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Editorial

Trial of Jack the Ripper

ADAM WOOD

Executive Editor

Last week I was speaking with a barrister turned best-selling author about various true crime cases, when conversation turned to the Notable British Trial series.

Discussing which infamous cases would be worthy additions to the long-running NBT catalogue, my colleague stated that with my background, a *Trial of Jack the Ripper* would be a runaway best-seller. Perhaps, I replied, but who would be named in the book's pages? Possible Rippers already featured in the original series are Thomas Neill Cream and George Chapman; who else was there whose trial would generate great public interest?

Step forward William Bury.

With almost perfect timing, UK television historian Dan Snow hosted a restaging of the 1889 Dundee trial of the wife murderer, put forward by some as Jack the Ripper, and the last man to be hanged in that city.

Forensic anthropologist Dame Sue Black and her team at Dundee University presented the medical evidence given at the original trial, with a modern-day jury hearing the evidence.

The trial was filmed for Snow's *History Hit* television programme and will be aired later in the year. Interested parties didn't have to wait for the show, however, as Mark MacKay, a reporter from the *Dundee Courier*, was on hand to live tweet the evidence heard. It was fascinating stuff, and what seemed to me as the perfect marrying of modern technology with historic criminal trials.

MacKay's snappy tweets included "Witness from a provisioner, a Mrs Martin, on Princes Street recalled Bury visiting to buy a piece of cord. He looked at a number before declaring "this one will do nicely" and "Bury said he'd feared being apprehended as Jack the Ripper and so had cut her up and put her in a box. She was still there."

Some of today's top experts were called to review the medical evidence, with Dr John Clark, a pathologist for more than 35 years, examining the wounds to Ellen Bury's body. Professor Richard Shepherd, involved in the investigations into cases such as 9/11 and the death of Princess Diana appeared as a witness for the defence. He did such a good job of bringing doubt to the events surrounding Ellen's death that the jury returned a verdict of not guilty – meaning that William Bury would have been a free man, a direct contradiction of the original trial, when Bury was found guilty and hanged.

The jury's conclusion didn't prevent the judge, Lord Matthews, declaring that he was convinced Bury was Jack the Ripper and, to laughter from the court, sent him to Perth Prison to be executed.

The *Courier's* tweets can be read on their website, and make for a very interesting read:

www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/local/dundee/593261/live-updates-retrial-william-bury-last-man-hanged-dundee.

In reality, a *Trial of Jack the Ripper* is very unlikely to appear, at least in the Notable British Trials series, given the lack of firm evidence against a single suspect. And anyway, given the skill shown by the defending counsel in the retrial of William Bury, what chance of a conviction?

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Adam Wood

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

The Dutch Jack the Ripper: New Light on Hendrik De Jong, the 'Continental Suspect'

By JAN BONDESON and BART FM DROOG

It is not generally known that in October 1893, the European boulevard press proclaimed that Jack the Ripper had just been captured by the Dutch police: the Whitechapel Fiend was in fact identical to the career criminal Hendrik de Jong, who had been arrested for the murders of two women. There was relief throughout Europe, among credulous people, that the Ripper had finally been caged, but the quality newspapers did not share their enthusiasm, and pooh-poohed the purported evidence that was brought forward. To this day, Hendrik de Jong remains a shadowy figure well outside mainstream Ripperology: although he gets the occasional mention on various Internet chimaeras, he is nowhere mentioned in the *Jack the Ripper A-Z*, and no English-language book discusses him as a Ripper suspect.

In this article, we will chronicle, for the first time ever, the full story of the life and crimes of Hendrik de Jong. We will provide evidence that de Jong was an opportunist serial killer of women, claiming at least four victims in Holland and Belgium between 1893 and 1898. His activities in 1888 will be scrutinized, as will his mysterious escape from justice and disappearance in 1898; his potential Ripperine candidature, which was taken so very seriously by the Continental boulevard newspapers in 1893, will be thoroughly assessed.

1. THE EARLY YEARS OF HENDRIK DE JONG, 1861-1892

Hendrik de Jong was born into a poor peasant family in Weesperkarspel, a rural municipality situated outside the town of Weesp, just south-east of Amsterdam, on October 5 1861. His father, the cattle farmer Willem de Jong, died when he was seven years old, and his mother Johanna when he was fifteen; he had the younger brothers Pieter and Johan, who both died in their early twenties,

the older brother Frans (1860-1901), and the sister Elisabeth (1867-1937)¹, whom he sometimes visited and corresponded with later in life.²

Mr. L.H.J. Lamberts Hurrelbrinck, his solicitor in 1894, disparagingly wrote that: "The father was a slovenly drunkard, and as a result, the family soon saw poverty, misery and distress. Instead of going to school, the young Hendrik and his brothers had to beg in the street if they did not want to die of starvation. Throughout his entire life he received only four months of formal education."³ Later, young Hendrik spent some time in an orphanage in Weesp, where he was remembered as a child having "arrogant, adventurous and dishonest character."⁴ As Lamberts Hurrelbrinck wrote: "Older, he grew up as a servant on a farm, from which he soon walked away; then he led a wandering life, once in this city, again in one another, each time with different patrons, only staying for a short time, then ran off or was chased away. All the bosses were unanimous in their disapproving judgment about this lazy, indescribable, confused boy."⁵

Hendrik de Jong's first proper job was as an apprentice in the tinned goods department of the Van Houten cacao factory in Weesp, where he was described by a colleague as being "proud, full of big ideas and troublesome of

- 1 Birth and death certificates, Provincial Archive Noord-Holland and Gelders archief, Arnhem. And: M.R. Aartsen. *Genealogie Aartsen, De Jong, Vleming, Van Schooten » Willem Hendriksz de Jong*, Coret Genealogie. 1997-2017.
- 2 De geheimzinnige verdwijning. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 20-09-1893. "In betrekking tot de Jong" (...). Quote from Frans de Jong. *De Zeeuw*, 21-09-1893.
- 3 Mr. L.H.J. Hurrelbrinck. *Misdadigerswereld*. Valkhoff, Amersfoort, [1907]. 264p. Chapter VII, pages 200-225.
- 4 De zaak-De Jong. *De Tijd*, 19-09-1893.
- 5 Lamberts Hurrelbrinck. *Misdadigerswereld*.

temper.” He did not last long there, and instead got a job as a menial servant of the Mayor of Weesp.⁶

In July 1878, at the age of sixteen, Hendrik de Jong volunteered for a five-year period of service in the Dutch army.⁷ He first served as drummer-boy, and then as trumpeter, in the 1st Infantry Regiment. On February 26 1880, he was detached to the Wharf Depot in Harderwijk, where recruits for the Dutch Indian Army (Nederlandsch Indisch Leger, NIL) were stationed, before being shipped to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). There, in May 1881, he volunteered for the NIL, for a period of six years. On August 13 1881, he departed for Batavia on the steamship ‘Madura’, arriving on September 25 1881. Initially, he was stationed at the 3rd Depot Battalion there, later serving as trumpeter in various garrisons on the islands of the East Indian archipelago. On June 20 1883, Hendrik de Jong was discharged from the military, as being totally unfit for service, and awarded an annual pension of 100 guilders. According to one source, he was dismissed from the army because he suffered from asthma attacks⁸ – in his army records, the exact reason is not given. What is clear, however, is that Hendrik de Jong did not see any active service during his period in Dutch East Indies.

According to his solicitor, Hendrik de Jong was a good linguist: in the army, he learnt English, German and a bit of French from his comrades.⁹ More than half the soldiers in the Dutch Indian Army were non-Dutch: most of the foreigners came from other European countries and from West Africa.¹⁰ On July 20 1883, de Jong returned to the Netherlands. He held a number of menial positions in his native land: as a farmhand, a house-painter, and a warden in a lunatic asylum; neither of these jobs lasted longer than a couple of months.¹¹

In December 1886, de Jong again volunteered for the Dutch Indian Army, and on January 15 1887, he embarked on the steamship ‘Koningin Emma’ in Amsterdam. On February 27 1887, he debarked in Batavia and was stationed at the 1st Depot Battalion. This time, his service lasted only until September 14 1887, when he was discharged for a second time, being considered totally unfit for military service. He received a certificate of good behaviour and was granted a pension of 100 guilders annually; towards the end of 1887, he returned to the Netherlands.^{12, 13}

In January 1888, de Jong was arrested in Nijmegen^{14, 15}, for the theft of various minor objects from a shop. Since he was either of obviously disturbed mind at the time, or feigned insanity, he was transported to the Coudewater lunatic asylum at Rosmalen on March 5.¹⁶ He was released after a week, and since the doctors declared him to be insane, he was never prosecuted for the theft; according to

Dutch contemporary law, lunatics were unfit to stand trial.

After this lucky escape, de Jong returned to Nijmegen, before moving on to Arnhem on May 22.¹⁷ Here, he started a novel chapter in his life of crime: courting rich but dim-witted women, posing as a wealthy and elegantly dressed gentleman, and persuading them to marry him. Making use of all kinds of lies and excuses, he often succeeded in getting money from these trustful and unsuspecting women. His first victim was young lady from Arnhem. After taking her money, he moved to The Hague, where he worked as a house-painter for a while.^{18, 19}

Around June 1888, he gained the confidence of Mrs Catharine Schermeljé (1848-1905)²⁰, who owned a cigar shop in The Hague, which was frequented by de Jong. She had divorced her first husband in January 1888.²¹ A naive, trusting woman, she fell in love with de Jong and installed him as a tenant in her house in Amsterdam. He said that he wanted to marry her, but as Dutch law required nine months’ time between divorce and remarriage, they could not do so immediately.

6 *De Tijd*, 19-09-1893.

7 All information regarding de Jong’s army time: De Jong, Hendrik. Army registration number: 24.141. Stamboeken onderofficieren en minderen KNIL 1815/1832-1898. Fiche 899. Algemeen Stamboeknr. Indië vanaf 1876: 24141-24220. Nummer archiefinventaris: 2.10.50. Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

8 Hans van Straten. *Moordenaarswerk*. Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam, 1990. Second [extended and revised edition]. Pages 31-35.

9 Lamberts Hurrelbrinck. *Misdadigerswereld*.

10 Stamboeknummers Nederlandsch Indisch Leger [Registration numbers, Dutch Indian Army], National Archives, The Hague.

11 Lamberts Hurrelbrinck. *Misdadigerswereld*.

12 Army records Hendrik de Jong.

13 De Jong went to live in Nijmegen. Source: The Nijmegen Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages. He is listed as being registered as inhabitant on 28 January 1888, formerly living in Batavia, address in Nijmegen: Kroonstraat 4. Regionaal Archief Nijmegen, Bevolkingsregisters van de gemeente Nijmegen, Nijmegen, archief 679, inventarisnummer 33030, 1880, Wijk B, deel 12, folio 13.

14 Hans van Straten. *Moordenaarswerk*. Van Straten incorrectly names Rotterdam as crime location.

15 De geheimzinnige verdwijning [The mysterious disappearance]. *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 01-10-1893.

16 De geheimzinnige verdwijning. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 29-09-1893.

17 The Nijmegen Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

18 Lamberts Hurrelbrinck. *Misdadigerswereld*.

19 De geheimzinnige verdwijning. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 29-09-1893.

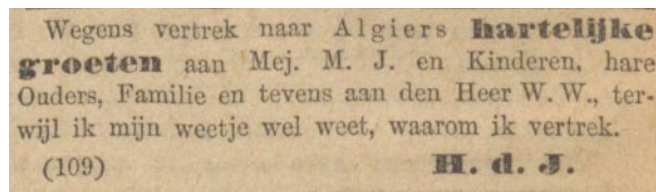
20 Henk Sweers. Genealogie van Wiard Sweers » Catharina Bathelemina Schermerlé. Genealogie Online, [s.l.], 2017.

21 Echtscheiding [Advertisement regarding the divorce]. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 13-01-1888; De zaak-De Jong. [Statement of Ms. Schermerlé]. *De Tijd*, 22-09-1893.

However, Hendrik de Jong installed himself as if he were already the spouse, taking charge of the money and the store stock, and finally convincing his naïve fiancée to move with him to Antwerp. They soon returned to Amsterdam, where de Jong lived with her. When the legal term for remarriage was approaching, de Jong suddenly disappeared. Then Ms Schermeljé received a copy of the *Algemeen Handelsblad* newspaper of 3 January 1889 at her house, containing an advertisement which was circled with pencil:

Because of leaving for Algiers, best wishes to Ms M.J. and children, her parents, family and to Mr W.W. Too, whilst I know my little knowledge and know why I am leaving. [Signed] H.d.J.”

The last part is an untranslatable play of words, in Dutch: “terwijl ik mijn weetje wel weet, waarom ik vertrek.”²²



‘Wegens vertrek naar Algiers...’ [Because of leaving for Algiers...], an advertisement in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, January 3 1889, placed by H.d.J. [= Hendrik de Jong]

This was the end of a dream which caused much pain to Ms Schermeljé, apart from the loss of circa 1 200 guilders.

But Hendrik de Jong had never left for Algiers. Instead, on January 3 1889, he moved into the Zeemanshuis (Seamans Hostel) in Rotterdam.^{23, 24} From here he started a new scam. Firstly, he placed a personal advertisement in the Amsterdam newspaper *Nieuws van den Dag* [News of the Day]. It is believed to be this advertisement:

Attention Ladies!

A handsome Gentleman, 27 years, P.G. [= of protestant faith], of respectable character, not without means, wishes to meet a young Lady or Widow of likewise condition, after mutual consent, to marry. Secrecy assured. Letters with clear address, preferably with portrait, to [correspondence address] KA 567, Nieuws van den Dag.²⁵

One of the ladies who responded was 17-year-old Antje (Anna) Deinema, daughter of the widow Pietje Klazes Deinema-van der Woude, who let out rooms for a living. De Jong, using the alias of Henri Hektor, told the mother and daughter that he was living in the well-known Leygraaff Hotel and earned 2 800 guilders a year, working as an administrator at the – non-existing – Dukeroo company.²⁶



Attentie Dames! [Attention Ladies!], an advertisement in *Nieuws van den Dag*, January 4 1889, presumably placed by de Jong.

Both women fell for de Jong’s undoubted charms, and very soon afterwards, on March 21 1889, Hendrik and Anna got married. They moved into the mother’s house, at Crooswijkse Kade 9, Rotterdam. Their honeymoon, on which they were accompanied by Anna’s mother, took them to Antwerp. Even though Hendrik behaved rather strange – he bought an officer’s uniform, posed as a Belgian lieutenant and started a row with a Belgian sergeant who had dared to speak to Anna – the mother trusted her son-in-law completely. When they returned to Rotterdam, de Jong advised his mother-in-law to invest 7 000 guilders in the Dukeroo firm, which she promptly did. In return, de Jong gave her ‘shares’ in the company, which he had designed himself, and ordered to be printed by a Rotterdam book printer. As Hendrik de Jong normally led a very regular and orderly life, the widow became suspicious when he did not show up for dinner on April 18. She took the Dukeroo shares to a notary, and was told that these papers were worthless, since the firm did not exist. Immediately she alerted the police, and when de Jong was arrested the very same evening, the sum of 5 302 guilders was found concealed in his top hat.

As Hendrik de Jong was held in custody until he was to stand trial on September 5 1889, he once more tried to feign being a lunatic to avoid prosecution. He complained about headaches, wrapped a white bandage around his head, gave silly answers, feigned a suicide attempt, tore his

22 H.d.J. [Hendrik de Jong]. Advertisement. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 03-01-1889.

23 The Rotterdam Zeemanshuis was a hostel based on christian-social principles. See: Zeemanshuizen in Rotterdam. Stadsarchief Rotterdam.

24 De geheimzinnige verdwijning. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 29-09-1893.

25 Advertisement. *Nieuws van den dag*, 04-01-1889

26 Rechtszaken. [Report on trial De Jong]. *Rotterdamsche Courant*, 06-09-1889.



Portraits of de Jong and his wives, from the Penny Illustrated Paper, September 30 1893.

clothes apart and threw excrements through the shutter in his prison cell door.²⁷ This time, the trick did not work. The prison director put him on a diet of water and bread for few days, and this harsh treatment had the desired effect: de Jong's insanity was miraculously 'cured', and he decided to act normal again. On 6 November 1889, de Jong was convicted of swindling by the Rotterdam court, and sentenced to two years and six months imprisonment, without deduction of the time spent in detention on remand.²⁸ Shortly after the conviction, Anna Deinema divorced him.²⁹

Hendrik de Jong spent the first half of his sentence in a prison near Rotterdam. On June 29 1891, he was transferred to the prison in Den Bosch, where he was kept until May 4 1892. In the Den Bosch prison register, it was curtly stated: 'behaviour in institution: good' and 'unfit for [solitary] cell, [as he is] suffering from shortness of breath in a heavy degree.'³⁰

After his release from prison, Hendrik de Jong settled in Tilburg on May 13 1892. In the population register he is listed as 'house-painter', although it is unknown if he did work as such: he had earned some money in prison, which allowed him to hang around for a while. He claimed to be a landscape painter³¹, as he visited societies and inns in Tilburg and introduced himself to different families, always dressed in black. According to one source, he courted a rich widow from Zevenaar shortly after his release. She gave him a gold ring with a diamond, and he gave her a worthless

ring in return. Then he told her he wanted to rent a villa in Baarn, where they would settle after getting married. He left, however, never to return.³²

In the second half of 1892, de Jong reappeared in Amsterdam. There he seduced the young girl Margareta, daughter of the Amsterdam hotel owner Hendrik Kramer. This time, de Jong claimed to be a wealthy surveyor, in possession of two villas near The Hague, and waiting for the release of a sizeable inheritance from two rich aunts. He only had to pay the notary some money, he told Margareta's

27 Hans van Straten. *Moordenaarswerk*. 1990. Page 31.

28 Rechtszaken [verdict court]. *De Tijd*, 16-09-1889

29 Anna Deinema divorced from Hendrik de Jong in April 1890. In 1902, at the age of 30, she remarried with 28-year old pharmacist Pieter Jacobus Spruijt (name also spelled as Spruyt). As no traces of this couple after their marriage date can be found in the Netherlands, it's very likely Anna and her husband emigrated to South Africa, where in 1910 a chemist Pieter Jacobus Spruyt was nominated for election in the Transvaal Pharmacy Board. Sources: Marriage certificate, Amsterdam and *The chemist and druggist. A weekly Journal of the Chemical and Drug trades and of British Pharmacists throughout the Empire*, December 10, 1910. Page 38.

30 Gevangenisregister [Prison Register] Den Bosch. Gevangenen in 's-Hertogenbosch, 1815-1940, Deel: 373, Periode: 1888-1889, 's-Hertogenbosch, archieftoegang 52, inventarisnummer 373, Inschrijvingsregister gevangen mannen. Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, Den Bosch.

31 De Zaak-De Jong. *De Tijd*, 28-09-1893.

32 Hans van Straten. *Moordenaarswerk*. Page 32.

father, for the handing over of the inheritance. The unsuspecting father in law-to-be lent de Jong 100 guilders for this and other lies, after which de Jong disappeared again. It was rumoured that he had gone to Calcutta.³³

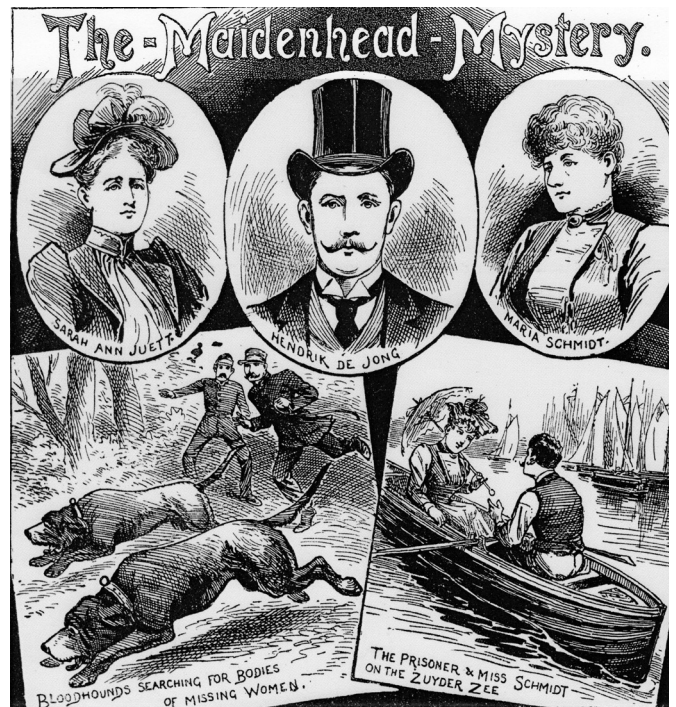
Hendrik de Jong did not go to India, however: he enlisted as steward on the 'Lowther Castle', a British sailing vessel which had arrived in Amsterdam, with a cargo of 28 000 bags of rice from Burma, at the end of September 1892. The ship sailed from IJmuiden³⁴ on October 28, destination Middlesbrough.³⁵

2. THE MAIDENHEAD MYSTERY, 1892-1893

In November 1892, the Middlesbrough police made a search of the ship 'Lowther Castle', which had just arrived from Amsterdam. In the cabin of the ship's steward, the Dutchman Hendrik de Jong, they found a quantity of cigars that he could not explain his ownership of, so he was fined for smuggling. Since de Jong claimed to be very ill, from asthma and an affliction of the throat, he was removed to Middlesbrough Infirmary. The ailing Dutchman soon perked up in the hospital, where he was given nourishing food and attentive nursing. The dapper, moustachioed cove soon took notice of the pretty, 23-year-old nurse Sarah Ann Juett, a native of Maidenhead. After a brief hospital romance, she agreed to marry him.³⁶ Her family was far from pleased that Sarah Ann had decided to marry a dodgy foreign sailor who smuggled cigars, but since she was a headstrong young woman, they had to accept her decision.

The Juett family is worthy of a short discourse. The paterfamilias was Mr Daniel Juett (1841-1927), a former railway tunnel miner who had gained financial security as a successful building contractor, and raised a large family. He married Sarah Ann Hartle in 1862, and they went on to have the daughters Ellen (1863-1887), Isabella (1866-?) who married a man named Johnson in 1888, Sarah Ann who was born in New Whittington, Derbyshire, in 1869, Mary Eliza (1871-?) and Louisa (1872-?). They then had the son Daniel Jr (1873-1961). When Mrs Juett died in 1884, her husband remarried and sired three more children. The family lived at Sydney Cottage, North Town, Maidenhead.

At the time of the 1881 Census, Sarah Ann Juett was a 'scholar' living with her parents at Bingley, Yorkshire. After the death of her mother, she trained to become a nurse, and she qualified in time to nurse her ailing sister Ellen, who expired in 1887. The 1891 Census finds her in a large nurses' home in Liverpool, from whence she later moved to the Middlesbrough infirmary. Her colleagues there described her as a very steady girl, who never flirted with the patients; still, her feeble feminine resolve had become entirely powerless when the gallant Hendrik de Jong had told her that he liked her best, because of her 'heavenly blue eyes', and did not care for any of the other nurses.



Hendrik de Jong and his two wives, from the Illustrated Police News, October 7 1893

Hendrik de Jong returned to his native land after getting engaged, but in April 1893, he wrote to Sarah Ann Juett that it was time they got married. Her Maidenhead parents and brother were far from impressed with the flashy Dutchman, who told them his brother was a doctor in Batavia, and that he himself had read many textbooks on medical science, although he was a hotel proprietor, of considerable wealth. This did not stop him from borrowing money from Mr Juett and various other relatives, who entertained niggling doubts as to what kind of gentleman would serve as a steward on board ship, and then get caught smuggling cigars?

But in spite of these doubts, the Juetts accepted Hendrik de Jong as their son-in-law: the marriage was solemnized at the Parish Church of St Luke's, Maidenhead, on June 15. The marriage certificate has Hendrik de Jong as a 31-year-old ship's steward, son of the ship's captain William de Jong, deceased. The 25-year-old Sarah Ann Juett is described as the daughter of the contractor Daniel Juett; her brother Daniel Jr was one of the witnesses. The creature de Jong

33 De zaak Hendrik de Jong. Article on trial. *Het Nieuws van den Dag*, 0-05-1894.

34 IJmuiden is the town where the sea locks of Amsterdam Harbour are located.

35 Shipping reports in Dutch newspapers: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, *De Tijd en De Standaard*, August-October 1892; Raymond J. Warren. *The Warren Register of Colonial Tall Ships*. [S.a.]; A record of Colonial shipping that serviced the Antipodes from 1768 through 1949. colonialtallshipsrayw1.blogspot.nl/2012/03/first-half-of-main-register.html

36 *Northern Echo* 22-09-1893, *Northern Daily Telegraph* 23-09-1893; see also *North-Eastern Daily Gazette* 27-01-7 1899.

borrowed another £20 from his father-in-law and at once set off to Holland with his wife; they would live at the large and fashionable Sluis Hotel in Arnhem, which he had just purchased, he said. The newlyweds took the train to Paddington, and stayed at the Devonshire Hotel in Bishopsgate Street before leaving for Holland. In early July, de Jong wrote a letter to Mr Juett, saying that his wife had been taken ill in Arnhem, but that there was no need to worry.



