed to you under plain cover from Forest Gate. The novel throbs away like an old war wound or a pervert's cock. The reader gets to visit the knocking shops in the old city of Peshawar, the velvet-curtained torture rooms at 19 Cleveland Street, and the headmaster's study at Grimstoke Towers where naughty schoolgirls regularly get a sound flogging. I think it's fair to say that most of the characters in this novel end up with their backsides reduced to raw beef after a good caning or slipping. Holmes and Watson are depicted as homosexual lovers; the Baker Street Irregulars are former juvenile prostitutes, and Holmes has a dangerous taste for young boys; Moriarty is a pornographer and corrupter of youth; another character cools his ardour by emptying the contents of a woman's just-used chamber pot over his face. Jack the Ripper is... Well, read it and find out. Amid all this X-rated material you forget at times you are supposed to be reading a Jack the Ripper novel.

It is late September, 1888. Sherlock Holmes has been called in by DCI Swanson to assist in the psychological profiling of the sadistic monster who is murdering prostitutes in Whitechapel. Lately, Holmes has been having terrible precognitive dreams in which he sees himself eviscerating and disembowelling women. After acquainting himself with Krafft-Ebing's theories on lust murder, he forms the opinion that the Ripper may be suffering from satyriasis. Plot-wise, the novel is a mess,

which ends up wallowing in black magic conspiracy theories, but it does a good job of situating the Whitechapel murders against a grey landscape of British public school beatings.

This is an energetic romp that for the most part is good clean dirty fun.

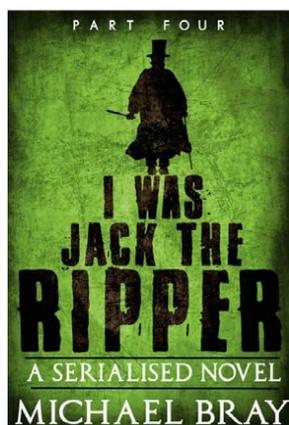
I Was Jack the Ripper (Part 4)

Michael Bray

2017

Kindle Edition, 36pp

£0.99



new series.

Part 4 is now out. It continues the shocking confession of one-time mortuary assistant Edward Miller, the man claiming to be Jack the Ripper. It is 1893 and Miller is dying; he has approached Charles Hapgood to write his biography. Before a roaring fire, and with whiskey glass in hand, the sordid details of his life spill out onto the carpet like vomit. In this instalment, Miller describes his first encounter with Inspector Abberline, the double event, and his blossoming relationship with Mary Kelly. But betrayal and rejection are powerful forces, feeding the monster inside.

This is building into a very powerful drama. I will review it in detail once all the episodes are published.

TING-TANG: THE TELL-TALE CHIMES

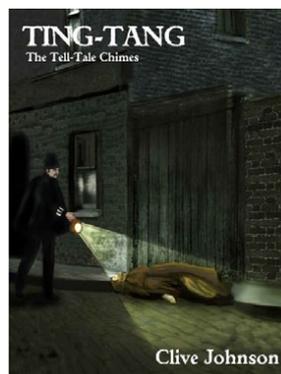
Clive Johnson

2017

Kindle Edition, 209pp

£2.99

This appears to be an updated version of the author's 2002 crime novel *The Chime*. It's the story of Metropolitan police constable Colin Swift (i.e. PC Ernest Thompson) who discovered the body of Frances Coles in Swallow Gardens. Reproaching himself for allowing the assailant to escape, Swift sets out to solve the Ripper mystery and bring the culprit to justice. In this endeavour, he is befriended by another young officer, Fred Seymour (i.e.



Frederick Wensley), who serves as Swift's companion and interlocutor, and who acts as our narrator.

What follows is a kind of grand tour of the East End, taking in the crime scenes and other venues of interest – the London Hospital, the docks, the doss houses, the music halls, and the surrounding streets and courtyards. All the while Swift is thinking about the murders, developing a theory as to the identity of the Ripper, jotting down his ideas into his pocket book. It is only at the end of the story, when Seymour retires from the force, that he reveals the contents of Swift's notebook and the younger officer's solution to the Jack the Ripper mystery.

It's cleverly done. Readers new to the Ripper mystery should warm to the format of two coppers maundering around the East End in search of answers. They peer into doorways, check out the fall of shadows in Mitre Square, and discuss every aspect of the Ripper crimes. Every now and then they re-enact key events like ham actors: "Lipski!" snarls PC Swift, before trotting across the road to play at being Israel Schwartz.

The book is mesmerising in the way it explores the fallibility of memory and the relationship between individuals and the chance events in their lives. I don't think *Ting-Tang* works as a piece of fiction, and nor can it be trusted as a faithful documentary account of the Whitechapel Murders. Rather, it belongs on your shelves next to the life-writings of retired police officers – the self-aggrandising autobiography, the unreliable memoir, the thrilling first-hand account of detective work in the raw. Clive Johnson has pulled off an act of literary ventriloquism, using Swift and Seymour as mouthpieces for some of his own reflections on the autumn of terror – the role of eyewitness testimony, the murderer's use of disguises and confederates, the significance of grape stalks and red roses, and the chiming of brewery clocks on Brick Lane that gives the book its title.

Hugely enjoyable.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE we review Matthew J. Kirby's *A Taste For Monsters*, and take a look at Ernie Lee's new novel, *Him*, about the Malay cook suspect.



DAVID GREEN lives in Hampshire, England, where he works as a freelance book indexer. He is currently writing (very slowly) a book about the murder of schoolboy Percy Searle in Hampshire in 1888.



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