Vignettes from the de Jong case, from the *Illustrated Police Budget*

On August 16 1893, Hendrik de Jong turned up uninvited at Mr Juett's house in Maidenhead, just as Mrs Juett was preparing the midday meal. He rushed up and attempted to embrace her, exclaiming "Ah, mamma, mamma, how do you do?" He moaned and cried, saying that Sarah Ann had left him, and that she had gone to New York with a big American she had met in Wiesbaden. When the angry Mr Juett called him a liar, he exclaimed "Papa, she will come back again!" and handed him a box of cheap Dutch cigars as a present. On the bottom of the box, he wrote 'Great Bat Hotel, Wiesbaden' and 'Mr. W. Wilson, New York' to define the place where the elopement had taken place, and the name of the man responsible. The faithless Sarah Ann had robbed him of all his money and jewellery, and brought all the clothes he had bought for her with her in a large sailor's bag. He would pursue the big American to New York, he said, and kill him if he did not give up Sarah Ann. Mr Juett did not believe a word of what de Jong was saying. He went to the police, but by that time, de Jong had returned to his native land.³⁷

The Dutch police was communicated with, and as we know, Hendrik de Jong was well known to them. Dutch police investigators found evidence that Miss Juett, or Mrs de Jong as she should perhaps be called, had last been

sighted at the villages of Heelsum and Renkum, together with her husband, but then she had completely disappeared. She was advertised for in the Dutch newspapers: a young and good-looking lady who spoke English only, wearing a light brown cloak, with a dress of the same colour. The Juett family feared the worst when they were told what kind of creature their naïve daughter had been unwise enough to marry: had de Jong murdered her after swindling her out of all her money?³⁸

3. THE DUTCH BLUEBEARD, 1893

It also turned out that Hendrik de Jong had been up to further mischief in Holland after his English wife had disappeared. Presenting himself as a military surgeon from the Dutch East Indies, he had married, after a dangerously short acquaintance, a wealthy 40-year-old Dutchwoman named Maria Sybilla Schmitz. Described as a tall and good-looking brunette, Miss Schmitz had fallen in love with the handsome, dapperly dressed Dr de Jong at first sight. In July 1893, he had sold all her furniture and belongings, saying that he would buy her much better things in London. And indeed, when de Jong visited England to tell Mr Juett that his daughter has left him with an American, he had left his second wife behind in London, at Wheeler's Hotel in Devonshire Square. When questioned by the police, Mrs Wheeler told them that de Jong had arrived from Holland, via Harwich, on August 16, with two boxes, one of them bearing the brass plate 'H. de Jong'. He had been bonhomous and generous at the hotel, liberally distributing cigars among the other guests, but he had treated his wife cruelly, often speaking harshly to her in Dutch. The day he had gone to Maidenhead to confront Mr Juett, he had seemed most nervous and anxious.

After returning to Amsterdam, Maria Sybilla Schmitz lived quietly with her husband, first at the Hotel Rotterdam and then at the Hotel van Gelder. She visited an Amsterdam music hall with her husband on August 28. She was last seen leaving Amsterdam for the village of Bussum, with her husband, but after that, she disappeared as well. The Dutch police found this a highly suspicious combination of events: had Hendrik de Jong murdered both of his wives, in quick succession?³⁹

37 The earliest British newspapers to mention the disappearance of Miss Juett were *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21-09-1893; *Leeds Mercury*, 21-09-1893 and *Glasgow Herald*, 21-09-1893. The earliest reports on the missing in Dutch newspapers were in *Algemeen Handelsblad* and *De Telegraaf*, both on 16-09-1893.

38 There was coverage of the search for Miss Juett in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 24-09-1893 and *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27/29-09-1893. Almost all Dutch newspapers reported widely on 'De Zaak-De Jong', the de Jong case.

39 *Leeds Mercury*, 25-09-1893, *Daily News*, 25-09-1893. 'Another Deeming Case?' exclaimed the headline of the *Hampshire Advertiser*, 27-09-1893.

The Amsterdam police soon arrested Hendrik de Jong, at a café he was known to be frequenting, but as cool as a cucumber, he denied any involvement in the disappearances of his two wives. They had both left him, and would return in due course, he said. There was much interest in his extraordinary career, in both the Dutch and the English newspapers. His effigy was exhibited, with considerable success, in an Amsterdam waxworks museum. When three schoolmasters had been returning home near Laren's Camp, outside Amsterdam, they had heard a terrible moaning sound, and a young girl and her father had also heard some person crying out. It was suspected that Maria Sybilla Schmitz had been murdered in this area, and search dogs were employed to make a thorough search, but without any human remains being found.

When de Jong's suitcase was searched, in the Amsterdam lodgings where they had lived just prior to the disappearance of Maria Sybilla Schmitz, the police found a small spade with a short handle.⁴⁰ An Amsterdam newspaper suggested that de Jong should be hypnotised, to be forced to confess where he had murdered his wives, and where he had buried their bodies, but the police did not pursue this line of inquiry, since it was of dubious legality.⁴¹ Forty police constables, dogs, soldiers and numerous volunteers were employed to search for de Jong's two missing wives, but without anything interesting coming to light.⁴²

Hendrik de Jong stuck to his story that the faithless Sarah Ann had left him with the big American William Wilson when they had been visiting Wiesbaden, adding that he had got tired of Maria Sybilla Schmitz and left her behind. Wilson had brought Sarah Ann with him on a river boat, he said; confronted with the fact that the regular river boats on the Rhine were not running at the time, since the water was too low, the quick-witted suspect said that a special flat-bottomed boat had been made use of. When he was confronted with a police telegram to Wiesbaden, asking for the whereabouts of the 'Great Bat Hotel', and the curt reply 'No such hotel exists', he said that he must have got the name wrong.

On October 3, de Jong was confronted with his English brother-in-law Daniel Juett Jr, who had travelled to Amsterdam to assist the police. Young Juett was most agitated at seeing the scoundrel he suspected had done away with his sister, but de Jong was his usual urbane self, smiling benignly at his brother-in-law like of the elopement of his sister should not disrupt happy family relations.

Two dresses and a gold chain had been discovered in a pawn shop, and young Juett identified those as belonging to his sister. The police suspected that de Jong had pawned nearly all of Sarah Ann's clothes and other belongings. When asked what she had been wearing when she eloped with Wilson, he said, with his usual coolness, that she had

worn some clothes he had bought for her in London.

Young Daniel Juett left Holland after giving an interview to a journalist from the *Algemeen Handelsblad* newspaper, and his father, who arrived in Arnhem on October 6, also spoke out in the press. He had initially been favourably impressed with Hendrik de Jong, who had told him that he had just inherited 17 000 guilders, since his elder brother had been disinherited because he had become a priest against the wishes of his father. To prove this story, he showed Mr Juett a document that seemed to indicate that he had 12 000 guilders in the Nederlandsche Bank, although this document later turned out to have been 'doctored' through the addition of two zeroes at the end. He had been very jealous, and had once told Sarah Ann that he would kill her if she was not true to him. He had shown Juett Sr a document purported to relate to his purchase of the Sluis Hotel, and cordially invited his father-in-law to come and stay there. "Had I been able to go," the ailing Mr Juett told the journalist, "It would have been different. Possibly de Jong would have murdered me too." He added that after taking his wife to Holland, de Jong had only once written to the family: in a letter directed to his sister-in-law Miss Louisa Juett, he wrote that his wife was ill, and begged that no more letters should be sent to the Sluis Hotel. When Mrs Isabella Johnson, Sarah Ann's married sister, had become anxious at the continued silence of her sister, she had telegraphed the Sluis Hotel, only to be informed that de Jong was not there.⁴³

When interviewed by the London correspondent of the *New York Herald* in late October, when he was back in his Maidenhead cottage, Daniel Juett again had much to say about Hendrik de Jong. Described by the journalist as a sturdy, good-natured Englishman who liked outdoor pursuits, he described how he had confronted the prisoner de Jong, in the hope that his paternal pleading for his daughter would bring some confession. Then de Jong saw him, he stretched out his hand; when he saw Mr Juett's gesture of pain and disgust, he shrugged his shoulders and said "Well, each one to his taste, but yours is poor." He could not be shaken by the questioning of the police detectives, merely repeating that he knew that Sarah Ann was alive and living with the big American in New York. He seemed quietly confident that he would not be convicted, and said "I shall be free. I shall walk out of here. You cannot keep me."⁴⁴

40 De geheimzinnige zaak. *De Telegraaf*, 18-09-1893.

41 Mentioned in: De Zaak-De Jong. *De Tijd*, 07-10-1893.

42 De geheimzinnige verdwijning, *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 01-10-1893.

43 *Derby Mercury*, 04-10-1893, *Scotsman*, 07-10-1893.

44 *New York Herald*, 01-11-1893; for English-language overviews of the case, see also *New Zealand Herald*, 11-11-1893 and *Star*, 16-11-1893.



Features from Hendrik de Jong's Dutch career, from the Illustrated Police Budget, October 14 1893

The owner of the Sluis Hotel, which Hendrik de Jong had falsely told the Juett family he had bought for 17,000 guilders, could verify that de Jong and Sarah Ann had been staying there from June 18 until June 24, and again from July 5 until July 8; he had settled the bill using English money. He had seemed dapper and gentlemanly-looking; she had been a pretty young woman, who had talked gaily and pleasantly with her husband, but became reserved and rather shy when strangers were present, presumably because of her ignorance of the Dutch language.⁴⁵ In late August, the hotel owner had received a letter from the elder Daniel Juett, who presumed that de Jong had by then purchased the hotel, asking for news about his daughter, who was not writing to her family, and who was reported to have been taken ill.

The sister of Maria Sybilla Schmitz came forward in the newspapers with a sensational story: after her sister Maria had disappeared, de Jong had tried his best to persuade her to go to London with him, but without success. A servant

maid came to the police, to tell that de Jong had used to visit her mother in Utrecht. One day, he had asked the mother to smell a small bottle he had brought with him; she fainted dead away, and when she recovered de Jong was gone and 300 guilders stolen.⁴⁶

The widow of a civil servant also came forward to say that she had responded to a newspaper advertisement for a housekeeper, inserted by Hendrik de Jong. The two soon became engaged to be married, and the wedding day was fixed. The trusting widow handed over her savings, and a valuable diamond ring, only for de Jong to make a swift getaway. A female artist in Haarlem had been cheated out of a considerable sum of money through a similar stratagem.⁴⁷ The police also found that prior to his acquaintance with

45 Scotsman 25-09-1893.

46 Reported in the Dutch newspaper *Leidsch Dagblad*, 02-10-1893; copied in the Finnish newspaper *Östra Finland*, 13-10-1893.

47 *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 08-10-1893.

Miss Juett and Maria Sybilla Schmitz, de Jong had been seen by reliable witnesses pawning a ladies' hat; there was newspaper speculation that he had murdered the owner of this hat, and once more done away with the body.⁴⁸

The Dutch newspapers were in no doubt that Hendrik de Jong had murdered both his wives and hidden the bodies through some cunning stratagem. There was speculation that these two murders were not the only ones he had committed. The body of a woman has been found in the Amstel, near the village of Nes, and a witness came forward saying that de Jong had travelled from Amsterdam to Schollenbrug on the Amstel with a female companion; it was speculated that he had thrown her into the water from a boat, but the companion in question turned out to have been his landlady, who was alive and well.⁴⁹ In 1889, a woman had been murdered in Rotterdam, and there were rumours that de Jong was involved, and he was also spoken of in connection with the unsolved murder of the servant girl Anna Verhoeven at Prinsengracht 663 in Amsterdam. Unamused by these idle stories, the police retorted that at the time of the Verhoeven murder, in March 1892, de Jong had been serving time in prison.⁵⁰

4. JACK THE RIPPER AT LAST?

The Dutch newspapers found it very edifying to speculate how many victims Hendrik de Jong had claimed during his sanguinary career. They also asked the question: might de Jong be identical to the Whitechapel Fiend, Jack the Ripper himself, who was well known to have claimed not less than eleven victims? Hendrik de Jong had sometimes claimed to have studied medicine in the United States, and had shown people a forged diploma as a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Boston. When in England, he often used the false name Henry Fawcett.⁵¹

Before meeting Miss Juett, he had worked for a couple of days as steward on board the 'Lowther Castle'. There was speculation that during the Autumn of Terror in 1888, he had been employed as a ship's steward on ships between Rotterdam and London, and thus had ample opportunity to commit the Ripper atrocities, making use of the Dutch vessel to make his escape each time. When Daniel Juett Jr had been interviewed by a Dutch journalist at the Sluis Hotel, he was asked what his family thought of Hendrik de Jong? "Our belief is that de Jong has a kind of mania for ruining women or killing them." "You mean a sort of Jack the Ripper?" "Yes, a man of very much the same stamp."⁵²

Newspaper speculation easily becomes newspaper truth, and when the story of Hendrik the Ripper reached Sweden and Finland in October 1893, it had become an established fact that de Jong had worked as a ship's steward [some said a ship's surgeon] on a Dutch vessel between Rotterdam and London. "It is becoming increasingly likely

that de Jong is identical with Jack the Ripper", a Finnish paper commented.⁵³

This was followed by rumours that de Jong had been indeed in London at the time of the Jack the Ripper murders. After this it was said that the police had found a set of blood-stained surgical instruments, presumed to be the ones made use of in the Ripper atrocities, amongst his belongings. It was also rumoured that de Jong had been examined by a specialist psychiatrist, the diagnosis had been one of extreme erotomania, an abnormal interest in women that could result in serious crimes being committed. And that a Dutch police inspector had brought de Jong's portrait to Whitechapel, where several people, both men and women, prostitutes included, declared that they had seen him on the prowl.

The story of Hendrik the Ripper was first reported in the British press on October 2 1893, in an article entitled "The Maidenhead Mystery. De Jong's antecedents. Is he 'Jack the Ripper'?", written by Tom Fielders, the Amsterdam correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.⁵⁴ He was of the opinion that the long series of Whitechapel murders, from 1887 until 1893, could hardly have been committed by the same person: man was an imitative animal, and several copycat Rippers must surely have been at work. In the opinion of Fielders, de Jong was not Jack the Ripper, "though he is possibly one of the guild". This obtuse statement would seem to imply that although de Jong was not responsible for the entire series of Whitechapel murders, he might well have committed one or two of them during his visits to London. Other journalists discovered that de Jong had been in prison at the time of the Whitechapel murders of Alice McKenzie (July 1889) and Frances Coles (February 1891); so persistent, in spite of the words of warning from Tom Fielders, was the belief that all the Whitechapel murders had been committed by the same culprit, that this argument was made use of to disqualify de Jong as a suspect.⁵⁵

Other newspapers merely sneered at de Jong's Ripperine candidature. The *Leeds Times* said, referring to the tale of Hendrik the Ripper, that "Of course this cannot be correct.

48 *Standard*, 29-09-1893.

49 *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 11-10-1893.

50 Zaak-De Jong. *Tilburgsche courant*, 05-11-1893.

51 *Tammerfors Aftonblad*, 13-10-1893.

52 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 03-10-1893.

53 From Sweden: *Dalpilen*, 20-10-1893 and *Tidningen Kalmar*, 13 and 16-10-1893; from Finland: *Östra Finland*, 13 and 20-10-1893, *Tammerfors Aftonblad*, 13-10-1893, *Nya Pressen*, 15-10-1893 and *Västra Nyland*, 03-11-1893; from Denmark: *Jyllands-Posten*, 15-10-1893, *Randers Amtstavis*, 20-10-1893 and *Holstebro Avis*, 09-11-1893.

54 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 02-10-1893; see also *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 03-10-1893.

55 *Bolton Evening News*, 12-10-1893, *Västra Nyland* 03-11-1893.

Jack the Ripper has been hanged three times at least, and before that he died a natural death in a Yankee gaol." The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* commented that after Neill Cream and Deeming had been credited with Jack the Ripper's atrocities, now it was the turn of de Jong. The *Shields Daily Gazette* said that in these days, everybody who kills more than one woman is jumped at as a Ripper suspect; the character of the crimes of de Jong resembled those of the wife-killer Deeming much more than the frenzied mutilations of Jack the Ripper.⁵⁶ The only support for the candidature of Hendrik the Ripper came from the *Western Mail*: according to a Dalziel telegram from Glasgow, there was a story going round the sailor's quarters that crews on the ships trading between Rotterdam and London considered that Jack the Ripper was a Dutch ship's surgeon named Jungh or Jongh. A similar story was current in Gibraltar maritime circles, added the *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*.⁵⁷

BEKENDMAKING; OR "HUE AND CRY" SENT
OUT BY THE DUTCH POLICE.

De Officier van Justitie te Amsterdam verzoekt inlichtingen betreffende het al of niet in leven zijn, van de beide Vrouwen, wier portretten hier onder zijn afgedrukt.



Het nevenstaande portret is van SARAH ANNA JUETT, oud 25 jaar, middelmatig lang, spreekt uitsluitend Engelsch, althans geen Hollandsch, vermoedelijk gekleed met licht bruin manteltje en japon, en voorzien van een roode parasol.

Zij huwde op 15 Juni 1893 te Maidenhead bij Londen met HENDRIK DE JONG, oud 32 jaar, geboren te Weespercarpsel. (Zie zijn portret hiernaevens.) Zij vertrok met hem naar Holland, logeerde het laatst in het Hotel Sluis te Arnhem en is op 7 Juli 1893 van daar weg gegaan.

Daarna is zij spoorloos verdwenen.



Het laatste hiernaevens geplaatste portret is van MARIE SYBILLA SCHMITZ, oud 40 jaar, zwaar gebouwd, donker bruin pony-haar, vermoedelijke kleeding: donkere rok witte blouse met zwarte streepjes en hooge pofmouwen, zwarte hoed, hoog opgebogen, met git.

Zij vertrok in het midden van Augustus 1893 met DE JONG naar Londen, is daarna teruggekomen, heeft tot het laatst van Augustus te Amsterdam eerst in Hotel "Rotterdam" Weesperplein, en

ekendmaking (Wanted), a police poster reproduced in the *New York Herald*, November 1 1893.

Courtesy Howard Brown / Jack the Ripper Forums

5. THE TRIAL OF HENDRIK DE JONG, 1893-1894

Even though everyone: the public, the police, the prosecution, the press, and even de Jong's own lawyer, were convinced that Hendrik de Jong had killed Sarah Ann Juett and Maria Sybilla Schmitz, he could not be charged for murder, as there were no bodies. After extensive questioning, during which he kept denying murdering the two women, and told his questioners one flagrant lie after another⁵⁸, he was charged with swindling 100 guilders from Hendrik Kramer, the Amsterdam hotel owner, in 1892. Surprisingly, Mr Kramer had been asked to press charges against de Jong by the prosecution, when they could not find

evidence to charge him for murder. Without the accusation from Mr Kramer, the prosecution wouldn't have had a case at all.⁵⁹ On April 12 1894, de Jong had to appear in the Amsterdam court.⁶⁰ Even though the charge was 'swindling to obtain the sum of 100 guilders' and not 'double murder', a massive crowd wanted to attend the trial, so many that some had to wait outside. Police and soldiers were needed in and outside the court to remain order. Almost all Dutch newspapers reported extensively on the trial.

Eleven witnesses were heard on the first day, among them the two physicians Kok Ankersmit and Halbertsma, who had repeatedly visited de Jong in his prison cell to assess his mental condition. According to them, de Jong had all the characteristics of a criminal, but was not suffering from any form of lunacy. He must be considered completely responsible for his acts. Hendrik de Jong, dressed in his top hat and elegant clothes, declared this to be entirely correct, agreeing that he was certainly not insane. Father, mother and daughter Kramer declared that de Jong had borrowed 100 guilders from the father, a loan that he never had repaid. Hendrik de Jong denied this charge, and accused the prosecutor of only causing sensation, with the result that he had already spent seven months in jail. His behaviour in court was haughty and careless. He even said that the judges played comedy, just to make him suffer a long detention.

The prosecutor Mr Regout stated that all facts were proven, called him a very dangerous, crafty and cunning swindler and demanded four years imprisonment, with deduction of the time in detention on remand. Hendrik de Jong's lawyer, Mr Lamberts Hurrelbrinck, reminded the judges of the case of the missing women, and that because of the prosecution could not charge de Jong for those crimes, he was now charged for an almost negligible act, just out of revenge. Arguing that de Jong had only deceived and lied because of his vanity and megalomania, and not to enrich himself, since otherwise he would have stolen more, he pleaded for an acquittal. The last words came from Hendrik de Jong himself: he kept on denying the charge, and stated that the whole trial was just an act of revenge. When he was lead out of the courtroom, he laughed and waved at Margareta Kramer, his cast-off fiancée from 1892.^{61,62}

56 *Leeds Times*, 07-10-1893, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 03-10-1893, *Shields Daily Gazette*, 10-10-1893.

57 *Western Mail*, 09-10-1893, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 11-10-1893.

58 Lamberts Hurrelbrinck. *Misdadigerswereld*, [1907].

59 De zaak Hendrik de Jong. *Het Nieuws van den Dag*, 30-05-1894.

60 Rechtszaken. [announcement of trial]. *Tilburgsche Courant*, 05-04-1894.

61 Rechtszaken. Hendrik de Jong voor de rechtbank. *De Tijd*, 14-04-1894.

62 Zaak-De Jong. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 13-04-1893.

One of the best sources on Hendrik de Jong is the chapter on him in the book *Misdadigerswereld (Criminal's world)* by the Dutch lawyer Mr L.H.J. Lamberts Hurrelbrinck (1856-1941).⁶³ He was one of the top lawyers of his days, and it was not without reason that de Jong choose him as defender. As many contemporary sources on de Jong are highly biased (some going as far as claiming that as a young boy, he had been a total disaster, and that his mother had bewitched cattle), the observations of Mr. Lamberts Hurrelbrinck can be considered as very trustworthy, even though he had written down his story some thirteen years after his business with de Jong. Since Hendrik de Jong had disappeared in 1898, his lawyer must have felt himself freed of his professional ethics in 1907, which explains why he was so frank about this case.

Mr. Lamberts Hurrelbrinck: "One of the most peculiar persons I've defended was without doubt the notorious woman killer Hendrik de Jong. But it was not because of these murders I stood by his side. (...) I'll never forget the moment when he entered the small room where I was waiting for him; never saw I eyes like his, the pupils almost as white as the white of his eyes. It looked to me as if I saw a blind man, staring at me with feeble, colourless eyeballs. (...) in his hand the silk top hat, neatly ironed with the four shiny beams, as if just out of a shop, the first and only time I saw this kind of headgear in the hands of a prisoner. He showed no signs of shyness, or of feeling ashamed. First a kind-hearted, familiar nod of the head as greeting, and then he extended his finely shaped hand to me, with a small smile around his thin lips. "Hello, Mr. Urlebrik", he began in a high-pitched squeaking voice, "I'm glad you want to defend me, I've heard much about you and also read of you," whilst he, without waiting for my questions, seated himself opposite me, "aperpo [by the way], do you happen to have negerhet on you?"

"Negerhet, what is that?"

"Negerhet, don't you know it, that fine chewing tobacco?"

"No, I do not chew tobacco, de Jong" – later on I learned he meant 'Negro Head'.⁶⁴

"I am sorry, but couldn't you get me some?"

"You must know that I am not allowed to do so."

"Couldn't you help me to get a piece of cigar, that I might taste some good tobacco again; I haven't had it for such a long time."

"It is not allowed, de Jong."

"Well then, if that's the case, I won't say a word."

"You will 'have' to speak with me anyhow about your case."

"First a piece of cigar!" – and some life came into in his faint death-eyes; the greyish-white pupils rolled restlessly to and fro, whilst the thin lips pressed against

each other.

This strange man, who possessed a steely determination and an indomitable power of will, would not say a word until I yielded to his demand, but yet I tried once more to get through to him.

"Did you read the summons?" I asked after a short time.

"First a piece of cigar!" he snapped angrily.

"Well, I will give you as piece of cigar, but you will have to chew it here; I will not leave until you have finished it."

"That's OK!"

I now took the cigar-case out of my pocket, but suddenly he grabbed it out of my hands, rising from his chair and walking to the corner of the room with a few fast steps. He took some cigars from the case, rubbed them between his hands, pulled up one trouser-leg, and put the cigar leaves between sock and leg.

All of this happened in seconds, so unexpected, so fast, that I, forgetting the demanded seriousness, forgetting my duty, registering only the utterly comical of the situation, burst out in a heartily laughter. I should have had called the warden, of course, but it was too late; I just laughed, disarming myself totally.

"You see, Mr Urlebrik," whilst he filled his mouth with half a cigar, "now I am at your command, now you can interrogate me."

"Did you read the summons, de Jong?"

"Yes indeed, all this nonsense I've read, but nothing is true – yes, I'll con such a bastard, such a tramp for a few lousy hundred 'pop' [vulgar for guilder]", and higher and higher the squeaking voice, whilst his fingers grabbed the small, blonde moustache above the chewing lips, "but no, these are only excuses, but you know, Mr Urlebrik, what the purpose of all this jokery is? They do it all to keep me in here; they want to get de Jong, you understand, because of the women's movement."⁶⁵

"What do you mean?"

"Yeah, you wouldn't know that! You should consult a doctor, Mr Urlebrik! You know as well as everybody does, that they see me as the murderer of these two women. That's what's going on, that's why they want to get at me, and that's why the examining judge harasses me each day with his silly questions."

I didn't mean to discuss this subject with him, but now he himself started to speak about it, and driven by a maybe not acceptable, yet understandable curiosity, I said to him: "If you really think that's the case, why don't you tell him where the two missing women are?"

"But how can I tell him, how can I know, if they ran off?"

63 A. Kessen, Louis Herman Jean Lamberts Hurrelbrinck. 1856-1941. *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde*, 1943.

64 *Negro head*, a tobacco brand.

65 Women's movement = women's liberation movement.

"And you have not the faintest idea where they might be?"

"No. Maybe in one of the many hotels where I've been with them."

"Do you still know all of these hotels?"

"Yes, I've written 'em down," and then, from very deep in his pocket, he took a piece of paper, on which he had scribbled all possible names of hotels from every country of the five continents, from Turkey, Greece, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, the United States of America, etc., etc., etc.

I could have told him that his entire life's history was known to me, that I knew that he never had been in all these regions, so that he never could have stayed in any of the hotels he had mentioned. That would have been utterly useless, since when de Jong has said something once, he would stick to it; he would not yield to any evidence. For example: once the examining judge asked him where he had been, and what he had done, on the day of the sudden disappearance of his second spouse.⁶⁶ "I went out for a walk with her in the Bussum area," he claimed, "suddenly she's gone, I don't know where; first I've waited a long time for her, then I searched everywhere without finding her, and then I just walked to the railway station and took the train from Bussum to Amsterdam."

"At what time?"

"Oh, I know that exactly, the train of 4.3." [16.15 hours]

"Are you sure?"

"Yes"

The judge showed him a booklet with the train schedules; no train leaving Bussum at 4.3 was listed.

"It did," stated de Jong resolutely.

"It can't be, because this is the valid booklet."

"Then the booklet is wrong; there was a train at 4.3."

The judge then researched this matter. Was the booklet wrong? Did a train leave on that day at 4.3? The station manager of Bussum answered no to both of these questions. Then, during the next interview, de Jong was confronted with this information.

"It was the train of 4.3," he maintained.

When the judge wanted to show the train booklet, de Jong said: "Well, don't show me that booklet again, I did take the 4.3 train anyway."

Another, even clearer example occurred during the investigation as to the whereabouts of the first disappeared woman. Hendrik de Jong claimed that on a certain day, they had left by steamer from Arnhem to Cologne – it was yet another lie, and in his lying he had certainly 'déveine' [French word, meaning 'bad luck']. Because of heavy frost, which caused ice to form on the Rhine, no boat had left Arnhem for Cologne on that day, as was proven in the books of the boat companies. "Then the books are wrong," he claimed; "I went that

day with my fiancée by boat from Arnhem to Cologne," and once he stated that, he stuck to his story.



Pictures of Hendrik de Jong and Sarah Juett, in a Dutch police leaflet from 1893. Collection Rijksarchief Gent. Courtesy Arie Vesterling / Ons Amsterdam magazine

So was his system of defence, a foolish, insane system, but it made every solid investigation impossible. Convinced that he, even though I had proved to him that he never had visited all countries and areas he had mentioned, would answer me: "I've been there, though," I did not once try to make him realize the insanity of his claims. Back to the accusation, in which I had the responsibility to help him in his defence - I asked: "So you deny to have conned Mr. Helmers [= Hendrik Kramer, the swindle of 1892]."

"Of course I deny that."

"But what has he to gain by making this accusation?"

"Just revenge, for me dumping his daughter, because I didn't want to marry her any more, and now this swine is doing this, this little scoundrel of nothingness, but I'll get back on him when I'm free again – yes, I, Hendrik de Jong, will marry the daughter of this scum, this lowlife."

⁶⁶ Second spouse = Maria Sybilla Schmitz; Lamberts Hurrelbrinck is wrong on this – there's no evidence that de Jong had married her, or that they were to marry.



Soldiers looking for the remains of the two murdered women, from the Illustrated Police News, November 7 1893

For a moment I stared at him, astonished, amazed. Is what de Jong says just ludicrous bragging, is it insane boasting or is it serious; does he really mean what he is saying? With other suspects, who do not want to confess, who try to prove their innocence by lying, one always discovers, no matter how sly and cunning they are, something forced, unnatural or unreal in their attempt to look natural and true. Not so with de Jong, with his unnatural braggadocio; at this moment he is convinced of the truth of his extravagant claims; he's fully aware of his dignity, his 'highness'... but then he isn't normal, he's suffering from megalomania. Whilst studying his file I found repeatedly the signs of conceited pride; I considered these as the bluffing words of a pathetic boaster; not anymore; now I know that he's fully convicted as he shouts out in indignation: "Yes, I, Hendrik de Jong, will marry the daughter of this scum, this lowlife." That scum, that lowlife, was a decent citizen, owner of a small but good hotel. However modest his position in society was, he stood much higher on the social ladder, infinitely higher than my client.

My client was a boy from Weesperkarspel. Incapable of earning a living in a decent way, he started swindling. His victims were mainly well to do women. By telling them all kind of lies, he made them give him some money. He told one woman he was a Doctor of Physics [Natuurkunde] and chemistry [Scheikunde] and placed beneath his signature 'Dr. N. & Sch.' He told another woman that he was a former navy officer, and showed her pictures of him in uniform; while walking with her, he greeted the navy officers as if he knew them.

He told other women that he was a wealthy landowner, owning big estates and many mansions at the Scheveningschen weg [a road in The Hague with expensive houses], he also told them in a very loving way about his extremely rich aunts, from whom he had

inherited all their wealth, and to prove it he showed a copy of the will. Many women were very proud to have gained the love of this rich, distinguished gentleman. Without hesitation they gave him money, whenever he had 'forgotten' his wallet and had to go to Germany 'for business'. He needed only money for the trip, as he could stay with some very wealthy people over there. Many times, he used the pretext as having to pay the notary some money, to get the inheritance of his rich aunts, to get money from his women. When they refused to give him any more, or when he had robbed them of everything, he disappeared, or the women themselves vanished in a mysterious and unexplainable way. The naïve credulousness of these women has amazed me; yet the more incomprehensible is to me the narrow-mindedness, the blunt lacklustre stupidity of men, who believed in these apparently tangible, clearly visible false hopes de Jong handed out, who trusted his lies.

[In the next pages Lamberts Hurrelbrinck [LH] explains what happened in the Kramer-case, and that he – LH, was and is utterly amazed that Kramer fell for the lies of de Jong. Only after de Jong was arrested for the Juett/Schmitz-disappearances Kramer went to the police. After that part, he tells about the trial.]

Never did I see such a crushing crowd, so compact, so massive, as in the Regeliersdwarsstraat [street in Amsterdam, where the court was situated] before the high narrow door that gave access to the public gallery, as on the day on which de Jong stood trial. For hours and hours, the narrow street was obstructed for traffic, there was no possibility, neither for pedestrians, nor for carriages and wagons, to get through this human chaos, this confusion of bodies, which were – so to say – glued to the outer back wall of the courthouse. Nobody was interested in the crime of which he stood accused, the swindling [of the Kramer family]. All wanted to see him, Hendrik de Jong, the notorious woman-killer.

They wanted to hear his voice, they wanted to see every move he made. A deadly silence, when he finally enters; again the top hat with the shining sides in his hands, very shiny shoes, a grey demi-saison [kind of jacket] loosely above a coat, the points of his small, blonde moustache coquettish in the air, and with his strange eyes inquisitively and self-assuredly looking around. The questions of the courts president to his name, age, place of residence, are answered with the high, squeaky voice.

Firstly, the experts are heard in connection with the mental condition of the accused; they declare him to be not totally normal, but totally responsible for his acts. He belongs to the 'inferiors', as the psychiatrists say, those whose brain functions have some aberrations, but these are not of such a nature that these people must be seen as not responsible for their actions. The file on de Jong contains a report, which is composed by these specialists, after careful investigation and observation of this patient. I am not allowed to tell much about this report, which is secret, I just write down what the psychiatrists declared during the trial. Not only important, but also very amusing was the fight between the accused and Helmers [Kramer]. Every reproach, every accusation was simply called a lie, and de Jong showed a quick-wittedness, a slyness and cunningness, which really forced admiration. (...)

At one moment, he becomes very angry at me, his defender; that happened when I requested the president to ask witness Helmers [Kramer] if, after reading the letters from de Jong, had not been able to understand that these could not have been written by a former naval officer.⁶⁷ This insult to de Jong's vanity hurt his pride: he shouted, banging his fist on the bench, that these letter were very well written and that every officer wanted to write as well as he did, and that if his lawyer wanted to insult him, he'd better shut up; he would defend himself; he could argue as no other man could!

I do not know if he argued less capably then I would have, but without doubt not with less success.

Notwithstanding my serious and convinced trying – I claim not convincing [as in succeeding to convince] – to prove that Helmers [Kramer] had not acted in this case as a normal thinking person, Hendrik de Jong was convicted to the highest penalty, that is four years' imprisonment, that is three years as maximum punishment for the specific criminal act, raised with one third because he was a recidivist. To explain why I asked the witness a question regarding a letter from De Jong, which question enraged my client, I'll show one of his letters to me, written when he was in custody.

Amsterdam, 4 July 1894

It goes you well. This pencil is worn out!

To the Honourable Mr L.H.J. Lamberts Hurrelbrinck, lawyer in Court affairs

Heerengracht b/d Utrechtstraat in Amsterdam

Honourable Sir!

In the past week I wrote to Your Worship, although I did not receive an answer from you. That makes me think that you have not received my letter. And that's what I call injustice, the same as so much injustice that has been done to me. Anyhow Sir! On Tuesday I appear in Court. I ask you politely to speak to you on Monday or Tuesday. If you don't have time for me, I will visit you at home, because the judges are now at last convinced that it is nothing else but revenge from [name apparently removed, must be Kramer] and his supporters. But there are learned gentlemen. How cowardly it might be they believe in the people who resent me! Yes, I can name you seven learned gentlemen who are truly resentful of me. To say it shortly: the cowardly stupid revenge towards me is growing in the entire society. What rightful Gentlemen would call this practice justice? Never will that be called justice! Nothing else than a fabricated revenge, hate, etc., that's the case of de Jong. That I do not call justice in our Fatherland. But the Chief Judges will give to me my justice, without hate or revenge. They are very strongly developed. And that's why they will use their minds. Which is exactly the duty of a good judge, who goes straight forward is according to me a good judge.

Very Honourable Gentleman, farewell, see you.

Your at your service being, H. de Jong

Immediately after the harsh judgement of the court, de Jong requested, or rather ordered, me to appeal against the sentence. Even though the Higher Court did not agree to my arguments in favour of releasing my client, this Court of Justice was a bit more lenient; it convicted him of swindling and sentenced him to three years' imprisonment. He had hardly been released from jail when he was arrested in Arnhem, again accused of swindling. His defender was luckier than I had been: the Court in Arnhem acquitted him. A few months later they tried to arrest him in Belgium, for the murder of a woman. This time Justice had the corpus delicti – the body of the murdered person – but the murderer has disappeared, without leaving the slightest trace. In his absence he was condemned to death. In this country, the Justice department had de Jong, but not the bodies of his victims, who were never found; in Belgium, Justice had the body of a victim, but not the murderer. Nothing was ever heard from him again.

"Madness and genius are bordering on each other," wrote Lombroso. This quote from the great Italian psychologist is not applicable on my former client. Experts have declared that he was not mad, and neither was he a genius. And yet... whenever I think of de

67 [Previously Lamberts Hurrelbrinck had mentioned that de Jong's letters were clearly those of a uneducated farm-boy].

Jong, the words of the famous professor pop up in my mind. Not a genius, but nevertheless an extraordinary being. His letters, bad as they were, remain the letters of somebody who had not more than four months of education. Hendrik de Jong spoke rather good English and German, he understood French; during his stay in the [Dutch] Indian Army he had learnt these languages from his army comrades from England, Belgium and Germany. He claimed that he could play the piano, without knowing the musical notes; naturally, I could not check if he spoke the truth on this, because of the absence of such an instrument in prison. I did however notice his remarkable skill in drawing. Once I received yet another letter from him, this time with a signature from me. At the first glance, on the face of it, I could not understand how my signature had ended up on this piece of paper from prison. The next moment I realized it was a falsification. To clarify this, I show here firstly my signature and then the falsified one. The reader will admit, that with the leaving out of 'Mr.' in front of the name and the ... [three dots] in the loop under the name, these two signatures are very similar; the reader will also understand my amazement, however shortly it lasted. Many times, I have asked myself: would de Jong, gifted with all these special skills, with a decent education, under intelligent guidance, not have been a totally different being than he was? Could this man with his clear mind, fast understanding, remarkable quick-wittedness, amazing cleverness and irrevocable willpower, not have been able to make a living other than by deceit and swindle? Was he predestined to become a criminal, a murderer, or was he forced to become one by his sad youth, his tragic life? Questions that cannot be answered, yet should be considered."

Two weeks later the court announced its verdict. Hendrik de Jong was found guilty according to the wish of the prosecution: four years imprisonment, with deduction. He listened carefully to the judges, at times shaking his head. After the verdict was spoken out, he shrugged his shoulders and looking smilingly at his lawyer.⁶⁸ After an appeal, the second trial took place on May 29 1894. The prosecution demanded confirmation of the verdict from the lower court, the defence for acquittal.⁶⁹ Just prior to this trial, the imprudent de Jong had threatened the judges per letter with a bloody revenge, if they had the effrontery to condemn him. If they would condemn him, they were unjust and cruel judges. His first victim would be either Mr Ort, the public prosecutor, or the examining judge in the case of the missing women.⁷⁰ One would think that the judges, after being threatened, would hardly be in the mood to be lenient towards de Jong. Yet he received a somewhat lighter sentence: in August 1894 he was convicted and sentenced to three years' imprisonment, without deduction. Hendrik de Jong appealed again, this time to the court of cassation, but the appeal was dismissed and de Jong remained in jail until 1897.⁷¹

6. HENDRIK DE JONG IN PRISON, 1894-1897

On 18 August 1897, shortly after eight in the morning, Hendrik de Jong was released. While a heavy downpour fell on him, he walked from the prison at the Amstelveensche weg in Amsterdam to the nearest cigar store. He was elegantly dressed in dark pants and jacket, a white vest and a grey cap.

When he left the store, he was interviewed by a reporter from the *Nieuwsblad van Nederland*. The journalist asked him: "You must be happy to be 'free' again?"

De Jong: "Yes sir, it was horrible to be detained for three years. This morning I was happy as can be."

Reporter: "Is it true that you behaved well in prison?"

De Jong: "Sure. Look at this." He showed official documents, that learned that during his detention, he had earned 238 guilders and 88 cents making the interior linings of suitcases. After deduction of what he had bought in the prison canteen, he had been handed 159 guilders and 94 cents.

Reporter: "How many suitcases did you make?"

De Jong: "Twenty-five thousand and thirty, while I glued double that number. The chief of the suitcase department was so satisfied with my work, that he gave me this handsome suitcase."

Whilst talking, de Jong's cigar went out. "Yes", he said, that's because I haven't smoked for three years. Everything is so strange to me."

In his document of acquittal was noted that his behaviour in prison was 'good'.

Reporter: "Did you consider petitioning for clemency?"

De Jong: "Yes, but I didn't get it. A brewer who had murdered his wife, received three months clemency and he didn't watch out... I am an unlucky child."

Reporter: "What did you do in your spare time?"

De Jong: "I read a lot of English books and wrote letters, but I never wanted my family to write back."

Reporter: "Why not?"

De Jong: "Because all their writing was full of Bible texts and I am a liberal!"

Reporter: "What will you do now?"

De Jong: "I'll try to get a job as a cook or steward on a boat. I might also go to Australia, because I have many well-to-do friends over there."

68 Hendrik de Jong. *De Tijd*, 27-04-1894.

69 *Het Nieuws van den Dag*, 30-05-1894.

70 Zaak—Hendrik De Jong. *Rotterdamsch nieuwsblad*, 30-05-1894; Een dreigbrief uit..... de gevangenis. *De Tijd*, 31-05-1894.

71 Hans van Straten. *Moordenaarswerk*. Page 35.

Amsterdam den Vierde Juni 1894.
 Het gaat teggerd. ~~Deze pen is versleeten, ik kan~~
 van den Wed. Meen

~~Mr.~~ Mr. L.H.J. Lamberts Hurrelbrink
 Advocaat in
 Rechtszaken
 Heerengracht bij Utrechtstraat
 12
 Amsterdam

Wed. Meen!
 Passeerde week heb ik Udd. geschreven
 doch heb ik geen antwoord van Udd.
 ontvangen. Hier van moet ik denken
 dat Udd. mijn brief niet hebt ontvangen.
 En dat naem ik onrecht, gelijk er
 zo veel onrecht mijn aan gedaan
 is.
 Welnu mijneer: 'dinsdag kom ik voor
 het Hof. Ik verzoek beleeft Udd. maandag
 of dinsdag te mogen spreken. Zoo
 Udd. geen tijd hebt, dan zal ik wel bij
 Udd. van huis komen. want de recht,
 zij inderdaad nu nog overtuigt

dat het niets anders is dan
 wraakrecht van
 en zij bij hang.
 Maar er zijn ook geleerde
 Meeren. Hoelang het ook zij
 zij zij mij haakrechtig
 ga ik kan Udd. ~~Udd.~~ Udd. geleerde
 Meeren opnaemen die mij
 waarlijk wraakrechtig zij
 Hoort om de lappen ~~sterven~~
 domme wraakrecht loopt nu
 tegen mij aan in de ghelen meest
 schappig. Weet een rechtwaer
 dig Heer. Had zo een landel
 wijzen recht naemen? Hoeit zal
 dat recht genaemt worden? Niets anders
 dan verzonnen wraakrecht, haak, enz.
 dat is de zaak de Jong. Dat naem ik
 geen recht in ons vaderland. Meen
 den Hofd rechters zullen mijn mijn
 recht geven, zonder haak of wraakrecht.
 Zij zijn zeer sterk ontwikkeld. En daarom
 zullen zij hem verstand gebruiken. Het
 geen niets meer is dan de plicht van een
 goede rechter, die recht door reegad
 is in mijn oogen een goede rechter.
 Wed. Meen: vaarwel het zijns.
 Udd. Dienstwillige H. de Jong

Facsimile of a 1894 letter from Hendrik de Jong to his lawyer,
 from L.H.J. Lamberts Hurrelbrink's Misdadigerswereld. Valkhoff, Amersfoort, [1907].
 Courtesy Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague

Reporter: "Who are they?"

De Jong: "I won't tell. The court asked me the same question, back then."

Reporter: "Do you receive a pension as a discharged soldier?"

De Jong: "Yes, but I can collect it only in Arnhem. I would like to receive the money in England, but the minister said no to my request."

When de Jong was asked about the two vanished women, he told the whole story again. With contempt he spoke about the judiciary, and he became angry when he described how they had shown him a drowned woman, and had asked if she was one of the two disappeared wives.

De Jong: "I know nothing, sir, nothing! First my legal wife ran away with Mr. Wilson, the American, and after that Maria Schmitz spent my fortune, but where are they? I don't know! How could I?"

Reporter: Your fortune, you say? How much did you possess, then?"

de Jong: "17,000 guilders. I had earned that amount in a gambling hall in Calcutta."

Hendrik de Jong showed the journalist all kinds of documents and booklets. One attracted attention because of its contents. Everything in it was written down in a neat script.

Reporter: "What kind of book is that?"

De Jong: "Oh! I write 'thoughts' and poems into it."

The reporter reproduced a poem that de Jong had written on the birthday of the future Queen Wilhelmina:

Wilhelmina of Nassau
 Cheers now our honest heart
 In God and Her trust
 Her heart belongs to the Fatherland.
 Let the Queen build freely
 On the Heavenly support!

He had also written aphorisms in his cell, according to the journalist, who quoted one of them:

"It appears that people can be found, who have a certain joy to harm others in front of the audience and who have this as basic rule: *Il en restera toujours quelque chose*, humans, whose offended self-love is searching for an object to vomit their spleen on, for whom the virtue of others is a thorn in

the eye and who need, whatever the cost, somebody to cool their anger on.”⁷²

Reporter: “Are you content about the way you were treated in prison?”

De Jong: “Sure.”

Reporter: “Did you participate in the prison riots?”

De Jong: “No, only socialists and agitators did so; the bad people, the naughty ones.”

Reporter: “Where the beans as bad as they say?”

De Jong: “Yes, but the soup was good. Do you know that already 36 persons have been chained because of the prison uprising?”

Reporter: “Can the convicts talk with each other in prison?”

De Jong: “Yes, easily enough, especially by using the ventilation tubes. Which I never did.”⁷³

After Hendrik de Jong had given this remarkable interview, he went by carriage to the Palace of Justice, to collect the money he had earned in prison. He was observed by another journalist, who remarked that de Jong would probably leave for Australia.⁷⁴

7. BLOODSHED IN BELGIUM, 1897-1898

But Hendrik de Jong did not sail to Australia. Instead, he boarded the ‘Concordia’, a river vessel that shuttled between Rotterdam and Arnhem.⁷⁵ On board he seduced a rich widow, Mina S., and made her believe that he was August Fiels, a wealthy man who owned a factory in Utrecht and houses in Rotterdam. As he had just lost his wallet (or so he said), Mina gave him five guilders. And from then on, he extorted more money out of her, until she became suspicious and went to the police. Whilst de Jong was performing this swindle, he was staying in an Arnhem lodging house. A guest from this house accused de Jong of stealing some of his possessions. The daughter of the landlord stated that de Jong had stolen a portrait of one of her girlfriends. On September 12 1897, within a month of his release from the Amsterdam prison, de Jong was arrested again.⁷⁶ On January 11 1898, Hendrik de Jong was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for swindling and theft. After an appeal, he was acquitted, because of want of evidence. He was released in early March 1898. His lawyer in these trials was a certain Mr Aberson.⁷⁷

After his release, Hendrik de Jong must have realized that he was by now too well known in Holland to succeed in any further swindling schemes. As far as is known, de Jong left the Netherlands shortly after his acquittal in March 1898, never to return. On April 16 1898, a man using the aliases Goldons, Goldenthing, Fother Berhard and Max Kraus arrived in Ghent. He registered in multiple hotels in

this Belgian city, using a different name in each hotel. In the following months, the same man was also seen in various other Belgian towns, using different names, claiming to be extremely rich, wearing fancy clothes and promising women to marry them. One of them was young lady from Ghent, 25-year old Jeanne Pauwels, who worked in a pub. Both in appearance and in behaviour, the mysterious man very much resembled Hendrik de Jong.⁷⁸

On the night of 18 July 1898, a double murder took place in Ghent: the 46-year-old pub owner Philomène Wauters (her name is also spelled Wouters) and the waitress Jeanne Pauwels were brutally bludgeoned to death in their bedrooms above the Café Sorbonne in the Rue Plateau. The killer had tried to set the beds ablaze, but the fire was discovered at seven in the morning, and extinguished in time. At first, it was thought that the two women had suffocated from the smoke, but after examining the bodies, the police found that they had been murdered.⁷⁹

The investigation led the Belgian police detectives towards a man who had left the building an hour before the fire was discovered, carrying a suitcase. It was the same man who had used all the aliases – that it was one and the same man was discovered because all the names had been written down in the same handwriting style.⁸⁰ Later that day, the man had deposited the suitcase with the blacksmith Jean Boeye in Bruges, some 30 miles to the west of Ghent. The man told the smith that he had to go by train to Ostend, at the Belgian coast. The smith later sent the suitcase on to a hotel in Ostend. The suspect was spotted here on 20 July 1898. He had taken residence in a hotel, from which he

72 [The quoted text was not written by De Jong. He must have transcribed it from *De zoon der natuur en de man naar de wereld* (The son of nature and the man to the world), written by Dutch author O.G. Heldring in 1837 – the original version can be found in part II, pages 265 and 266]. With thanks to Koen Biesmans, who pointed us to the original writer.

73 Hendrik de Jong. [copy of the article in *Nieuwsblad van Nederland*]. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 20-08-1897.

74 De Jong op vrije voeten. *Tilburgsche Courant*, 22-08-1897.

75 The vessel was the *Concordia IV*, built in 1894. Renamed the *Stad Harderwijk* in 1926. It was dismantled in 1950.

76 Rechtbank te Arnhem. *De Graafschap-bode*, 08-01-1898.

77 [Regarding the de Jong trial]. *Middelburgsche Courant*, 26-02-1898; *Rechtzaken. Het Nieuws van den Dag*, 04-03-1898; Hendrik de Jong. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 05-03-1898.

78 ‘s-Hertogenbosch, 23 Augustus. *Provinciale Noordbrabantsche en ‘s Hertogenbossche courant*, 24-08-1898.

79 The newspaper reports on the method of killing are conflicting. In some articles it is stated that the killer had stabbed the women to death, in other reports the killer used a small kind of American pistol. In articles from the time of the trial and the verdict a hammer is mentioned as the murder weapon. Allerlei. *Provinciale Drentsche en Asser courant*, 25-07-1898; Hendrik De Jong, de moordenaar. *De Tijd*, 01-12-1900.

80 Hendrik de Jong. *Tilburgsche courant*, 21-08-1898.

disappeared in the night of 21/22 July, leaving an unpaid bill and a big suitcase behind. In this suitcase, which had recently been painted, the police found documents which belonged to the murdered women in Ghent. A leaflet, with the name of D'Jelmako, from Canada, was found glued to it.⁸¹

According to the *Leeuwarder Courant* of August 30 1898, the suspect embarked on a steam vessel bound for England on July 22, claiming that the next day, he would sail from Liverpool to New York, and from there to Buenos Aires. It is unlikely, however, that he was still on the steamer when it left Belgium, since the police found out that de Jong had stayed in a hotel in Bruges on 8 August 1898, under the alias F. Jamar.⁸² Meanwhile, a Europe-wide manhunt was started for Hendrik de Jong, as he was by now identified as the man who had left the Ghent pub shortly before the bodies of the two murdered women were discovered. Dutch police gave copies of their files on de Jong to the Belgian police, which distributed 'wanted'-leaflets with photos and a description of de Jong.⁸³ People who had the misfortune to look like Hendrik de Jong, or who had the same name, were arrested, from Austria to the Netherlands, until well into 1901.⁸⁴

But de Jong himself was nowhere to be found. The last trace of him is a letter to his lawyer, Mr Aberson from Arnhem, posted in Philadelphia in early August 1898. De Jong claims to have settled in the new world, and gives his regards to the judge and public prosecutor in Arnhem.⁸⁵ How could Hendrik de Jong post a letter in America, and at the same time stay in a Belgian hotel? If the police was correct, and de Jong had been in Bruges in the beginning of August, the answer is simple: this 'letter from America' was an attempt from de Jong to put the Belgian detectives off the scent. He could have asked somebody bound for America to post this letter over there. He was very skilled in asking favours – so why not in this case also? But it is of course also possible that the police was wrong, and that the man called F. Jamar in the Bruges hotel was not Hendrik de Jong.

8. THE ESCAPE OF HENDRIK DE JONG, 1898-1914

In January 1899 it was rumoured that Hendrik de Jong had arrived in the Dutch East Indies.⁸⁶ In the same month the Vienna police suspected that he killed a prostitute in the Austrian capital.⁸⁷ Both the rumour and the suspicion proved to be false, however: Hendrik de Jong was nowhere to be found.

In November 1900 the Belgian Justice Department reported that Hendrik de Jong would face trial for the murders of Philomène Wauters and Jeanne Pauwels in 1898. This announcement gave the Dutch press the idea that the Belgian police has at last arrested De Jong, but it would be a trial *in absentiam*.⁸⁸ No newspaper reports on the court

session could be traced; but the verdict, spoken out by the Court [Hof van Assisen] of East-Flanders on 20 December 1900, was widely published: Hendrik de Jong was found guilty of burglary, arson and murder in the Platteaustee in Ghent. The fugitive de Jong was sentenced to death and had to pay the trial costs of 2,320 Belgian francs (1,160 Dutch guilders).⁸⁹ On Friday January 11 1901, the city executioner of Brussels arrived in Ghent, where he placed a placard on the pillory at the Corn Market (Koornmarkt). On it, the death verdict against de Jong was displayed. Four policemen guarded the pillory from 11.00 to 12.00 hours, after which the executioner left with his material.⁹⁰

In the following years, whenever human remains were found in the areas where Sarah Ann Juett and Maria Sybilla Schmitz were last seen in 1893, it was rumoured that at last one of the victims of Hendrik de Jong was found.⁹¹ But it always turned out to be the remains of other people. To this day, Sarah Ann Juett and Maria Sybilla Schmitz remain missing persons. In January 1914, after the murder of a French lady in Brussels, Hendrik de Jong was named briefly as the prime suspect. As no other news articles on this case appeared in which he was mentioned, it may be assumed that the Belgian detectives had their reasons to discard him as a suspect.⁹²

- 81 *Provinciale Noordbrabantsche en 's Hertogenbossche courant*, 24-08-1898.
- 82 De beruchte Hendrik de Jong. *Leeuwarder Courant*, 30-08-1898; Hendrik De Jong. *De Locomotief*, 26-09-1898.
- 83 Leaflet Ghent police. Collection Rijksarchief Gent (Imperial Archive Ghent).
- 84 Geen Hendrik de Jong. *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 30-09-1898; Hendrik de Jong. *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 23-10-1898; Hendrik de Jong. *Leeuwarder courant*, 27-07-1901.
- 85 Hendrik De Jong. *De Locomotief*, 23-11-1898.
- 86 Hendrik de Jong. *Tilburgsche courant*, 08-01-1899; Hendrik de Jong. *Leeuwarder courant*, 09-01-1899; Hendrik de Jong! *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 09-01-1899.
- 87 Buitenlandsche Berichten. *Leeuwarder courant*, 05-01-1899.
- 88 Hendrik de Jong. *Telegraaf*, 29-11-1900; Hendrik de Jong, de moordenaar. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 30-11-1900; [Hendrik de Jong arrested?] *Arnhemsche Courant*, 30-11-1900; Hendrik de Jong. [Biography] *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 06-12-1900.
- 89 Archives of 'Hof van Assisen Oost Vlaanderen' [Court Ghent]. Inventaris van het archief van het Hof van Assisen van Oost-Vlaanderen en rechtsvoorgangers (jaar IV-1958). BE-A0514 / R81 / J. Cazaux, S. Heusequin, K. Velle. Rijksarchief Gent; Rechtzaken. Hendrik de Jong. *De Telegraaf*, 23-12-1900; Assisenhof van Oost-Vlaanderen. *'t Getrouwe Maldegheem*, 30-12-1900, page 2.
- 90 Gent. *De Volksstem*, 30-01-1901.
- 91 Een slachtoffer van Hendrik de Jong? *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 12-04-1905; Vermoeden. *De Tijd*, 13-04-1905; Een herinnering aan de moordgeschiedenissen van Hendrik de Jong. *Nieuwsblad van Friesland / Hepkema's courant*, 15-04-1905.
- 92 Hendrik de Jongh. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 19-01-1914; Hendrik de Jongh? *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 21-01-1914.

What happened to Hendrik de Jong after early August 1898 remains a mystery. Did he indeed go to America, as the letter to his last lawyer would suggest? Or did he stay in Europe? Or could it be that he tried to swindle the wrong person in or shortly after August 1898, and had to pay with his life for it? Or did he kill himself? Questions, questions, questions.

It would appear unlikely that Hendrik de Jong stayed in the Netherlands or Belgium after his escape, since in these countries, he was well known to be a murderer. Nor would it have made sense for him to go to Britain, where his murderous escapade back in 1893 had been widely publicized; moreover, here was a country with effective policing and a firm dislike for various foreign criminal elements. He might have put out as false trail for the police, and doubled back to France, Germany or Austria, but although Mr Lamberts Hurrelbrinck speaks approvingly of his linguistic skills, it remains unproven that he did master the languages of these countries well enough to fit in.

It would have made good sense, in almost every respect, for Hendrik de Jong to have escaped to the United States: a vast country with indifferent policing, a healthy population of Dutch immigrants where he could fit in perfectly, and a friendly attitude to foreign elements as long as they behaved themselves. After all, de Jong knew good English, and he was a criminal of superior intellect and cunning, having twice been able to get away with double murder. His major problem was that he entirely lacked a trade, and that unskilled labour was uncertain and badly paid. Moreover, de Jong was a very lazy man, and it is difficult to see him working as a cowboy or as a crossing-sweeper. Confidence trickery and murder was his chosen trade, and he was too old a leopard to change his spots; it would be a worthwhile study for some transatlantic Ripperologist to search the American annals of murder for cases, circa 1898-1914, fitting the known *modus operandi* of the Dutch Jack the Ripper.

In later years, the story of Hendrik de Jong and his evil acts slowly drifted out of the public memory, until it was revived by Dutch journalist and poet Hans van Straten (1923-2004). In his study *Moordenaarswerk (Murderers work, 1964, reprinted in 1990)*, he devoted five pages to the Hendrik de Jong-case. He worked through piles of newspapers from the years 1889-1897 and created, after the book of Mr. Lamberts Hurrelbrinck, the best study on this case – even though he missed the murders in Belgium, in 1898. The chapter in Hans van Straten's book formed the base of our study. We are very grateful to him.

9. WAS HENDRIK DE JONG JACK THE RIPPER?

Jack the Ripper suspects come in three categories: credible, unlikely and preposterous. I [J.B.] would tend to put Druitt, Kosminski and Tumblety in the first of these

groups; a bevy of suspects including Sir William Gull, Sickert and Klosowski in the second; an even greater crowd of suspects, Prince Albert Victor, Lewis Carroll and Frank Miles among them, in the third. For many decades, the realm of Ripperology has been confined to a relatively narrow circle of individuals with good knowledge of the case, and at least moderately sound judgment. An unwanted by-product of the Internet Age has been that any person, without regard to education, intelligence and judgment, is capable of self-publishing a book, however ludicrous its contents. The mystery of Jack the Ripper has long commanded the fascination of disturbed minds and unsound intellects, and as a result of this, the amount of obviously preposterous Ripper suspects has increased exponentially. My friend Richard Whittington-Egan used to lament, in his old age, that although he had been a keen follower of, and commentator upon, the 'ripperature' of half a century, it was no longer worthwhile to keep up with the deluge of third-rate Ripperine publications, regurgitated through CreateSpace and others of that ilk.

So, within this deluge of credible and incredible Ripper suspects, does the candidature of Hendrik de Jong have anything to recommend itself? Is he just another preposterous pseudo-suspect, brought forward by some deluded 'internet monkey', or does he have some claim to further scrutiny from the Ripperologists? We will here present the case for the prosecution, the case for the defence, and a summing-up and verdict.

CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION

There is no doubt that Hendrik de Jong was an opportunistic serial killer of women, claiming two victims in 1893 through murdering his unsuspecting wives, and another two in the Ghent 'double event' of 1898. For the first two murders, the police and prosecution were certain he was a guilty man, although he had succeeded in disposing of the two bodies through some cunning stratagem; for the second two, he was convicted and sentenced to death *in absentiam*. He thus had the killer instinct, being able to plan and execute a murder with cunning and skill, and to get away scot-free without having to face the music. He was active at the same time as Jack the Ripper. He spoke good English, and roughly fits the rather rudimentary contemporary descriptions of the Ripper. He was familiar with England in general, and London in particular. There was a story current at the time, in Glasgow and Gibraltar nautical circles, that Jack the Ripper was a Dutch ship's surgeon named 'Jungh' or 'Jongh'; it is a curious coincidence that de Jong, who may well have been afloat as a ship's steward at the time, used to affect a medical education and present himself as a ship's surgeon.

If some of the Dutch newspapers of 1893 are believed,

the evidence in favour of Hendrik de Jong being Jack the Ripper mounts up. Blood-stained surgical instruments were found among his effects when he was arrested, and he possessed several books about surgery and anatomy, with a sinister emphasis on the study of the female genitalia, and their surgical removal. Since it was speculated that he had worked as a ship's steward on a ship between Rotterdam and London, he was in an ideal position to commit the Ripper murders, and it was said to have been determined, through some stratagem or other, that his visits to London coincided with the various atrocities of the Autumn of Terror. Several people in Whitechapel, men as well as women of the streets, picked out his photograph as that of a man they had seen prowling about. It is a fact that Hendrik de Jong was known as a notorious customer of prostitutes: geographical translocation is unlikely to have satiated neither his priapistic desire for casual sex, nor his equally perverted and murderous lust for blood, making use of the knife he always carried to wreak havoc among the Whitechapel prostitutes, before making a clean getaway back to Rotterdam on his ship each and every time.

It is telling that according to some of the Dutch newspapers, both men and women in Whitechapel recognized Hendrik de Jong when they were shown his photograph by a Dutch detective. In the autumn of 1888, de Jong was active cheating Catherine Schermeljé out of her money, something that is unlikely to have taken up all his time and talents. It is a pity that nothing certain is known about his nautical career in 1888, except that in January 1889, he was to be found at the Rotterdam seaman's hostel, an unlikely place for him to be had he not been working as a sailor from this port. The reason the Ripper killings ceased was of course that de Jong started another, more ambitious fraudulent scam in January 1889, and that he was arrested in April that year, subsequently spending more than two years in prison for this swindle.

A key problem in Ripperology is the dogma of the 'Doctor in the Thames', originating in the mind of the veteran theorist George R. Sims, and fiercely debated ever since, although the remains of no medical man of any description were in fact found floating in the river at the relevant time. There is a strong case that the suspect Montague John Druitt, who really committed suicide soon after the murder of Mary Jane Kelly, was the person alluded to by Sims and Macnaghten. The Doctor in the Thames has left a long-lasting legacy, namely that many people found it likely that the career of Jack the Ripper came to an end soon after the murder of Mary Kelly. Either he committed suicide, died from disease, or was incarcerated in some hospital or asylum. This has meant that suspects who came to a sticky end not long after the Autumn of Terror have received close attention, whereas those living long and rewarding lives after that awful glut in Miller's Court have been seen as less likely candidates. If we

accept the 1893 version that Hendrik de Jong was a sailor or ship's steward in 1888, then we also have a legitimate reason why the Ripper murders ceased: de Jong started another, more demanding swindle in January 1889, and gave up his Rotterdam nautical career; he ended up in prison in April 1889, and remained incarcerated until May 1892. He then resumed his sanguineous career, disposing of his two wives in 1893, before going to prison once more, and having his lust for blood reawakened a few months later, in 1898.

The reason we quoted at length from Mr Lamberts Hurrelbrinck's first-hand description of his encounter with Hendrik de Jong is that it offers, to a much greater extent than the newspaper reports, some degree of understanding of de Jong's character. His own defending counsel described him as a sociopath and a pathological liar, a man entirely without empathy and conscience, with a fixation with women and a depraved moral sense, but yet remaining intelligent, cunning and strong-willed. Is that not a 'profile' of the Whitechapel Fiend, Jack the Ripper himself?

CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

What is alleged against Hendrik de Jong is, firstly, that two of his 'wives' disappeared mysteriously in 1893. Since they were never seen again, it was widely presumed that de Jong had done away with them, but since the bodies were never found, he did not stand trial for these crimes. It is of not infrequent occurrence that the police is convinced about the guilt of some high-profile murder suspect, only for the case against this individual to be found, after careful independent review of the evidence, to be much less formidable than presumed at the time; for the defence, call the ghost of Robert Wood, tried for the Camden Town Murder of 1907! It is not contested that Hendrik de Jong was convicted, *in absentiam* and under somewhat peculiar circumstances, for a double murder in Ghent in 1898, with allegations that he had previously involved the two female victims in one of his swindling schemes. It should be remembered, however, that the evidence against him, as provided by the contemporary local newspapers, seems sketchy to say the least, and that an unsolved murder creates a *horror vacui* that might prompt a miscarriage of justice; for the defence, call Barry George, alias Mad Barry, of Jill Dando framing infamy!

Whereas the press coverage of the Maidenhead Mystery and the disappearance of Hendrik de Jong's two wives was reasonably factually accurate, the same cannot be said about the irresponsible speculation in the boulevard newspapers, alleging that de Jong was identical to Jack the Ripper. The statement that medical textbooks, and blood-stained surgical instruments, had been found among de Jong's effects, seems particularly suspect: why were these alleged textbooks, and spectral surgical knives, never seen or photographed? According to a Finnish newspaper, their

existence was debated in the press at the time, and there were counterclaims that they “only existed in the too active fantasy of a journalist”. The same newspaper continues: “Standing idle in Amsterdam waiting for news, the numerous special correspondents of the large English and American papers have invented some thrilling new ‘developments’ for their editors. After the borrowed plumage is plucked from the alleged ‘Ripper’, one feather at the time, what remains looks more like a very ordinary criminal, if even that.”⁹³

Since no evidence exists that Hendrik de Jong was ever in England before early November 1892, when he was ‘nabbed’ by the customs officers in his cabin aboard the Lowther Castle in Middlesbrough harbour, the question if Hendrik de Jong was the same person as the killer known as Jack the Ripper, can be answered quite simply: No, he was not. Jack the Ripper killed at least five Whitechapel women from August 31 until November 9 1888, mutilated the bodies, and left them in places where they were likely to be found. During this period, Hendrik de Jong was staying with his fiancée, Catharina Schermeljé, in Amsterdam, The Hague and Antwerp. When de Jong was arrested in 1893, on suspicion of having murdered Sarah Ann Juett and Maria Sybilla Schmitz, Ms Schermelje reported extensively on her time with De Jong, during the second half of 1888. Her statement must have reached the London detectives who came over to the Netherlands in October 1893, to investigate whether de Jong was Jack the Ripper, and it may well have been her statement that cleared him of this suspicion.

It is of course possible that Hendrik de Jong, living in Rotterdam or some other great seaport with good boat connections to England, could have made trips to London, to slaughter a prostitute over there, and return home the next day. But why would he do so? Amsterdam had 400 000 inhabitants in 1890⁹⁴, Antwerp some 300 000.⁹⁵ If de Jong had any desire to kill anonymous prostitutes, he could have done so much more safely in one of these cities, although there is no evidence however that de Jong ever had such a desire. Hendrik de Jong’s *modus operandi* was entirely different from that of Jack the Ripper: he was basically a con artist preying on lonely and vulnerable women, who made the ‘career change’ to murderer in 1893, after spending two and a half years in jail for swindling. No one knows why De Jong decided to kill Sarah Ann Juett and Maria Sybilla Schmitz, although it may be speculated that he did so because these two women found out he was a swindler, and threatened to go to the police; wishing to avoid another lengthy and disagreeable jail term, he killed them and successfully hid their bodies. The same assumption can be made regarding the Ghent double murder of 1898, or was this perhaps a ‘simple’ case of robbery with murder? Hendrik de Jong made concerted and successful efforts to conceal the murders he committed, whereas Jack the Ripper did

not seem to care about that aspect of his macabre business. Both of them were serial killers. Both of them were active around the same time. Both of them have disappeared. But here the similarity ends.

SUMMING-UP AND VERDICT

As a previously overlooked near-contemporary suspect, who attracted much newspaper publicity in the Continental papers of late 1893, Hendrik de Jong is definitely a person of interest to Ripperologists. His activities in the second half of 1888, in between being released from the mental hospital and moving to Arnhem in May 1888, and leaving the Rotterdam seaman’s hostel where he had been living in January 1889, remain largely unknown. It would greatly have strengthened the case against him if there had been independent corroboration of the 1893 newspaper reports that he had worked intermittently as a steward on board a ship from Rotterdam to London, and that his visits to the Metropolis coincided with the Whitechapel Murders.

It was stated in the press that while Hendrik de Jong was in police custody in 1893, a Dutch detective went to London, to show his photograph to people in Whitechapel, who recognized him as a man they had seen. Another curious statement comes from the *De Tijd* newspaper: “A Dutchman who recently returned from England told *De Handelsblad* (Dutch newspaper) that the English police, who for a while thought Hendrik de Jong was Jack the Ripper, is now, after investigating the matter, convinced he is not and stopped making inquiries in this direction.” This would seem to suggest that the Metropolitan Police reopened its Ripper files in 1893, to make some inquiries into de Jong’s purported candidature, perhaps even going to the extent of sending a detective or two to Amsterdam to liaise with the Dutch police. It is a pity that these exertions have gone entirely undocumented, since it would have been interesting indeed to know why the London police decided to take de Jong seriously as a Ripper suspect, and what circumstances persuaded them to write him off from further inquiries. There must once have been a ‘Hendrik de Jong’ folder among the Metropolitan Police Ripper files, but it is no longer there today, having been lost, mislaid, pilfered by some constable who was after the foreign stamps, or transferred to the Special Branch due to its spicy contents. Some Dutch Belgian court and police documents do survive, but they provide nothing with regard to the question if Hendrik de Jong was Jack the Ripper.

93 Västra Nyland, 03-11-1893.

94 Statistiek. *De Grondwet*, 03-08-1890.

95 Lieve Saerens. Table 6. Population in Antwerp (1880-1910) [Page 29]. *Vreemdelingen in een wereldstad. Een geschiedenis van Antwerpen en zijn joodse bevolking (1880-1944)*. Lannoo, [Tielt], [2000].

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Tribunal de Première Instance de Gand.

CABINET

de M. le Juge d'Instruction de RYCKMAN.

AFFAIRE N° 238.

3 Signalement et Portraits

du nommé **HENRI DE JONG**,
fils de Guillaume et de Jeanne Greevink,
né à Weesper-Carspel (Pays-Bas) le 5 oc-
tobre 1861, sujet Néerlandais, époux
divorcé de Jeanne Deynema, remarié avec
Sarah-Anna Juett à Maedentad (Angle-
terre) le 15 Juin 1893, ayant en dernier
lieu demeuré et été détenu à Arnhem, inscrit
ensuite à Anvers, actuellement fugitif ou
latitant.

Taille : 1m73 ou 1m74;
Visage : ovale;
Cheveux et sourcils : châtain foncé
(il est possible qu'il se teigne); raie au
milieu de la tête;
Front : haut et large;
Yeux : Gris-blanc ou bleu-de-ciel,
absolument caractéristiques et laissant
une impression ineffaçable; **regard**
dur;
Nez : pointu;
Bouche : petite; lèvres assez fines;
belle denture;
Menton : large et saillant;

1, 2. — Portraits faits à Arnhem en 1893, lors du mariage de de Jong
avec Sarah-Anna Juett.
3, 4, 5. — Portraits faits en 1897 ou 1898, pendant que de Jong était
détenu en Hollande.

Oreilles : percées, un peu écartées de la tête;
Teint : pâle, peau mate;
Barbe : aucune, ou seulement une petite moustache foncée, que souvent il rase;
Mains : grandes;
Corpulence : moyenne; solidement bâti;

Signes particuliers : **plusieurs verrues** sur la figure, notamment au-dessus de l'œil droit et à côté de
l'oreille droite; jambes légèrement arquées;

Vêtements les plus usuels : costume gris foncé ou costume noir; long pardessus beige à grands boutons; col
droit à pointes rabattues, cravate blanche pendante; manchettes; chapeau boule noir avec doublure en soie noire et cuir
de même couleur; bottines à lacets ou souliers vernis; mis comme un monsieur, mais sans goût et ressemblant plutôt à
un domestique de bonne maison;

Accessoires de toilette : Montre en argent, chaîne en or à gros anneaux; portefeuille de poche avec tête de
cheval; étui à cigares en cuir, ayant la forme d'un gant; canne à pommeau rond en argent ou métal approchant;
presque toujours un marteau sur lui (du moins autrefois en Hollande); petite valise recouverte d'une enveloppe en
toile grise et grand sac de marin;

A 1898 leaflet from the Justice Department of Ghent, 1898, with pictures of Hendrik de Jong.
Collection Rijksarchief Gent. Courtesy Arie Vestering / Ons Amsterdam magazine.

What this article has achieved is to grant Hendrik de Jong membership in a select club of Ripper suspects: namely that consisting of serial killers of women who were active at the same time as Jack the Ripper, but with a different *modus operandi*. The Borough Poisoner, Severin Klosowski, who sadistically poisoned his wives, is something of the doyen of this club, since he was taken seriously as a suspect by leading theorist Philip Sugden as late as 1994. The club members also include Frederick Bailey Deeming, who murdered his wife and three children at Dinham Villa, Rainhill, Liverpool, in 1891, and his second wife in Melbourne, Australia, the following year. Thomas Neill Cream, who poisoned four prostitutes in Lambeth in 1891 and 1892, is yet another member, although he has since been struck off as a serious Ripper suspect since he was incarcerated for murder in Joliet Prison, Illinois, during late 1888. Deeming's candidature has also been undermined, by the fact that he appears to have been in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, in August 1888, before rejoining his family in their suburban Liverpool villa.

A fascinating twist to the mystery of Hendrik de Jong is provided by the fact that his ultimate fate remains entirely unknown. It is highly likely that this cunning and resourceful criminal made his escape from Ghent, quite possibly to the United States, where he could resume his sanguineous career. Did the carefree, tobacco-chewing Hendrik the Cowboy fart thunderously after eating white beans, and gun down a Red Indian or two with his trusty Colt revolver, just for the fun of it; did the slimy, insinuating Hendrik the Swindler seduce and then rob a number of trusting American ladies, murdering those who proved difficult or recalcitrant; did the psychopathic, blood-crazed Hendrik the Ripper kill and kill again, in a transatlantic Autumn of Terror, until his lust for blood had finally been satiated – for the time? We will never know, but it seems very suitable to end with an obituary written by Guy Logan in his *Masters of Crime*, equally suited to Jack the Ripper and to the fugitive Hendrik de Jong: "Some where, some when, this monster died, whether by suicide, in a lunatic asylum, or quietly in his own bed, and took with him his fearful secret. The truth can never be known now."

NOTES

Dutch place names

The spelling of place names in the Netherlands is sometimes confusing. The city that English speaking people know as The Hague is called 's-Gravenhage or Den Haag by Dutch speaking persons. Den Bosch and 's-Hertogenbosch are two names for the same city.

Dutch newspapers

Most Dutch newspaper articles can be traced via www.delpher.nl, the historical newspapers and magazines archive of the Netherlands National Library.

Main archival sources

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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*.

BART FM DROOG is chief editor of the *Nederlandse Poëzie Encyclopedie* (*Dutch Poetry Encyclopedia*), an investigative journalist and poet. He has published some fifteen books, amongst these an anthology of modern true crime murder ballads.

Musings on Bucks Row

By STEVEN BLOMER

I have been conducting extensive research on the events surrounding the murder of Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols for the past twelve months, embracing the peripheral figures and events, and not just those central to the actual discovery of the body.

These include the three slaughtermen from Harrison, Barber in Winthrop Street, Mumford, Brittain and Tomkins; the two workhouse/mortuary attendants, Mann and Hatfield, and the nightwatchman, Mulshaw.

In the following article I shall endeavour to cast light on these persons, how they have been portrayed in the past and if this portrayal is fair.

Starting with the mortuary attendants Robert Mann and James Hatfield, these two unfortunate characters were both also inhabitants of the workhouse and have been portrayed as being slow-witted and unreliable. Mann has even been suggested as a possible candidate for the Ripper himself.¹

Robert Mann stated that he arrived at the mortuary at about 5am on the morning of 31st August 1888 and unlocked the building, Polly’s body at this stage being on the ambulance in the yard. The body was then moved into the building and it was at this point that the additional abdominal wounds were noticed. Dr Llewellyn was sent for, arriving just after 5.30 and he carried out a brief examination of the abdominal wounds for the next ten to fifteen minutes.²

Mann says that he then locked the mortuary and went for breakfast. He says the body was not undressed until after breakfast, when Hatfield arrived at around 6.30. We are not sure if they arrived back at the mortuary

separately or together.³

We now move on to the major issue concerning the two attendants. Did they receive instructions to undress the victim? Were any police present when this was done?

There is plenty of apparently contradictory evidence in the comments by three police officers, Inspector Spratling, Inspector Helson and Sergeant Enright.

Spratling’s testimony over the course of the inquest contradicts itself on face value. First, he says he was not present when the body was undressed.⁴ However, he is also reported as saying he saw two men undress the body.⁵ And then there is one report that states the body was undressed to allow Llewellyn to conduct his 5.30 examination.⁶

It is obvious that they cannot all be correct, and indeed Mann says the body was not undressed until

1 *Jack the Ripper: Quest for a Killer* by M.J. Trow, 2009.

2 *Daily News*, 4th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 16- Spratling Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

3 *The Times*, 18th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 13- Mortuary Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

4 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3rd September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 16- Spratling Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

5 *The Times*, 4th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 16- Spratling Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

6 *Evening News*, 3rd September. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 16- Spratling Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

after breakfast, which must have been after Llewellyn's examination. What we almost certainly have is muddled and inaccurate reporting.

There is further confusion when Coroner Wynne Baxter asked who gave the authority to the attendants to undress the body. Many reports state that Spratling said he gave no instructions to do so, while in other reports this comment comes from Sergeant Enright, who says he told the men not to touch the body. The reports are often unclear as to what statements belong to which policeman.



Later at the inquest on 17th, Spratling changed his response to say he implicitly told Mann and Hatfield not to touch the body.

Mann claims he locked and left the mortuary for breakfast at approximately 6am after Llewellyn had examined the abdominal wounds, and Hatfield did not arrive for another 30 minutes.

This leads to a problem. If both Mann and Hatfield were given this instruction, how did it actually happen?

It must mean, if the police testimony is true, that the police waited either in the yard or inside the locked mortuary until the return from breakfast of Mann and the subsequent arrival of Hatfield. It is most odd.

Baxter was not so concerned with the giving of instructions to strip the body, but he was that no record appeared to have been taken of the removal of clothing, saying he wished to see those who did the undressing and on Abberline's suggestion the clothes are sent for too.

This all seems very strange, given what followed a few minutes later at the inquest on the 3rd, when Inspector Helson gave his testimony. He made it very clear that when he arrived at the mortuary, between 8.00 and 9.00am, the body was still clothed, and he was present when it was stripped.⁷

If that was indeed the case, why do we have all this confusion and contradictory statements from Spratling and Enright? After Helson gave his testimony all seemed to be back on track so to speak, until Mann and Hatfield appeared on the 17th.

Mann said Helson was not present when they undressed the body; despite repeated questions from Baxter the most he said is that he was not sure, given in just one press report.

Mann also reported that they received no instructions to undress the body, which is odd given that Helson claimed to have been present and that he - Mann - did not know a doctor was coming.

While the testimony indeed seems weak and at odds with that of Helson, it does actually sit much better which what is implied by Spratling and Enright on the 3rd.

Baxter told the jury that as Mann suffered from fits and was unwell, they should disregard his testimony as unreliable. This response is very indicative of the times, when epilepsy was almost seen as a form of stupidity and, indeed, mental illness.

It is a great shame that Baxter took this line, as it prevented questions being asked which could have clarified matters further.

However, Hatfield agreed with much of what Mann said; they were given no instructions and were "quite alone" when they stripped the body.⁸

This should have encouraged Baxter to address the matter more fully. Unfortunately, this did not happen because when discussing the stays Hatfield claimed he did not know if the victim was wearing any. This drew a response from the jury, who reminded Hatfield that he had joked around with them when the jury visited the mortuary - what we would today term inappropriate behaviour. In response, Hatfield claimed he had a bad memory and Baxter at once stepped in to say they could get no more from Hatfield because of his memory.

However, he did remember Helson being on site and instructing him to cut the Lambeth Workhouse label out of the petticoats. So his memory was not that bad.

The description given of how the clothing was removed and that it was just left to lie in a heap, firstly inside the mortuary and by noon in the yard, makes one question if the police really were present and observing the procedure. Helson seemed firm, however the testimony

7 *The Star*, 3rd September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 14- Helson Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

8 *Daily News*, 18th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 13- Mortuary Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

of Spratling and Enright brings even this into question, particularly when Spratling gave his updated version of events on the 17th, when there was no need for such if the body was still dressed when Helson arrived.

Baxter showed a great deal of frustration and resignation to the whole series of events surrounding the mortuary.

I started by thinking there was no chance that the body was undressed with no officer in attendance, now I am not so sure. Indeed, I would suggest on the balance of probability that no one was present, or at least no one was taking much notice.

We now turn to the question of the slaughtermen from Harrison, Barber in Winthrop Street and the somewhat confusing tale they tell.

Only one of them was actually called to the inquest to give testimony; Henry Tomkins. It is of some interest that Tomkins was the man called to the inquest - did the police just randomly pick one of the three? Did he volunteer? Or was he put forward by the other two?

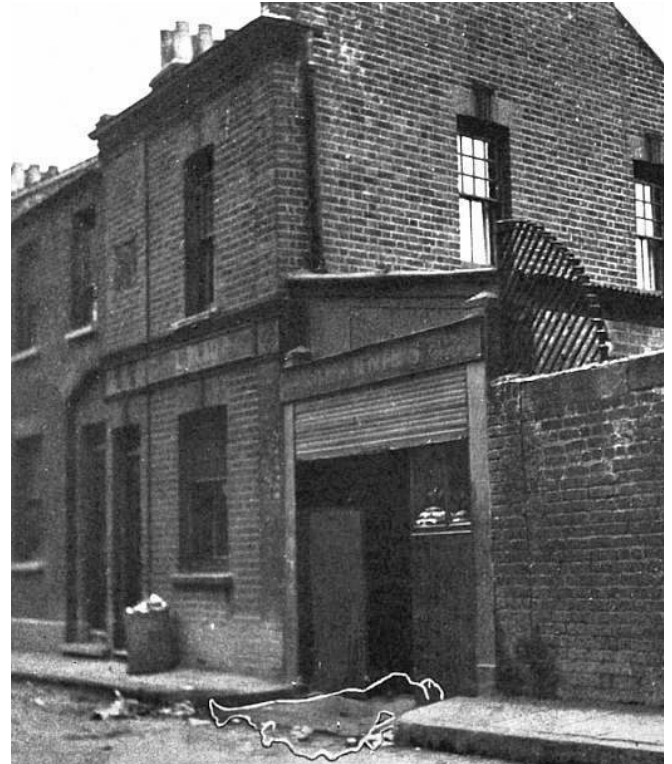
Tomkins is a very interesting character. He was the newest of the three workers, having arrived in London in the April of 1888. He could therefore be seen in some respects as the least experienced of the three. However, he had been brought up in the trade since a youngster, and was very experienced at the work. In fact, his father William had worked for the very same company in the 1870s (although ownership had changed) at the Belle Isle yard in Islington. However, William Tomkins had been discovered to be stealing meat from the employer. Both he and his accomplice, a man named Dawes, were prosecuted and Tomkins Sr was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

After his release from prison, William moved north to Newton Heath just outside Manchester, and worked with his sons as horse slaughtermen. They returned to London in late 1887 or early 1888 and lived not far from Winthrop Street.

It seems that the founder of Harrison, Barber, John Harrison, may have sold out his share of the business around 1887, but it seems unlikely that Alfred Barber at Winthrop Street was not aware of the Tomkins family history. The world of horse slaughtering was a small one.

William died in April 1888, his body being found outside of the slaughter yard by one of his sons. Unfortunately we do not know which of Henry, Thomas or Robert this was. He was apparently in an alcoholic coma and did not recover. A point of interest is that the inquest was conducted by none other than Mr Wynne Baxter, thus it is possible that Henry had met Baxter before and his response to Baxter at times at the Polly Nichols inquest may in part be due to

this earlier meeting.



*Bucks Row
from Jack the Ripper: A New Theory by William Stewart*

Apart from the three slaughtermen on site, there was the boss, Alfred Barber, one supposes asleep upstairs for much of the night, and in theory also an official called Inspector of Houses (etc) for Horse Slaughtering, or more commonly the Horse Coroner. This individual was meant to examine every animal before slaughter, however it seems possible that all were examined at the same time, early in the night, and the official did not remain on site.

The position did not require any special qualifications. Gary Barnett has recently discovered that the Inspector for Whitechapel was one John Hall.

It seems probable that for most of the night the three men were effectively left alone and unsupervised. It is true that Barber could have entered at any point, but when one reads Mumford's press interview it seems this did not happen often.⁹

When we look at the testimony of Tomkins several things stand out; an apparent misogynistic outlook, and an attitude toward Baxter, almost going out of his way to avoid giving clear answers on several occasions.

The testimony of Tomkins can be, and is seen by many, as being misogynistic - but is it really?

9 *The Echo*, 4th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 15- The Slaughter House Men Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

He was a married man, and his testimony seems to be more about the type of women who may have come to the yard. He was well aware of them and said he did not like them, and had nothing to do with them even if they come to the yard, which it appears they did.

Tomkins indeed made a very big thing about his dislike of women, almost complaining too much. One wonders if he was trying to stop any suggestion of visits, or maybe even use of the yard. One must admit there is nothing to support any such idea. Alternatively, he may have just been attempting to say he did not mix with them to project his marriage.

Author and researcher Tom Wescott in his recent book quotes a letter from a Col. Fraser dated October 3rd, stating one of the three slaughtermen is known to hate women.¹⁰ However, this view may be taken from the inquest reports rather than local knowledge or opinion, given the letter is dated after the inquest.

It is clear from his questioning of Tomkins that Baxter wanted to know if prostitutes visited the yard. What we do not know is why he asked this question. Was he wondering if Nichols had been to the yard before her death? Perhaps he was trying to ascertain if the yard was frequented on a regular basis? The truth that is we have no way of knowing what Mr. Baxter was thinking, or the reasons for his questions.

Before leaving this particular issue, we should look at what another slaughterman, Mumford, said in an interview to the *Echo* on 4th September. He confirmed that women came to the yard, but made no mention of how often. The interview includes the following comment about there being number of lodging houses in the area: "Why don't the police go to some of the lodging-houses so well known about here?"

This can be interpreted to suggest that these may not just be lodging houses. Interestingly, when Mrs. Green gave her inquest testimony, she was asked by a juror about there being such houses in Thomas Street but she claimed ignorance, just saying there are none in Bucks Row.¹¹

It is also to be noted that a report of 19th September by Inspector Abberline stated "Bucks Row is a narrow quiet thoroughfare frequented by prostitutes for immoral purposes at night."¹²

One wonders where this information came from; was it just gossip, or something more?

We then have the issue of who the slaughtermen saw that night between 1am and 4.15. They claim to have seen only PC Thain, when he came to collect his cape. Tomkins gave this information when pressed by Baxter - he did not volunteer the information and only admitted it when asked a direct question. He claimed that Thain left his cape

because it was a fine night, but did not comment about what time this occurred.

There are major issues here. If the only person seen was Thain - at 4.15 to collect his cape - how did the cape get there? If Tomkins was telling the truth it must have been left before 1am.

PC Neil said that he saw the slaughtermen between 3.15 and 3.20.^{13,14} It is of course possible they did not see him, but it seems unlikely.

Something here does not ring true. Is it just an accidental omission or something else? Why did Baxter not ask for clarification? It may be that by that stage he was frustrated by Tomkins' already somewhat evasive answers and it slipped his mind. Or he did ask, and the question and answer was not recorded by any of the attending press? Or perhaps it was not deemed pertinent to the aim of the inquest.

Moving on to the issue of the slaughtermen going to Bucks Row, there is no mention of seeing nightwatchman Patrick Mulshaw, although some have suggested the man who spoke to him may have been Charles Brittain, the third slaughterman. However, there is little to support this idea other than he apparently stayed behind, according to Tomkins, and arrived later. It could equally have been the unnamed man whom PC Neil saw walking down Bucks Row after Dr Llewellyn arrived.

At first, when asked by Mr. Baxter about who was already on site, Tomkins appeared to be very evasive about the men reportedly seen there. This includes not being precise, but rather vague in replying, and even claiming he cannot read, exposes himself to some ridicule.

He also claimed that he didn't notice much as he was in a hurry. If so, why did he linger at the murder site?

Mr. Baxter asked a specific question: "Are you sure there were not three people there?"

Why three people?

It is true Mr. Purkiss said two or three, however he did not give his testimony until 17th September, and PC Neil suggested just two people.

Eventually Baxter got the following information from Tomkins.

10 *Ripper Confidential* by Tom Wescott, Chapter 6.

11 *Evening Standard*, 18th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 8- Green Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

12 Ref. MEPO 3/140, ff. 242-56

13 *Daily Telegraph*, 3rd September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 4 - Neil Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

14 *Daily News*, 3rd September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 4 - Neil Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

When he arrived in Bucks Row he saw three to four policemen, possibly including a sergeant. He also said the doctor was present. And finally he agreed that two men were there.

The police and the doctor can be accounted for, but who were the men?

Neil claimed that the slaughtermen were the first to arrive,¹⁵ however he also says there are two men who had been knocked up in the immediate vicinity of the murder site. This has lead me to ask whether they be Purkiss and Green?



However, Purkiss clearly refuted this when he talked of two or three men being there when he looked from his window overlooking the murder site.¹⁶ This appears to discount Purkiss being one of Neil's men, or at least it makes him a further person in addition to those he himself saw. So if Purkiss is not one of the men reported by Neil, who could they be?

Of those we know of whom the police claim were knocked up, we are left with only Green, Lilley and possibly the watchman in Schneider's factory. Could they be these three unknown men?

It should also be noted that Purkiss did not say if he recognised any of these men or not. If they were in effect his neighbours, would one not expect him to say so?

One must note that Neil said that the slaughtermen arrived when body was about to go onto an ambulance, and that they were the first members of the general public to arrive, apart from a man who passed by unknown.

Again, something is not right. It just doesn't ring true.

The whole behaviour and story of the slaughtermen is

odd to say the least. There are without a doubt lies told and truths withheld. The men cannot even agree on who went to Bucks Row. Was this just a bad attempt to cover for them leaving the yard unattended?

It may be that the men were just trying to say that no bad women ever came to them at night. Or, maybe, they are scamming their boss on hours. Perhaps there is a link to working girls meeting clients around the area of Bucks Row, Winthrop Street and the yard, which they just did not want to discuss?

Further research is needed to allow any hope of addressing these issues.

Finally, Chief Inspector Donald Swanson, in his report of 19th October, says there is no evidence against the men at all. So, unless new research turns up something to counter this, it is nothing more than an interesting sideline on Bucks Row.

Let's look at Mulshaw, the nightwatchman. His positioning is interesting, as he said he was about 50 yards from the slaughterhouse. Yet in some reports it states 70 yards. He also gave a straight-line distance from the murder site to his location. In one report this is given as 70 yards, yet in another it is given as 30 yards. It is interesting that 70 yards appears more than once, and maybe there was some confusion and misreporting. When one looks at a map, 30 yards seems more likely.

Mulshaw did a very long 13 hour shift, starting at 5pm and finishing at 6am. It would therefore not be surprising if he did fall asleep at some stage, which he freely admitted. It is obvious from his replies that he did sleep at various times throughout his shift. When directly asked if he was asleep between 3.00 and 4.00am, he replied: "I don't think so", or, as another version states, "He did not think he slept between 3-4."

Several reports claim that he was not asleep between 3 and 4am, but no direct quote is given and so this information could be taken from his statement: "I don't think so."¹⁷

Of more interest is his response to the following question from the Coroner: "Would you have heard any cry from where the woman lay?" Mulshaw replied, "I can't say that I should."

In all, it seems he was not sure he would have heard anything, and that he may have been dozing for much of the night.

15 *Daily Telegraph*, 3rd September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 4 - Neil Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

16 *Evening Standard*, 18th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 9 - Purkiss Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

17 Ref. HO 144/221/A49301C, ff. 129-34.



His comments about the police are interesting. He should, over a 13 hour period, have seen a policeman 26 times if it was an approximately 30 minute beat. However, he claims he only saw an officer every two hours.¹⁸

He says that the police did not come around often and that he only saw two that night, one being identified as PC Neil, but Mulshaw was unable to state when he saw him.

This raises several questions:

1. Was Mulshaw asleep, and so missed the police patrols?
2. Alternatively, knowing there was a watchman at the western end of Winthrop Street, did the police cut that part of their beat on a regular basis? It is certainly possible.
3. Who was the other police officer? It could have been the constable on duty before Neil, or it could be Thain. At some stage it seems Thain did go to the slaughterhouse to collect his cape. Or it could be some other unknown policeman.

Mulshaw also claimed that he was approached by a stranger who told him there had been a murder in Bucks Row. It was reported that this occurred at 4.40,¹⁹ and that Mulshaw went to Bucks Row and saw Dr Llewellyn. However, this timing seems too late given other testimony, and so is very probably wrong.²⁰

It has been suggested that this person could have been one of the slaughtermen. But, given he had been working at that site for some time, would they be unknown to one another? He may not have known their names, but surely he would have seen them?

This incident may well relate to the man seen passing down Bucks Row who was neither stopped nor identified.

Overall, the impression one gets of Mulshaw is of a man who did not pay too much attention to what was going on around him.

The reports indicate that he was unsure about much of what he said, and therefore the reliability of his testimony must be viewed with some skepticism.

I hope this article has put some of these peripheral characters in the Bucks Row murder into a better focus, dispelled some myths, and suggested some other ideas.

I would like to acknowledge the information supplied by Gary Barnett on the background to Tomkins and Harrison, Barber.

18 *Evening Standard*, 18th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 10 - Mulshaw Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

19 *Evening Standard*, 18th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 10 - Mulshaw Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.

20 *The Echo*, 17th September 1888. Other reports in the Bucks Row Project part 2, post 10 - Mulshaw Casebook.org & JTRForums.com.



STEVEN BLOMER is a former employee of both Kings College London and the Medical Research Council, where he worked for over 30 years in medical research. He took early retirement In 2015, and now divides his time between watching cricket, Egyptology and full time research on the Whitechapel murders. For the past year he has been working on a research project on the murder in Bucks Row.

Disappearing into History

By TIM MOSLEY and SCOTT NELSON

In the previous article of this series, *Murder Most Foul*, we hypothesized about Jack the Ripper's possible motives or reasons for committing the Whitechapel Murders. We now ask why, at the pinnacle of his success, he disappeared into history.

Just why *did* the Ripper discontinue the Whitechapel Murders so abruptly and so dramatically and disappear without a trace? What conceivable motive or reason could have led such a successful serial killer to stop killing suddenly, when he apparently had, on the average, been claiming a new victim every two weeks over the previous ten? Many Ripper luminaries have evaded this troublesome issue altogether. Philip Sugden, for instance, remarked curtly: 'The Ripper, for whatever reason, had gone.'¹ Was the real reason for the prior cessation of the murders between the Double Event and Kelly the massive build-up of police presence in the East End, or was there some hidden reason for the Ripper's vanishing? Conventional wisdom on this thorny subject is quite limited in scope. This mindset is well represented in the following excerpts from CourtTV's *Crimelibrary* website.²

When Do Serial Killers Stop Killing?

When does a serial killer stop? Either when they are caught or killed. Very few have turned themselves in. Only Ed Kemper called the police to confess, and waited at a phone booth to be picked up. Recently, a Humboldt county truck driver walked into a police station with a female breast in his pocket as proof of his deeds. Some plead to be caught, yet coyly disappear before the cops arrive to arrest them. William Heirens wrote his memorable message ('For heavens sake catch me before I kill more I cannot control myself') in bizarre, red lipstick cursive on the wall, while his victim lay dead, shot and stabbed in the neck. If there are any serial killers who quit because they were satiated or bored, we cannot know because they are not in captivity [apart from a very few serial killers like Dennis Rader].

Some claim that if they could they would have indulged in mass destruction. The 'Vampire of Dusseldorf' Peter Kurten said 'the more people the better. Yes if I had the means of doing so, I would have killed whole masses of people -- brought about catastrophes.' When Carl Panzram wasn't fantasizing about poisoning towns with arsenic, he spent his time plotting a grand scheme to incite war between the British and the Americans. 'I believe the whole human race should be exterminated, I'll do my best to do it every chance I get,' he told a jury before their deliberation (they sentenced him to death in less than a minute.)



Peter Kurten

- 1 Sugden, Philip: *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, London, Robinson, revised 2002
- 2 CourtTV: web.archive.org/web/*/crimelibrary.com

Are There Any 'Reformed' Serial Killers?

Fortunately, our society is not willing to risk the opportunity to find out by releasing them. In fact, one of the most outspoken critics of 'reform' is a serial killer himself, the unrepentant Carl Panzram: 'I have no desire to reform myself. My only desire is to reform people who try to reform me. And I believe that the only way to reform people is to kill 'em. My Motto is, Rob 'em all, Rape 'em all and Kill 'em all.'

Conclusion: 'A person was a blank'

In the end, all we can conclude is that serial killers are human black holes. That they are so normal, so generic, so invisible, they terrify us because they mirror us. Henry Lee Lucas grimly proclaimed that 'All across the country, there's people just like me, who set out to destroy human life.' Many of them describe themselves as having a piece missing, something dead within, or as Bundy said, a void inside. Not only are the victims 'a blank' to the killer, as Lucas put it, they are blank to themselves. 'What I wanted to see was the death, and I wanted to see the triumph, the exultation over the death. . . . In other words, I was winning over death. They were dead and I was alive. That was a victory in my case,' mused Ed Kemper. In other words, 'Get a life' becomes 'Take a life.'

Killing others is not an attempt to fill the void, but to spread the void. To make the other into a lifeless object mimics the killers own lifelessness. 'It didn't mean nothing, it just didn't mean nothing,' said DeSalvo. 'It was so senseless that it makes sense, you know?'

The serial killer lives on the other side of our social boundaries. He is an embodiment of the darkness, desire, and power that we must repress within ourselves. He is not a creature of reason, but of excess and transgression and voracious appetites - selfish, carnal desire. He breaks the social rules that confine the rest of us - our outrage keeps the boundaries intact, while our curiosity can explore the dark recesses of our own repressed desires from a safe distance. He crosses the line into a world of mayhem and depravity. We recoil at their bloody antics, but remain transfixed.

The main fault with conventional and mainstream explanations such as these is that they completely discount *motive*, presuming instead that all serial killers are driven by more or less the same irresistible pathological urges and lusts, generally sexual in nature. Earlier in this series, we underlined that we must think 'out of the box' and not blindly assume that the Ripper was *necessarily* like any Ripper authority, professional criminologist, or other expert thinks that he 'was' or 'must' have been. Ordinary and traditional thinking have got us virtually nowhere over the last 129 years. We must therefore exhaust all other credible possibilities if we hope ever to see the

mystery solved in our lifetimes.

To understand why the murders stopped, it may be necessary to understand why they started in the first place. Many explanations depend on motive or reason. If we could be certain of the Ripper's motive or reason for committing these crimes, we could gain rare insight into why he stopped committing them. As in the previous article in this series, *Murder Most Foul*, we differentiate between *motive*, a voluntary choice of action based on a preconceived plan, and *reason*, an involuntary action based on a particular condition of the subject's mind. Of course, there are many possible explanations that are entirely independent of motive or reason. We will examine these first.

EXPLANATIONS INDEPENDENT OF MOTIVE OR REASON

*'The best-laid plans o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley'*

- Robert Burns

The Ripper may have intended to continue with the Whitechapel Murders indefinitely, but his plans were interrupted by circumstances beyond his control - as stated so eloquently by the Scottish poet Robert Burns. The scenarios that follow are reasonable to consider and relatively few in number, yet do not seem to have ever been the subject of a serious comparative study.

I. The Ripper Died

Donald Rumbelow wrote that 'within a few months [after Miller's Court] it was evident that the murders had come to an end, and it was widely assumed that the Ripper was dead.'³ Certainly, the Ripper could have died from any of a number of causes, thus ending the Whitechapel Murders conclusively - if not prematurely. But how did he die?

Accident

Was the Ripper run over by a hansom cab one night as he wandered the streets scouting for new murder sites or already on the prowl for his next victim? Did he have a fatal accident at his work place? Was he asphyxiated at home by a poorly vented coal fire? Or did he suffer one of the many other common, ordinary accidents which may occur at home or the work place? Falls, for instance, *still* claim thousands of lives a year even today.

3 Rumbelow, Donald: *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, London, Penguin (revised 2004)

Injury

An ingenious theory presented a few years ago on the Jack the Ripper Casebook⁴ was that the Ripper died from blood poisoning contracted from a self-inflicted knife injury during the mutilation of Catherine Eddowes. Since he had sliced into her abdomen, as evidenced by crime scene observation and the feces found on the scrap of her apron, it is certainly possible that, working in extremely close quarters and in near-total darkness, with furious speed and an extremely sharp knife, he *did* cut himself and contaminated the wound with his victim's feces. In this scenario, if the Ripper contracted blood poisoning from Eddowes, he would have been utterly weakened by November. But if instead, he slipped up later in Miller's Court, we have a convenient solution to why the killings stopped. Septicemia would have killed him eventually. In an age before antibiotics or even sulfa drugs, such a condition could easily have proved fatal, especially in London's East End, where personal hygiene was mostly lacking and medical facilities for the local citizenry would have been of minimal availability and quality.

Of course, the Ripper could have suffered a mortal injury at work, in public, or at home, in an accident that was not immediately fatal, but still debilitating. He could even have been attacked by criminals, e.g., in a street mugging or beating during which he incurred injuries to which he eventually succumbed.

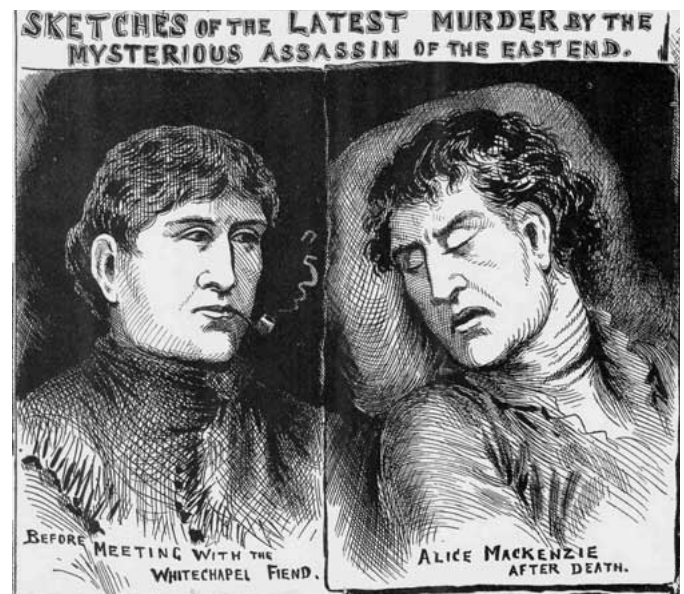
Illness

There is no reason why the Ripper could not have died from a long-term illness such as tuberculosis or cancer. Consumption was the cause listed on many a death certificate in the Victorian era. Many people died prematurely from diseases such as smallpox and typhus, especially in the crowded slums. The poorer areas suffered a higher incidence of cholera, typhus, and other diseases resulting from inadequate sanitation. The Ripper could also have contracted a disease from one of his victims. Annie Chapman was thought to have been terminally ill when she was murdered, and the Ripper may have exposed himself intimately to whatever condition she had. In an interesting variation of this hypothesis, imagine the Ripper becoming infected with E.coli bacteria, a strong possibility after he had been groping among the severed intestines of several of his victims. E.coli is found in the lower digestive tract of many mammals, such as humans and cattle, and its epidemics are generally caused by the mass contamination of beef carcasses by bovine feces in the slaughterhouses. As Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, puts it: 'there is shit in the meat'. If the Ripper did not contract fecal E.coli blood poisoning, he may still have

become infected with E.coli through his own digestive tract - if he did not clean himself thoroughly before celebrating each murder with bangers and mash.

Much about the murders could be explained if the Ripper had known that he was terminally ill. Suppose he knew *before* the murders had even started. He might not have been too concerned about *anything* if he knew he was dying, and would probably have been willing to take the substantial risks he did since he had nothing to lose.

Excessive alcohol consumption or drug abuse could account for the appearance of the blotchy-faced man accompanying MJK to her room on the night of her murder. It is a long shot, but such a condition might also explain the relative clumsiness of the later Alice McKenzie attack. By then the Ripper was a weak and dying man. He could have been subsequently hospitalized - if he could afford it - and died in his hospital bed. No press report would have covered his demise other than as a statistic.



The murder of Alice McKenzie

Murder

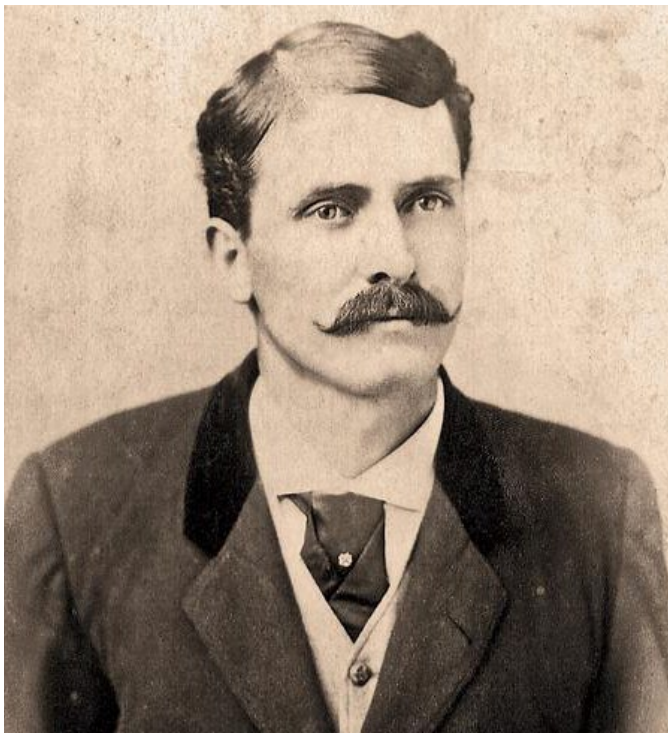
The Ripper was a criminal and as such probably no stranger to other criminals. As 'there is no honor among thieves', he could have been murdered - even though murder was a relatively rare crime at the time in London's East End. But such men as him were likely to be acquainted with criminals who were experts at their work, just as he was, and capable of leaving no trace of the crime or the victim.

Another possible scenario in this vein involves plain old-fashioned *carelessness* on the Ripper's part. He might have been a flawless super-criminal when he was on the

4 Ryder, Stephen: forum.casebook.org

prowl for victims, but he was not *always* 'on duty', as it were, and, like the rest of us, he could very well have made a simple mistake that proved quite costly.

A good example is the case of Bill Tilghman, one of the most famous lawmen of the American West, and one of its deadliest gunfighters. He was renowned, among other deeds, for the cleaning up of 'Hell's Half Acre'. Yet he came to a humiliating end. On 1 November 1924, Tilghman was eating in a restaurant when a shot was fired outside by a drunken, corrupt official who had clashed with him on several occasions. Tilghman went out and arrested the drunkard. As he was taking him to jail, the man pulled out a small pistol he had concealed about his clothes and shot Tilghman, who died shortly thereafter. The price for the lack of vigilance can be high, as it was in this instance. Tilghman *knew* that this man was dangerous, but *assumed* that he possessed only the weapon that he confiscated as he made the arrest. Even a moment's carelessness on the part of an experienced professional lawman proved fatal.



Bill Tilghman

Could the same thing have happened to an overconfident Ripper who no doubt thought he owned the town? Other cutthroats roamed those same back streets and alleys after dark. Could the Ripper have met an untimely demise by the knife of some unknown culprit? In a burst of cosmic irony, he may have been killed by somebody who knew he was the Ripper.

Of course, the Ripper murder as just described would be attributable to a *disorganized* effort by some common criminal merely taking advantage of an opportunity. What if his murder had instead been *organized*? The Whitechapel

Murders probably *did* arouse the wrath of London's underworld because of the resulting frenzy of police action and growing public intolerance of criminal activity of all kinds. As exemplified in the 1931 Fritz Lang film 'M', the Ripper could have been hunted down by the underworld. This is exactly what happens in John Gardner's novel *The Return of Moriarty*, in which Professor Moriarty⁵ uses his criminal organization to liquidate the Ripper, who had begun preying on some of the Professor's finest rental property. There had been precedents for such behavior. In early 18th century England, a genuine precursor of the fictional Professor Moriarty, Jonathan Wild, held court. The gangland godfather and self-styled 'Thief-Taker General' controlled most of London's criminal underworld single-handedly, until he was hanged for his crimes in 1725. And, in 1888, gang war for control of the East End whoring and fencing *turf* was at an all-time high, so the very concept of an organized criminal campaign against the Ripper is quite plausible.

Executed

Who is to say that the Ripper did not commit other crimes unrelated to the Whitechapel Murders? He might have killed someone in a fit of pique or a spur-of-the-moment incident, as did British serial killer Dennis Nilsen, who once killed a man simply because he was on his way. Without the planning and safeguards that he must have normally employed, the Ripper would have been as vulnerable as any ordinary East End hooligan. If he had been hanged for another crime, as were Dr. Neill Cream, William Bury and George Chapman, the Ripper might have elected to carry his dark secret to the grave, rather than give the authorities any satisfaction or closure.

Suicide

There is no reason why the Ripper could not have committed suicide - although there is little evidence of *other* serial killers who have taken their own lives at the peak of their criminal careers. Had the Ripper been a 'Shropshire lad' he could have heeded the following advice:

If it chance your eye offend you,
Pluck it out, lad, and be sound;
'Twill hurt, but there are salves to friend you,
And many a balsam grows on ground.
And if your hand or foot offend you,
Cut it off, lad, and be whole;
But play the man, stand up, and end you,
When the sickness is your soul.

A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*

5 Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan: *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, Mass Market Paperback, 2 vols., October 1986

Had the Ripper been inclined to brood upon his crimes and his victims, he might have elected to end his own life, finally realizing that he did indeed possess a 'sickness of the soul' that was past curing. He may have been driven towards this action by the belief that his arrest was imminent. Of course, when one mentions 'suicide' and 'Jack the Ripper' in the same breath, a name inevitably turns up – Montague John Drutt.

On the face of it, Drutt seems an unlikely suspect. Yet he heads Macnaghten's short list. There may be much more to Drutt than we now know, since much of the evidence against him was allegedly destroyed by Macnaghten. Still waters run deep, and it is certainly conceivable, albeit highly unlikely, that this mild-mannered and unassuming man was indeed Jack the Ripper. One reason that Drutt has made such an appealing suspect since the late 19th century is that he died an apparent suicide at about the right time, a short while after the 'awful glut' in Miller's Court that was assumed by Macnaghten and others to have led to the Ripper's death. After all, the authorities had concluded that the Ripper was insane and they were looking for some outward manifestation of mental illness - like suicide. Another reason is the absolute *mystery* surrounding Drutt's death. There are still some who think his death was not a suicide at all, but a cleverly disguised murder.

In the Victorian era, a suicide in the family was very shameful. Drutt's family had to keep up appearances. They were obviously the kind of people to whom social standing mattered a good deal. Even today Brits tend to be close-mouthed about personal things – *must keep a stiff upper lip at all times, you know* – and this was the Victorian era, when a social taboo existed about the discussion of topics such as sex. Discussions of suicide in one's own family, or other scandals, were no doubt equally discouraged.

Macnaghten stated he had 'little doubt' that Drutt's family suspected him. This assertion suggests that his conclusions were not drawn exclusively from first-hand 'private information', as he had said. There may be reasons to believe Macnaghten and the Drutts were more intimate than one would normally assume – he must have known what they thought about Montague's death. In a newspaper interview given upon his retirement in June, 1913, Macnaghten stated:

The greatest regret of my life was that 'Jack the Ripper' committed suicide before I joined the force. 'That remarkable man,' he said, 'was one of the most fascinating of criminals. Of course he was a maniac, but I have a very clear idea who he was and how he committed suicide, but that, with other secrets, will never be revealed by me. I have destroyed all my documents, and there is no record of the secret information which came into my possession at one time or another.



Melville Macnaghten

Macnaghten made several references to Drutt in his 1914 book, *Days of My Years*:

Although, as I shall endeavour to show in this chapter, the Whitechapel murderer, in all probability, put an end to himself soon after the Dorset Street affair in November 1888, certain facts, pointing to this conclusion, were not in possession of the police till some years after I became a detective officer.

There can be no doubt that in the room at Miller's Court the madman found ample scope for the opportunities he had all along been seeking, and the probability is that, after his awful glut on this occasion, his brain gave way altogether and he committed suicide; otherwise the murders would not have ceased.

In a 1915 article, George R. Sims, a confidant of Macnaghten's, wrote:

There was no question of the insanity of revenge upon a certain class of women as there was in the case of the mad doctor who lived with his people at Blackheath, and who, during his occasional absences from home, committed the crimes which won him world-wide infamy as 'Jack the Ripper'.

These remarks all obviously refer to Drutt, given the reference to 'his people' and Blackheath, and the repeated error of identifying his occupation as that of a doctor. Their significance is that they also identify a *motive* for the murders, 'insanity of revenge', and a *reason* for the cessation of the murders, namely that 'his brain gave way altogether' - leading directly to the Ripper's death via suicide.

While Druitt remains the best known of the suicides which occurred at that time, there were certainly others, and at least one of them was no less spectacular. An East End tradesman, Edward Buchan, *cut his own throat* in full view of numerous witnesses. His suicide is the subject of these excerpts from the Jack the Ripper Casebook:⁶

Here was a man who, on the day of Mary Kelly's funeral (which incidentally fell on his own birthday) decided to end his own life in a rather unusual and brutal manner, reminiscent of the Ripper crimes, as he cut his own throat severely – To quote from a news article: 'He had nearly severed his head from his body.'

Now, if one considers the series of Ripper murders as one of escalating intensity, then the Mary Kelly murder was the coup de grace, and how could one top that? It seems that Buchan's suicide topped that in a sense, insofar as it had to have required some pretty amazing stamina and willpower to inflict such grave damage upon oneself, and it almost seems more shocking.

The psychological scenario envisioned from all this, assuming Buchan was the killer, is that he was a tortured soul trying to make some sort of statement to the world, a statement which he himself could not fully articulate, but which expressed itself in the destruction of various innocent victims. And when he had done his greatest damage – i.e., made his strongest statement – and was as yet still unfulfilled, he turned to the one act which summed up his career in the most direct and concrete manner, turning his destructive skills onto himself, and in a similar fashion. It almost seems poetic.

But if the Ripper *did* indeed commit suicide, he may well have opted for a more private affair, considering the emotional baggage that he was carrying. If Druitt was the Ripper, his suicide note would have made no mention of the fact, as he would have wished to protect his family from the social repercussions that would follow his exposure. Buchan would have probably remained equally silent.

II. The Ripper Was Incapacitated

This scenario is along the same lines as that of the Ripper's dying, except that here the Ripper is merely rendered physically incapable of continuing the murders. A long terminal illness common to the era, such as tuberculosis, in which physical health and ability decline steadily until death comes, is certainly conceivable. Perhaps loss of a limb, paralysis, or severe crippling might have instead occurred, owing to accident or disease, any of which would certainly have ended the murders involuntarily but authoritatively.

III. The Ripper Left the Area

The Ripper's Work Took Him Elsewhere

Whether he in fact moved away and maybe killed elsewhere in a continuation of his series that goes unrecognized today might be partly looked at through the lens of the possibility that 'Jack' had killed before elsewhere. The deep neck wound committed on all the canonical victims, almost back to the vertebrae, is quite distinctive, and I would like to suggest that the killer came to Whitechapel fully formed and that he probably had killed elsewhere.

Christopher George⁷

Had the Ripper been a sailor like John Anderson or Arbie LaBruckman, he could have been subject to relocation at any time by his employer. Had he been employed locally by an English company, he could have been relocated within England, although the chances of this having occurred in the impoverished Whitechapel area must have been few. Unless, of course, he didn't actually *work* there.

If the Ripper did emigrate, what would he have done if he chose to continue killing? Would he search out the common prostitutes of the new country and imitate his London crimes? Or would he kill, but possibly with a new victim pool due to circumstances and possibly via a new method? Would he even kill? Perhaps his motive was essentially connected to his surroundings and a way of life in Whitechapel.

Nemo⁸

The Ripper Relocated Locally

The Ripper could have simply relocated within England or the British Isles. Suppose, for example, that he feared that bloodhounds might eventually track him down if he continued killing, and maybe that, despite his extraordinary efforts to the contrary in Miller's Court, the police *did* find something in Mary Kelly's room to set bloodhounds upon his trace. One tantalizing fact that supports this concept of 'local relocation' is the mysterious death and mutilation of a small boy, Johnnie Gill, in Bradford, England, in late December 1888 - which would have been about the right time after Mary Kelly's murder for another Ripper murder to have occurred. Had he continued killing, his 'trademarks' would be on his further victims. Following are the condensed facts of Johnnie Gill's murder and mutilation, as reported in a contemporary newspaper:

6 Ryder, Stephen: forum.casebook.org

7 Brown, Howard: www.jtrforums.com

8 Ibid

Gettysburg Compiler
8 January 1889

AN ATROCIOUS CRIME

A Little Boy Chopped to Pieces in Bradford, England

London, Dec. 29.

The horrible discovery of a young boy's dead and mutilated body was made at Bradford this morning, and the town is wild with excitement, fearing that Jack the Ripper or apt imitators of his have made their appearance here. The body was found in an outhouse and was that of a boy named John Gill, aged eight years. The boy when last seen alive was sliding on the ice with a number of companions. This morning he was found murdered. His legs and arms were roughly chopped off and tied to the body. The ears were cut off and there were two stab wounds in the chest. The heart and entrails were torn out and lay on the ground near the body, which was wrapped in a rough covering and flung in the outhouse. The greatest excitement prevails, many believing that Jack the Ripper has made his advent in Bradford. The police, however, hold the theory that the murder was committed by a gang of drunken lads whose minds were inflamed by reading reports of the Whitechapel tragedies and wanted to imitate the work of the Whitechapel fiend.

Could the Ripper have relocated to Bradford, or perhaps he was just 'passing through', and took advantage of a novel opportunity, possibly in an attempt to rekindle the same passions previously experienced through the murder and mutilation of prostitutes? Had the Ripper been a thrill killer, he might have found the thrill was gone after the murder of Mary Kelly and tried to rekindle it with the murder and mutilation of a young boy. On the face of it, it seems highly unlikely, but so do 'copycat' Ripper murders, as no others had been observed outside of the London metropolitan area at the time. Perhaps the Ripper *did* murder and mutilate the boy, found the experience wanting and overly dangerous, and attempted no other crimes.

The Ripper Left Britain Altogether

The Ripper may have fled to another country for one reason or another. Perhaps he felt that pursuit was getting too close for comfort, or that Britain was getting too hot to hold him. Had he actually fled, this could explain the various and unexplained Ripper-like murders observed elsewhere around the world, including those in Central and South America. In this scenario, Tumblety, LaBruckman, Anderson and possibly Chapman would be the most viable suspects, as they were all known to have frequented foreign countries.

The Ripper's emigration would naturally explain why the murders suddenly stopped in Whitechapel. Yet one would

then wonder why the police from other countries were not on the lookout for murders similar to the Ripper's. Reports of the Whitechapel Murders had by then spread worldwide. In cases such as Tumblety's, press coverage transcended countries and continents. In addition, Scotland Yard would surely have been checking on leads that suggested that the familiar pattern of killings and mutilations was beginning anew elsewhere.

This is, after all, how the authorities nabbed the Hillside Strangler, Ted Bundy, and the BTK (Bind, Torture, Kill) Killer, Dennis Rader, in the United States. Each of them had moved from state to state to elude detection, but the similar *modus operandi* observed in their continuing crimes helped the authorities to identify them. In other words, serial killers generally cannot conceal themselves, no matter *where* they go. It is hard to believe that the unique *MO* and *signature* of the Ripper would have been missed, no matter to where he emigrated, had he carried on his 'work'. Yet there remain the equally mysterious stories of the subsequent Ripper-like murders in the Americas, and one is left wondering if there may be some substance to this theory after all.

IV. The Ripper Was Jailed For Some Other Crime

Most Ripperologists doubt that the Whitechapel Murders were the Ripper's first or only crimes. It is certainly conceivable, even probable, that he did at some point run afoul of the law. Had he been sentenced to prison for any length of time, this would naturally have put him out of commission, so far as additional murders were concerned. In fact, he might have died anonymously in prison, not an uncommon occurrence in Victorian times.

It might be worth considering that murderers... serial murderers... are generally the diametrical opposites of what they were in their previous civilian lives. Few serial killers cause trouble in [jail] and in a way, that they are not in an environment from which they could act out their mayhem without an immediate retribution, if not from inmates or prison authorities, they are usually considered low risk inmates. Bizarre considering that Peter Sutcliffe caused such a panic in the 1970's and he winds up being a veritable milquetoast in the slammer. He's not alone. Most are... As a result, if the Whitechapel Murderer had been incarcerated and not institutionalized, he probably would have been a wallflower in a prison causing a limited amount of trouble. The odds seem to suggest he would have been as much had he been a psychopath such as the growing list of reprobates we have to examine appear to be.'

Howard Brown⁹

9 Brown, Howard: www.jtrforums.com

V. The Ripper Simply Quit

In Ian Fleming's James Bond novel *From Russia with Love*, there is a short dissertation on why killers for hire eventually falter and become ineffective or quit altogether: 'the soul sickens of the work'. Did the Ripper simply tire of it all, becoming 'sick' of killing, having reached satiation after the *Grand Guignol* murder of Mary Kelly? If he was a discharged soldier from a foreign war, had the horrid effects of the battlefield finally worn off, allowing him to resume a normal life? Or did he have an internal clock of some nature that told him it was time to stop? Most serial killers stop killing simply because they are caught. Maybe the Ripper became bored because MJK's mutilations were more than sufficient and could not be topped. That said, wouldn't such a killer have transformed his previous achievements into something to further his notoriety?



Dennis Rader

The BTK murderer, Dennis Rader, killed ten victims in Kansas between 1974 and 1991. He took several hiatuses, including one for a decade, until he was arrested in 2005 when he betrayed himself by sending unnecessary letters to the police. A few other serial killers retired before being caught, notably the Hungarian Bela Kiss and the Green River Killer, Gary Ridgway, who in 2003 confessed to 48 murders in Washington State during the 1980s and 1990s. After Ridgway started living with his girlfriend, later his wife, he killed only three more women. The cessation of his murdering ways was presumably the result of his newly found domestic bliss.

Did the increased police patrols and greater scrutiny of men walking about in the streets end the Ripper's killing spree? Did he stop killing because he was nearly caught or close to being identified? Or had he (like adherents of the Joseph Barnett theory believe) felt satiated with enough bloodlust to last a lifetime? Did he integrate himself back into the community to pursue an innocent lifestyle, marriage and full-time employment? Could he have quit killing because

he feared bloodhounds tracking him? While this concept sounds promising, it is nothing more than one of the many popular misconceptions about the case, better relegated to the 'urban legends' category. Bloodhounds are generally set upon someone's track with an article of clothing which carries the unique scent of its owner. If nothing belonging to the fugitive is available they cannot track him. Of course the Ripper could have beaten the bloodhounds by visiting the crime scenes and contaminating his traces. But we know that he left behind nothing with which he *could* have been traced. The only article that we *know* he must have touched, the scrap of Catherine Eddowes's apron, was so befouled with the scents of her own blood and feces that his own effluvium would have been impossible to discern.

VI. The Ripper Was the Victim of a Private Conspiracy

A private conspiracy against the Ripper is a concept that has not been given the attention that it deserves. Was he being blackmailed by someone who knew his identity? Equally as likely as a criminal conspiracy, if not more so, was a *family* conspiracy against him, whereby he was brought to book by his own family, who would either have forced him to leave the country or had him committed to an asylum - exactly as Sir Robert Anderson said it happened. This is not at all far-fetched, as evidenced by a contemporary example. In the 1980s, a criminal then known only as the Unabomber struck terror throughout the United States through a campaign of seemingly random bombings. The killer, Theodore Kaczynski, was finally captured by the FBI after his own brother recognized as his some phraseology in the Unabomber's Manifesto. The significance of this is that at that time, despite the millions who had been following the case from the start, *no one else on earth knew who the Unabomber was*. Imagine, if you will, that the Lusk letter had been genuine, and that a close relative of the Ripper had recognized the significance of its content upon seeing its transcript reproduced in the newspapers. What would this relative have done? Certainly not expose him, if there was any other alternative, for being known as Jack the Ripper's father, son, brother, uncle, cousin, or nephew would undoubtedly have been very bad for his business and social status. No, most likely he would have called a family conference to discuss his suspicions and decide what exactly should be done about this eccentric relative should their forthcoming private investigation bear fruit. If it happened that way, there could be somewhere in England today a family smirking at the ongoing efforts of Ripperologists everywhere, as they continue their 129-year long conspiracy of silence to harbor a secret that has eluded everyone else.

Had the Ripper been forced into an involuntary exile, say in Central or South America, where he would have

been relatively safe from the reach of British authorities, his natural anger and frustration, if not his unnatural urges, could well have been responsible for the aforementioned series of mysterious and unsolved Ripper-like murders observed in those locations.

Although the Ripper may have ended the Whitechapel Murders because of circumstances such as those we have just examined, it is much more likely that he did it because of the nature of his motive or reason for killing. If we identify his motive or reason for starting to kill, we might determine with some certainty his motive or reason for stopping. The following are the possible explanations that are entirely dependent on the Ripper's motive or reason for committing the Whitechapel Murders in the first place. They were already mentioned in the previous article in this series, *Murder Most Foul*.

EXPLANATIONS DEPENDENT ON MOTIVE (VOLUNTARY)

1. Hatred and/or Anger
2. Revenge
3. Product of the Environment
4. Political and/or Ideological
5. Jealousy and/or Unrequited Love
6. Religious Fervor
7. Liberal Social Reformer
9. Profit
9. Public Service
10. Cover-up for Other Crime(s) or Action(s)
11. Business
12. Paranormal
13. Occult
14. Royal Cover-up
15. Combinations or Variations of the Above
16. Unknown

EXPLANATIONS DEPENDENT ON REASON (INVOLUNTARY)

1. True Psychopath and/or Sociopath
2. Sexual Deviant
3. Criminally Insane
4. Product of Environment
5. Drug-induced Psychosis
6. Brain Tumor, Syphilis, or Other Mental Condition
7. Evil
8. Misogynist

9. Sexual Frustration or Dysfunction
10. Imp of the Perverse (impulsive, spur-of-the-moment)
11. Just for Jolly
12. Schizophrenia
13. *Idée Fixe* (obsession with someone or particular group)
14. Walter Mitty Syndrome (daydreamer in reduced circumstances)
15. Somnambulism
16. Atavistic Throwback (instinctive recessive behavior)
17. A Cry for Help
18. Disturbed War Veteran
19. Combinations or Variations of the Above
20. Unknown

We shall briefly examine the circumstances for a cessation of killing to which each of the above motives or reasons could apply. There are a number of possible scenarios to consider. Obviously, Combinations or Variations of the above would apply in every case and so shall be omitted from this exercise.

I. The Ripper Died

Those primary motives and reasons to which this theory applies could be as follows:

- Sexual Deviant
- Drug-induced Psychosis
- Brain Tumor, Syphilis, or Other Mental Condition
- Schizophrenia
- Paranormal

Did a sexually deviant Ripper meet his fate while indulging in violent sadomasochistic practices, as numerous 'sexual deviants' do every year in our own time? Had an addicted Ripper overdosed at last on his preferred drug of choice, perhaps in a lethal experimental combination with alcohol or other drugs? Did the Ripper have a brain tumor that was responsible for his committing the Whitechapel Murders, and which, upon further metastasizing, quickly killed him? Did the Ripper suffer from tertiary syphilis, in which the brain itself was eaten away over a lingering period? Or was the Ripper merely a violent alcoholic schizoid who, like so many others in the same circumstances, eventually succumbed to alcoholism and died prematurely? If the Ripper was truly schizophrenic, his evil half could have lost the ongoing conflict after Mary Kelly's death and the good half could have ended it all via suicide. Or, if he was truly a 'freak of nature', as other serial killers are known to

have been, did he just expire from what would be for him unnatural causes?

II. The Ripper Was Institutionalized or Imprisoned

The motives and reasons to which this theory applies could be as follows:

- True Psychopath and/or Sociopath
- Sexual Deviant
- Criminally Insane
- Product of Environment
- Drug-induced Psychosis
- Brain Tumor, Syphilis, or Other Mental Condition
- Evil
- Political and/or Ideological
- Schizophrenia
- A Cry for Help
- Paranormal
- Royal Cover-up

Had the Ripper been observed in other circumstances to have been psychotic, sexually abnormal, violently insane, mentally ill, schizophrenic, or just pathologically unusual, he might well have been confined to a mental institution, sanatorium or asylum either by his family and friends or by the authorities. Locked up in such a place, the Ripper might have become harmless, as serial killer Ed Gein did under similar circumstances, turning into a docile model patient whose actual criminal history no one could have ever suspected. Had the Ripper been mentally ill, he might have ended his days like Norman Bates at the end of Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film *Psycho* (inspired by the life and crimes of Ed Gein). Like Norman, the Ripper could have retreated into himself, taken over completely by one or the other of his warring personalities, keeping the secret of his killings to the very end. On the other hand, a short-term acute mental illness from which the Ripper later recovered could have triggered his homicidal rage. Or he could have been a homeless vagrant sleeping in the streets when he was picked up and sent to a workhouse - and was not able later to escape from the system.

Had the Ripper been a member of royalty or the nobility, perpetual 'house arrest' would undoubtedly have sufficed for this privileged aristocrat. Had he been a Jew or a Fenian, or an anarchist, or a member of another politically sensitive persuasion, he could have been imprisoned or incarcerated, possibly for decades. Supporting discussion in this vein follows, in excerpts taken from the Jack the Ripper Casebook website:¹⁰

shall probably never be satisfactorily explained. We know, for example, that by February 1894, Macnaghten was in possession of information from the Druitt family. From that time forward he considers only 3 persons as serious suspects. One is obviously out of respect for Anderson's opinion. As years go by, he leans more and more toward the drowned 'doctor'. Then he destroys 'incriminating' evidence pertaining to this suspect. By this time, he knows these unsolved crimes have evolved into a famous mystery on both sides of the Atlantic and there is renewed public interest in identifying the notorious murderer. He also knows that the London police have endured criticism and ridicule for not having solved the case, and yet he destroys evidence pertaining to his Number One Suspect. In parallel, we have Monro's description of a 'hot potato' suspect. Between Macnaghten's short list of 3 and Monro's comment as repeated by his son, we can only hazard a guess that one of the following must have been the case:

1. The suspect was 'one of the highest in the land', possibly involving the throne itself.
2. The suspect was from a prominent or influential family, possibly royalty, and the police naturally wanted to spare this family public disgrace.
3. The suspect was a Fenian sympathizer.
4. The suspect was a poor immigrant Jew and all concerned wanted to avoid the inevitable anti-Semitic riots that would have resulted in the East End.

If the Ripper turned out to be a Fenian sympathizer this would complicate any political initiatives toward Home Rule for Ireland. Those supporting Home Rule, such as Churchill, would want to keep this suspect confidential. However, since Anderson and Macnaghten were politically opposed to Home Rule it would seem logical they would eagerly make public any evidence that JtR was a Fenian murderer. Either enormous pressure was applied to both or there was simply not enough proof to convict a Fenian suspect.

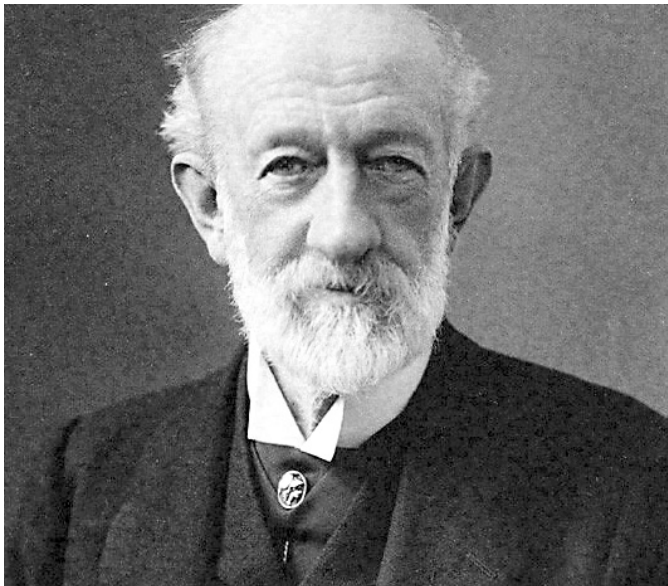
Benjamin Disraeli was a favorite of Queen Victoria. Coincidentally he was educated as a youngster in Blackheath, [as was Druitt]. Since he was the most prominent Jew in England there can be no doubt the Queen would wish to spare the Anglicised Jewry of London any embarrassment or resentment, so if the Ripper was a Jew the police were very likely under instructions to handle the situation with utmost discretion.

Naturally, imprisonment could also have applied had the Ripper been arrested and prosecuted for other crimes unrelated to the Whitechapel Murders, which would have decisively, albeit inadvertently, ended the latter.

Macnaghten's attitude toward Druitt is just another of the mysteries within the Great Victorian Mystery that

10 Ryder, Stephen: forum.casebook.org

One of the many maddening coincidences concerning the Whitechapel Murders is that the authorities had in desperation offered a pardon to any and all of the Ripper's accomplices, and soon afterwards, the murders stopped. Was this cause and effect? Did an accomplice or confidant of the Ripper's decide that the stakes were getting way too serious after Miller's Court and that this was his best chance to get out with a whole skin? Did an associate, maybe even a family member, turn informer and denounced the Ripper to the authorities, on condition that he would not be criminally prosecuted, but just put away for life? It should be noted that the authorities would not have been able to touch the Ripper once he had been committed to a mental institution, regardless of their suspicions. Hence, Sir Robert Anderson's enigmatic pronouncement that the Ripper had indeed been put away in such a place (and had the London police the powers that the French authorities possessed, could have been brought to justice) might be carrying more truth than generations of Ripperologists have previously been willing to acknowledge.



Sir Robert Anderson

But if the police really *did* apprehend the Ripper, then why didn't they publicize it? The police were so maligned throughout Britain and the world for their apparent inability to stop the Ripper that they would naturally have wanted to showcase such a noteworthy arrest. Of course, they may not have known they had actually apprehended the Ripper, perhaps merely thinking him to be a local lunatic, arrested or put away for some other offense, like David Cohen.

Maybe the Ripper or his family were politically well-connected. One could understand the police suppressing that kind of story, especially if there were political overtones. Yet this is unlikely. The police needed to put the public's fears to rest and salvage their damaged reputation.

If they had got their man, at some point, even many years later, *surely* the public would have found out. Even if a David Cohen-type had been locked up in an asylum, why wouldn't the authorities examine whom they had taken into custody more closely once the murders had apparently stopped? The investigation would not end just because the murders had ended – not for several years. On the contrary, the police would have been all the more energetic about examining the suspects they *did* have in custody, knowing that the Ripper could be among them.

III. The Ripper Went Completely Mad

The motives and reasons to which this theory applies could be as follows:

- Sexual Deviant
- Criminally Insane
- Drug-induced Psychosis
- Brain Tumor, Syphilis, or Other Mental Condition
- Schizophrenia
- Disturbed War Veteran

Interviewed by the *Weekly Dispatch* in 1896, Detective Inspector Edmund Reid gave his opinion that the Ripper's mania was such that it had resulted in the death of the maniac – an opinion 'borne out by the best medical experts who have studied the case.'

It is easy to visualize a sexually deviant or insane Ripper eventually going 'over the edge' mentally, owing to the heinous nature of his crimes and the abhorrent vices and vile depravities that he may have been practicing in tandem. Likewise, it is easy to understand a Ripper suffering from a mental illness of one type or another which was worsening with time, as pathological conditions of that nature are poorly understood even today, and treatment in Victorian times consisted of little more than commitment to a mental institution.

Perhaps the best theory of the Ripper going off of the deep end mentally is the case of Aaron Kosminski. As opposed to Melville Macnaghten's theory that 'the murderer's brain gave way altogether' and he committed suicide immediately after 'the awful glut' at Miller's Court, the Kosminski theory is that the Ripper merely devolved into an incoherent, blithering simpleton who ate out of gutters and heard voices, as was documented in his asylum records.

The mentally ill are certainly quite capable of extreme violence, as witnessed by numerous historical serial killers. Even those who have no prior history of violence have sometimes committed horrific crimes when given the opportunity. In one such case documented by Spitz and Fisher,¹¹ one inmate in a nursing home for the mentally ill

killed another by nearly hacking off his head with a frenzy of knife cuts. As they state: 'homicidal cuts of the throat are often single and deep, indicating determination.' Could there be a better description of the Ripper's earlier attacks? Spitz and Fisher go on to state that 'exceptions to this are sometimes noted if the assailant is markedly intoxicated or demented.' Here we see the kernel of the Kosminski theory: his decreasing mental stability led to ever-worsening butchery, culminating in the near-total obliteration of Mary Kelly – and his own complete mental ruin.

Had the Ripper been just another 'runaway train on the track of madness', as serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer was once described,¹² was his eventual fate as a drooling madman inevitable? Did he begin the Whitechapel Murders in a state of relative rationality which later deteriorated? Had he not gone completely insane, as Kosminski theorists postulate, would he have become careless enough to be captured, as Dahmer was? Could his mind have become so unhinged by what he had done to Mary Kelly that he might have actually confessed, as did Dahmer and a host of other serial killers once they were brought to book?

IV. The Ripper Accomplished His Mission

The motives and reasons to which this theory applies could be as follows:

- Hatred and/or Anger
- Revenge
- Occult
- Political and/or Ideological
- Jealousy and/or Unrequited Love
- Religious Fervor
- Liberal Social Reformer
- Profit
- Walter Mitty Syndrome
- Public Service
- Cover-up for Other Crime(s) or Action(s)
- Business
- Royal Cover-up
- Disturbed War Veteran

When a serial killer stops, one possible reason for his action can be, at some level, that, either consciously or unconsciously, he has accomplished what he set out to do. Was the Ripper a delusional killer who had finally removed the object of his hatred (MJK?)? Was this a temporary period of relief before he started killing again? The Ripper realized he was in a quandary and either killed himself or left London in the hope that a new location would mean a new start. How easy would it have been for him, were

he driven not by sexual dementia, but by one of the above motives or reasons, to stop killing after completion of his agenda? Easier than one might think, as evidenced by the following example:

After WWII ended in Europe, Johnny Hopper, the real-life 'Rambo' featured in a previous installment of this series,¹³ resumed his career as a simple tradesman, living an ordinary life until his death in the early 1990s. Here we see an authentic 'killing machine' *voluntarily* stopping his activities once his motivation had ceased to exist. No one who was not familiar with Hopper's history would have *ever* suspected that he had been capable of such prolonged and murderous activities.

Had the Ripper been similarly motivated by hatred, anger, revenge, politics, ideology, jealousy, unrequited love, religious fervor, social reform, profit, delusions of grandeur, public service, a cover-up for another crime, or business reasons, he could probably have also stopped voluntarily at any time during his killing sequence. He would have had a set purpose and agenda and, when they were fulfilled, he stopped killing. As we have just seen with Johnny Hopper, another 'serial killer' of similar motivation had been able to quit voluntarily. It is indeed presumed that vicious Japanese soldiers in the Pacific Theatre of World War II equally discontinued their activities afterwards and returned to 'normal', even though they had repeatedly been guilty of genital mutilation, emasculation, evisceration, and dismemberment of U.S. Marines.

Elsewhere in this scenario, the Ripper may have stopped killing simply because he had a preset number of victims, like the numerologic serial killer in the 1995 film *Seven*, who killed a victim for each of the Seven Deadly Sins. Where do we find murderers that have a preset number of victims? According to some researchers,¹⁴ occult ritual murder dictates a set number of victims. Their favored Ripper suspect, Roslyn D'Onston Stephenson, was known to be a practicing black magician and student of the occult. If such were the case, the Ripper simply stopped killing because he had finally killed the requisite number of victims prescribed in whatever black magic occult ritual was being performed.

Of course, the Ripper may have stopped killing simply because he had killed the people he wanted to kill. In this scenario, the murderer would not have been a drooling fanatic but a calculating person, someone

11 Spitz, Werner, and Fisher, Russell: *Medicolegal Investigation of Death*, Fourth Edition, Charles C Thomas Pub Ltd 2005

12 CourtTV: web.archive.org/web/*/crimelibrary.com

13 *Smithsonian Magazine*, September 1993: The Shadow of a Gunman from World War II

14 Edwards, Ivor: *Jack the Ripper's Black Magic Rituals*, John Blake, 2003

who had respectability, control, and savvy to be able to lure prostitutes into his confidence. Someone who was motivated not just to kill, but to kill in a very public way. Of the above motives and reasons listed, those that best fit this scenario are revenge, jealousy, unrequited love, profit, cover-up for another crime, business, and, Lord help us, the Royal Cover-up, as best exemplified in the Ripper film *From Hell*.

Did the Ripper intend to cause a specific event through the Whitechapel Murders and was prepared to keep killing until that objective was achieved? One of the known by-products of these murders is that the hated Commissioner Warren *did* resign – and the murders stopped immediately thereafter. Was this cause and effect, or just another of the maddening coincidences observed in this infamous series of murders? In a more recent series of serial killings, the Kingsbury Run Murders of the 1930s, their most notable after-effect was the ruin of the career of Eliot Ness, who was sufficiently disgraced by his inability to apprehend the murderer that he lost the election for Mayor of Cleveland and was forced into an impoverished retirement.¹⁵ Could this series of killings have been the work of someone who wished to see Ness taken down for what he had done to gangland overlord Al Capone a few years earlier? And could someone of like mind have done the same thing to Warren for his perceived offenses, real or imagined, such as police behavior during the notorious Trafalgar Square demonstrations?

V. The Ripper Reformed or Recovered

Those motives and reasons for which this theory applies could be as follows:

- Sexual Deviant
- Product of Environment
- Hatred and/or Anger
- Occult
- Drug-induced Psychosis
- Brain Tumor, Syphilis, or Other Mental Condition
- Political and/or Ideological
- Sexual Frustration or Dysfunction
- Jealousy and/or Unrequited Love
- Religious Fervor
- Just for Jolly
- Schizophrenia
- *Idée Fixe*
- Walter Mitty Syndrome
- Somnambulism
- A Cry for Help
- Disturbed War Veteran

If the Ripper had been a sexual deviant, could he have somehow recovered from that condition? Sometimes the effect of an overdose is that the user no longer craves – or can even tolerate – the substance to which he was addicted. A man known to the authors ‘overdosed’ on pineapples in Hawaii while serving in the Navy. Fifty years later, even the *thought* of pineapples makes him physically ill. Had Mary Kelly’s murder and subsequent gross mutilation represented an overdose to the Ripper’s system which caused him to discontinue the murders altogether?

If the Ripper had been criminally insane, this overdose might have cured him – the flip side of Martin Fido’s David Cohen theory. The same cure might also apply to the motives or reasons of product of environment, hatred, anger, sexual dysfunction, jealousy, unrequited love, religious fervor, just for jolly, *idée fixe*, Walter Mitty syndrome, as well as to other mental illnesses or conditions.

If the Ripper had merely been driven by a ‘grass fire’ type anger against prostitutes – intense but brief, like modern road rage – he might eventually have calmed down enough to think - and act - rationally again. Perhaps an early sexual encounter had resulted in his being ridiculed or humiliated, led him to kill his partner in a frenzied attack (possibly Tabram) and gave him a taste for killing instead of sex. Time might have also aided him for the motives and reasons of political, ideological, jealousy, unrequited love, just for jolly, *idée fixe*, and Walter Mitty syndrome. Had time brought along the right woman, even a misogynistic Ripper might have reformed. Modern history shows us that even the vilest of criminals seem to have no shortage of females willing to become romantically involved with them.

Could the Ripper have metamorphosed or could his urge for killing have simply disappeared on its own? Had he been possessed of the right kind of mental disorder, it does seem possible, as we see here:¹⁶

There have been at least two known serial killers that had Dissociative Disorders. DeSalvo (The Boston Strangler) had a form of Dissociative Fugue, for he was not cognizant of the murders in which he was responsible. Also we have Gein, who had a form of Dissociative Amnesia, and may also have had Multiple Personality Disorder (A.K.A. Dissociative Identity Disorder.) [This doesn’t mean] Jack just simply stopped for no reason. However, how does one explain what happens when people suddenly snap out of Catatonias or even from severe mental breakdowns without any warning or added stimuli? But it does happen. So maybe something similar happened in Jack’s case?

15 Badal, James: *In the Wake of the Butcher: Cleveland’s Torso Murders*, Kent State Press, 2001

16 Ryder, Stephen: forum.casebook.org

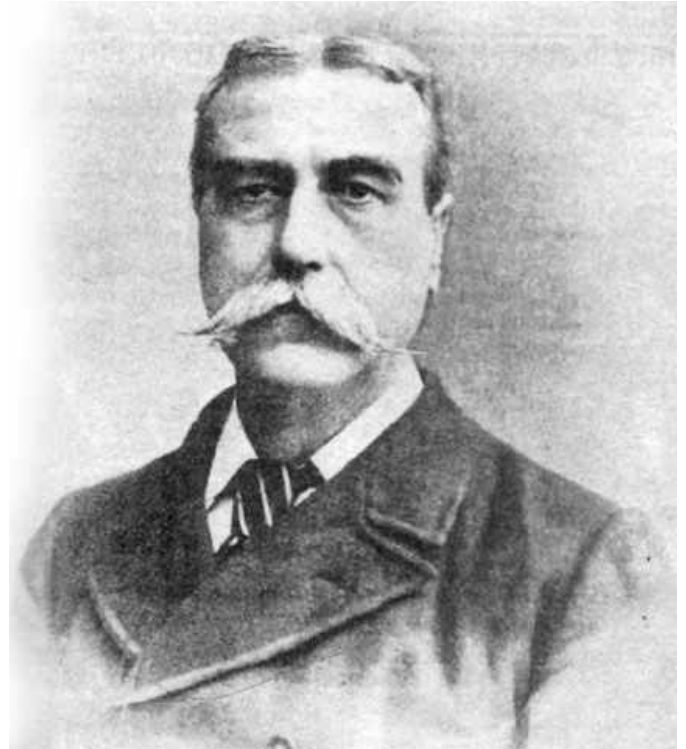
This same explanation might also apply toward the motives or reasons of product of environment, hatred, drug-induced psychosis, political, ideological, jealousy, unrequited love, just for jolly, *idée fixe*, Walter Mitty syndrome, somnambulism or a disturbed war veteran.

In a *very* long shot, could the Ripper have found Christ after the murder of Mary Kelly? Could he have stopped for that reason? One should never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit; witness the conversion of the zealous Christian persecutor Saul into the legendary missionary Paul. Yet this seems too much of a stretch, unless the Ripper *already* was of a religious persuasion, and religious fervor, paganism, or occult rituals had been the underlying reason for his murders. Had he been doing all along what he thought had been right, killing and mutilating sinful prostitutes because 'God had told him to' in prayer? Had he acted upon some moral justification based upon the Holy Scriptures? In the course of history purveyors of violence, some of whom are in painful evidence today throughout the Middle East, have justified similar actions on purely religious grounds. Had the Ripper once been so motivated, and had he later, brooding upon Jesus' contrarian forgiveness of prostitutes in the New Testament, become more heavily influenced by the Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill'? It should be noted that the self-professed black magician and Ripper suspect Roslyn D'Onston Stephenson renounced his pagan religion and converted to Christianity, after which there were no more rumors of alleged misdeeds. The same would apply had the Ripper merely been driven by pure *evil*, as conversion to Christianity would surely have driven the influence of the Father of Evil away from him.

As we know, no one is more fanatically opposed to smoking than an ex-smoker. Had the Ripper, for whatever reason, reformed or recovered, unlikely as that may have been, he could have changed so drastically and his lifestyle would have been so radically altered from that point on that as he quietly disappeared into history no one would have ever suspected him capable of being a murderer. A good example follows.

An amazing story that was reported by the Associated Press about 35 years ago concerned an elderly recluse, virtually a hermit, who had left a bequest worth many millions of dollars to various universities and charities. Included in his estate was a sealed letter that explained not only why he was doing this, but also the mysterious circumstances of his life's history. As a young man during the Great Depression, a time when so many were desperate, he had participated in the robbery of a gas station. Unfortunately, the attendant was killed during the robbery. Although this incident was an unintended consequence, it changed his life. From then on, he was determined to make amends to society. He never married, and dedicated

his whole life to making money that he would one day give away in an effort to prevent others from making the same mistake he had. He had lived like a pauper and had never been known to allow himself the slightest luxury.



Roslyn D'Onston Stephenson

VI. The Ripper Simply Quit

Those motives and reasons for which this theory applies could be as follows:

- Product of Environment
- Hatred and/or Anger
- Revenge
- Occult
- Drug-induced Psychosis
- Brain Tumor, Syphilis, or Other Mental Condition
- Political and/or Ideological
- Misogynist
- Sexual Frustration or Dysfunction
- Jealousy and/or Unrequited Love
- Religious Fervor
- Liberal Social Reformer
- Profit
- Just for Jolly
- Walter Mitty Syndrome
- Public Service
- Business
- Disturbed War Veteran

There is no particular reason why the Ripper could not have voluntarily quit, unlikely as it seems; other serial killers have. For example, Albert DeSalvo stopped killing, or claimed to, on his own terms, and Ed Kemper definitely did so. Others, such as the Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run and the Zodiac Killer, *probably* did so. From confessional data made available concerning the notorious Green River Killer, Gary Ridgway, it can be concluded that this is exactly what happened with him. The following discussion has been excerpted from the Jack the Ripper Casebook site:¹⁷

'Frequently, it is heard that it would be highly probable that someone with the ferocity of the Ripper would have to be killed or locked up in order to stop him. The Green River Killer, Gary Ridgway, did cease for years in his activities. He had found marital bliss and was a happy dude. His neighbors, however, found him a little creepy. He would go door-to-door, ranting about hookers and johns leaving used condoms out in the open. Here is an example of a killer, who committed ten times the number of murders the Ripper performed, living a nondescript life, still with the same anger mechanism that kick-started his prior actions. Like Tumblety, someone who was detained and let go... without rambling on, there are other similarities... there are other instances of homosexuals performing against heterosexuals and vice-versa... Ridgway was able to wheedle his way out of suspicion and he may have not been near as erudite as Dr. T was...'



Since the Ripper most likely quit under his own terms, there may be some hidden meaning to the short duration of the murders. Did the Ripper simply quit killing in frustration, seeing that his efforts were futile? The results would have been the same whether he had a public (liberal

social reformer) or private (Joe Barnett) agenda. A typical example of the Ripper quitting in frustration owing to the failure of his private agenda may be found in the following series, composed by one of the many 'Joe Barnett partisans' that frequent the Jack the Ripper Casebook site:¹⁸

'The murders stopped with the death of Mary Kelly. His plan didn't work. She went back to prostitution and rejected him. This would also explain the 'over-kill.' He either was filled with rage or needed to de-humanize her as so many killers do when murdering people they know (Lizzie Borden, OJ).'

'Joe Barnett. He had the motive, the means, the skills, and the apartment key! He had a reason for doing the killings that stopped when his plan failed. And his final act was to butcher the woman who made it all fall apart. As Agatha Christie once said, 'Every murderer is probably somebody's old friend.' Or as in most cases of the murder of women, it's an old boyfriend or husband whodunit!'

'And ultimately, that is why Jack the Ripper stopped. Quite simply, he had finished his work. Joe Barnett could not keep Mary Kelly off the streets. Even after murdering fellow prostitutes to scare her. When his plan failed, he killed the woman he obsessed over. If he could not have her, she would have to die. His jealousy and rage and wounded male ego got the best of him, the way it does most women's killers.'

Other motives or reasons why this scenario might also apply are occult, sexual frustration or dysfunction, religious fervor, performing a public service and a recovered war veteran.

It should be noted that killers driven exclusively by hate and revenge, such as Johnny Hopper,¹⁹ have quit successfully, as have organized crime figures driven solely by business or profit, such as those of the former Murder, Inc. Today's Mafia/Cosa Nostra and drug-gang enforcers may retire successfully from the business of killing, usually on their own terms. Mutilation has quite often been a part of these crimes as well; sometimes a victim's genitals were left in his mouth either as a calling card or a warning or object lesson for others. Far too many dismembered corpses have been reported in the contemporary news for there to be much compunction about gross mutilation on the part of these criminals.

There are numerous other reasons why the Ripper may have simply quit killing, particularly if he did so on his own terms. The Ripper could have changed his lifestyle,

17 Ryder, Stephen: forum.casebook.org

18 Ibid

19 *Smithsonian Magazine*, September 1993: The Shadow of a Gunman from World War II

purposely or inadvertently. This explanation might apply to the motives or reasons of sexual frustration or dysfunction and drug-induced psychosis. The Ripper might just have decided to 'retire undefeated' after his incredible run of luck, especially if the thrill of the kill had begun to fade after the murder of Mary Kelly. This explanation might apply to the motives or reasons of just for jolly, Walter Mitty syndrome, product of environment, and political or ideological. An insane Ripper could also have conceivably quit killing, had either his interests been drawn elsewhere or his insanity progressed to a markedly different stage.

VII. Unknown

Those motives and reasons to which this theory applies could be as follows:

- True Psychopath and/or Sociopath
- Sexual Deviant
- Criminally Insane
- Atavistic Throwback
- Paranormal
- Unknown

Numerous serial killers have disappeared into history without a trace. No one knows, for example, what became of the Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run. Author James Badal summed up this situation quite succinctly when he wrote:

‘There roamed an unknown psychopath who littered the inner city with a dozen decapitated and otherwise mutilated bodies over a three-year period and vanished as mysteriously as he had appeared, leaving virtually no clues as to his identity.’²⁰

The Mad Butcher presumably stopped killing, never to be observed in action again. Yet there are some who still blame him for similar killings in states other than Ohio, and some even hold him responsible for the murder of the Black Dahlia in Los Angeles in 1947. Similarly, no one knows whatever became of the Zodiac Killer, who also stopped killing for unknown reasons. The Axeman of New Orleans, who killed without any consistent pattern or motive,²¹ represents one of the great unsolved crimes of the 20th century, as he also seems to have suddenly stopped killing. Jack the Ripper is in ‘good company’, as it were, for his own circumstances are no less puzzling than those of

any of the others.

‘Unknown’ is a fitting end for these legendary serial killers. Revelation of any further details would be almost anticlimactic. Still, one can certainly imagine a psychopathic, criminally insane, or sadosexual serial killer quitting for some obscure, never-to-be revealed reason, since many of them have done it in recent history. Were the Ripper of a pathological uniqueness, such as an atavistic throwback or a paranormal might offer, there could be no better explanation for the ending of the murders than there is for their beginning.

Whatever the cause, intended or not, Jack the Ripper *did* simply disappear into history. Whether or not he relocated and continued killing elsewhere is almost immaterial, for his legend remains firmly fixed in London’s East End. For many, his story ends appropriately with the sublimely horrific death and destruction of Mary Kelly; any extrapolation from this point forward is mere supposition and conjecture. Furthermore, clashes with dogma and tradition are not always welcomed in Ripper circles. After 129 years, the debates and arguments have become fiercer and more partisan, and, as many have observed, considerably more acrimonious. Just what is it about Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel Murders that polarizes highly educated and otherwise rational people so? What *is* it about the Maybrick Diary that provokes such a visceral negative response from so many Ripperologists? Why are so many people convinced that the case will never be solved, yet dedicate most of their adult lives to its study? Answers to these questions together with the examination of the many parallel issues that accompany them will be the focus of the concluding article of this series, *A Ripper Retrospection*.

20 Badal, James: *In the Wake of the Butcher: Cleveland’s Torso Murders*, Kent State Press, 2001

21 CourtTV: web.archive.org/web/*/crimelibrary.com



TIM MOSLEY is a lifelong Ripperologist, having been introduced to Jack the Ripper in 1961 via Boris Karloff’s *Thriller*. He founded the original jtrforums.com in 2003 and is an administrator of the current site. **SCOTT NELSON** is an environmental engineer living in northern California. He has been studying the case for 40 years. With thanks to Eduardo Zinna for his assistance with this article.

The Wondrous Letine Troupe: A Music Hall Murder Tragedy

By HEATHER TWEED

'Hullo What Have We Here? The Letines, The Grandest and the Prettiest Bicycle Show Ever Seen,

Glasgow Evening Post, 1st December 1884

On a warm June night in 1889 just before 11pm, the private omnibus of The Wondrous Letine Troupe pulled up by the stage door of the Canterbury Theatre on Westminster Bridge Road. The popular act, lead by 36-year-old George Gorin, under the stage name 'Professor' Letine, also featured his young wife Olga, three girls and a nine-year-old boy. The troupe were famous for their trick cycling and acrobatic feats and on most nights they regularly performed at up to five theatres scattered across London. After their show at the Paragon on Mile End Road the close-knit group quickly bundled their precious stage bikes, props, and themselves, on board their private horse-drawn omnibus and sped post-haste to their next booking at the Canterbury.

Olga and the children dashed into the theatre. The tall, handsome Letine, dressed in smart outdoor gear, paused for a moment then stepped onto the pavement.

Music hall star Jenny Hill was the act on stage before the Letines were due to perform. She delivered the final lines from the epic play *Masks and Faces*:

'A stab, a gasp and all is o'er'

As Professor Letine crossed the gaslit pavement towards the stage door a figure ran from the shadows. A recently sharpened butcher's knife glinted in the flickering light and the five-inch long blade was plunged into Letine's abdomen.

'I am stabbed! Catch him!' cried Letine, staggering

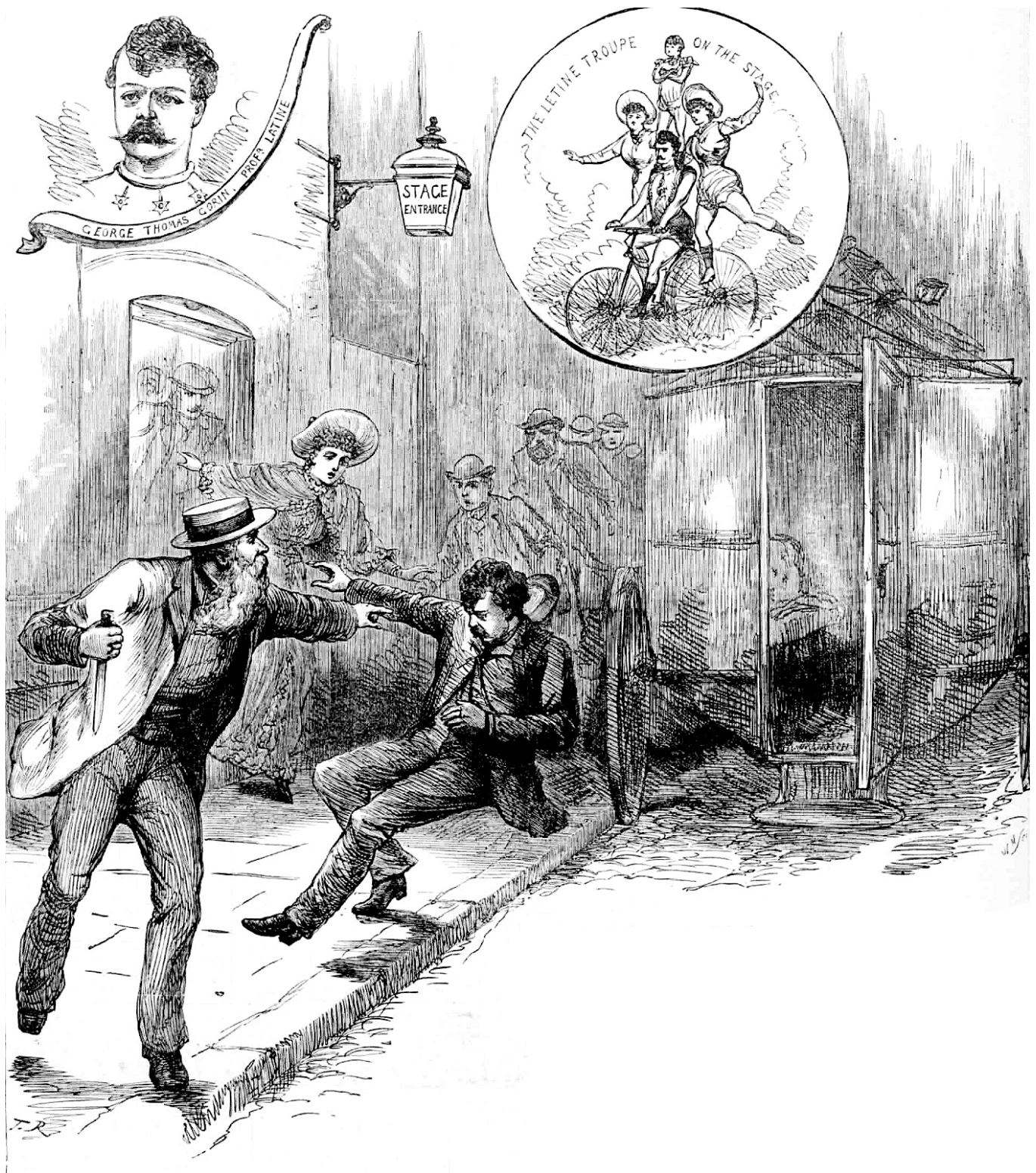
towards the horse. The horror-struck bystanders were frozen.

The coachman jumped down from his seat to support his collapsing master. Hearing the scream, Olga ran from the theatre. Letine fell into her arms.

Edwin Pike, the hall-keeper, ran after the man with the knife and tripped him. At that moment the assailant put a gun to his own mouth. As he fell he fired.



George Letine (*The Pictorial Australian*, 1 July 1889)



The Penny Illustrated Paper depicts the horrific murder scene, 29 June 1889

The man and Letine were rushed to nearby St Thomas's hospital, Letine on board his own omnibus.

As Letine lay dying, the doctors tried to stem the blood from his terrible stab wound. They stripped the outdoor jacket and trousers from his body, gradually revealing the white tights and spangled tunic of Letine's stage outfit. He was dressed and ready for a quick change between shows. It was in the glamorous garb of Professor Letine that poor

George Gorin bled to death on the operating table.

His killer, later revealed as Nathaniel Curragh (or Currah), failed in his suicide attempt and the whole tragic story unfolded as the newspapers wasted no time in splashing the details of this horrific and tragic murder and attempted suicide across their pages and the world's press. Olga and her family were persuaded to give an exclusive interview to *The St James Gazette* on 25th June.

Interviews such as this were a fairly new innovation; the idea was imported from the American press and viewed as rather vulgar by the English gentry and chattering classes.

Olga and George Gorin lived in a large, comfortable home at the foot of Denmark Hill with the troupe they called their family.

Nathaniel Curragh was the manager of the Crayford Waterworks in Kent. His daughter Beatie or Beatrice (real name Annette) was a lively, bright 13-year-old child full of energy and quick to learn. Beatie had been drawn to the colour and thrills of acrobatic performances since visiting a circus with her father. Not long after the trip, her mother Rebecca died of consumption, and in 1886 Beatie saw an advert placed in a newspaper by the Letines asking for potential new trainees to apply to join the troupe. She secretly applied and 'to her joy' was accepted.

Her father was deeply unhappy with his little girl's decision, but reluctantly signed the agreement forms. She was 13-years-old and the troupe was about to tour Europe. No wonder he was reluctant to let her join the group, never mind travel so far from her loving home.

Despite his misgivings, Nathaniel Curragh befriended George and Olga Gorin, and became almost family. Curragh often wrote to his daughter advising that she listen to her 'Uncle & Aunt'.

Curragh wrote to Letine saying how proud he was having seen Beatie perform at Crystal Palace. All appeared to be fine and well, his dear Beatie was happy and thriving. Curragh doted on his children although he still mourned deeply for his wife Rebecca.

Reports were so positive that Beatie's elder sister Gertrude (stage name Rose) even decided to join the adopted family alongside her sister.

In November 1888 Nathaniel Curragh married his new wife Francis. Then something changed.

Beatie was obviously not well; she had been losing weight and making mistakes. She had to wear three pairs of tights to pad her frail body. Then, in mid April 1888, after a twelve-night run at Day's Grand Theatre of Varieties in Cardiff, the troupe returned to London. Beatie had caught cold and a concerned Olga and George called for a doctor to examine her. He diagnosed possible consumption. As soon as they learned that her mother had died of the same complaint, they sent her home to be cared for by her father, Curragh.

Then in April 1888 Olga and George Gorin stood in a packed Lambeth police court accused of child cruelty. Rose had brought the charge before the judge, claiming that the Letines had beaten and 'unlawfully assaulted' two of her fellow troupe members, nine-year-old Arthur

Troughwish and a four-year-old unnamed girl. Another Curragh sister, Fanny, was also called for the prosecution.



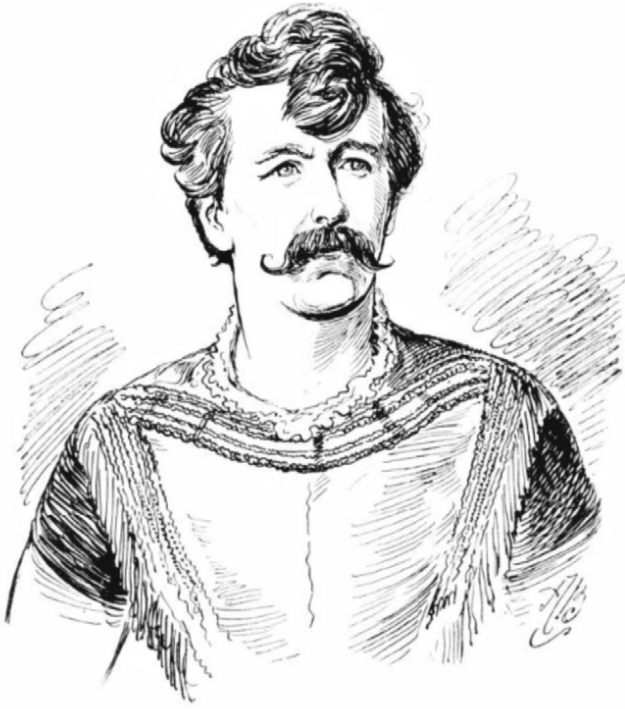
*Nathaniel Curragh, his daughter Beatie Curragh
and George Letine
from The Ipswich Journal July 1889*

Rather oddly, Rose declared that she had no quarrel with the Letines and would look after the children of the troupe. The magistrate said he had no power to give her custody, and suspected that she wanted to train them to start her own troupe. The happy and positive letters of Rose and Beatie were read out and Arthur said that he had never been beaten with a poker or mis-treated in any way. At this point the judge stopped the case saying he had 'not the slightest doubt' that it had been brought before the court 'purely out of spite'. The crowd cheered.

In October 1888, Olga and George stood in court once more, this time in Cardiff where they had been touring the show in the spring. And this time the charges were brought by the Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children. They had interviewed Beatie after a complaint was received.

Beatie was so weak during one performance in Cardiff, she explained, that she had 'dropped a little boy off my shoulder. The master put him up again and I dropped him again, and the people hissed.' Letine lifted the boy to her shoulder again but she dropped him yet again and the unsympathetic audience hissed once more. Upsetting for little Beatie and a reception that seasoned perfectionist George would rarely have heard. One time she fell into the footlights and Letine had to jump to her rescue.

Under pressure from her father and the Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children to testify, she later claimed that Letine had beaten and shouted at her. Yet early letters from Curragh, and later testimony from fellow performers had only praise for the way that Olga and George had taken the young performers into the heart of their family.



George Letine (The Entr'acte 29 June 1889)

In the spring of 1888, twelve months after joining the Letine troupe, an emaciated, skeletal Beatrice was met by her brother at the station. Later, at the murder inquest, he said he was shocked to see the state of her as she stepped from the train. "Says I to myself, you'll be a corpse any day."

Beatrice spent six months being nursed in a convalescent home in Southend then was taken back to the Curragh house in Crayford to spend the last few months of her short life at home. She died suffering from 'enlargement of the heart, acute bronchitis, congestion of the lungs, and pleurisy'.

Nathaniel Curragh was heartbroken at the death of his daughter. He was a changed man.

As Beatrice lay in her coffin, Curragh softly passed his hand over her brow with a strange movement, muttering, "My poor child you've been murdered!"

All who knew him agreed that his character was totally altered. Before his child's death he had been 'a steady, respectable man, of rather a lively, jocular disposition.'

He began rambling incoherently veering between a 'morose and churlish' nature, excitable and very strange.

He pulled a gun on his son Charles, muttered to himself, tied invisible string into knots, frequently woke from nightmares shouting, and spent hours staring at a picture, on the mantle, of little children placing flowers on a grave.

When interviewed later, he told the doctors that he was haunted by demons and evil spirits who spoke to him, that 'God Almighty frequently' had told him to murder Letine and kill himself, and most poignant of all that 'He was pursued by the spirit of his dead daughter Beatrice, urging

him to kill Letine'. Echoing his tender action towards her he claimed that her apparition 'put her cold hand on my forehead.' Once Beatrice appeared before him and simply said 'Cheer up, dada'.

Curragh followed the troupe's every movement for weeks checking their nightly schedule. He wrote to George and Olga accusing them of murdering his dear Beatrice. On the evening of 20th June he walked into a pub by the Canterbury to ask what time the troupe usually arrived at the theatre. He asked the same question at the dairy next door.

A lamp cleaner testified that Curragh was in the theatre at 9am on the 21st, and haunted the building frequently throughout the day always asking what time the Letines were due to appear. There was no doubt that the murder and attempted suicide were pre-meditated. Nathaniel had reached the end of his tether, his mental health had suffered. He had deliberately stalked then murdered his prey, George Gorin.

The bullet Curragh fired as Edwin Pike grappled him had lodged in his mouth, Curragh survived, and the bullet was dislodged from his palette and removed in a simple operation, along with a tooth, two days after the murder.

In court Nathaniel sat before the judge. His long white beard covered his face. He fidgeted, his face twitched, and clearly agitated he had no understanding of his surroundings or the perilous situation he was in. Searching his clothing at the hospital earlier, Inspector Lowe found a smaller clasp knife and seven gun cartridges. Curragh had dropped the gun at the scene of the crime but it was never found, and the police suspected it had been stolen. Lowe also found a notebook and letters in Curragh's pockets. There was a will, leaving his possessions to his wife and other entries were addressed to family members 'From your broken hearted father' and one addressed to 'The villains that murdered my own dear child'.

During the hearing it emerged that Curragh's father, mother and sister had all struggled with mental health issues. Shockingly, his father had made his own coffin and made young Nathaniel and his siblings sleep in it on a regular basis.

On Tuesday 25th June 1889, in a small crowded room at the western end of St Thomas' Hospital, Olga was asked to describe the murder in grim detail to the inquest jury. She was, understandably, in pieces, described in some newspapers as 'hysterical.'

Since December 1888 Curragh's family, and new wife, had been mourning the death of little Beatrice. For the six months in the lead-up to the murder they were also dealing with Curragh's erratic behaviour and his obsessive mental condition.

Olga's shocked state of mind could not have been eased by the fact that the troupe had made substantial financial losses on a trip to Russia. 36-year-old George had also died intestate; Olga was suddenly a widow at 25 with no home or income, no security. By default the nearest male relative was due to inherit. It was only through the good grace of George's brother Walter that she had anything, as he waived his claim to what remained of George's estate.

Richard Warner, friend and manager to the Letine Troupe, quickly arranged a benefit and another well-known act, Selbini, who had trained with Letine after running away from another act, returned from his show in America to lead the fundraiser.

On 27th June swathes of mourners crowded outside Olga's house at the foot of Denmark Hill. There were many fellow performers as well as friends, family and fans of George and the Letine Troupe.

The funeral cortège wound its way to nearby Nunhead cemetery, where thousands more mourners awaited the burial ceremony.

In 1890 Olga married into the relative safety of an insurance underwriter named George Charles Alexander Smith. They continued to live at the house on Denmark Hill with Lizzie Pocock and Katie Tatton, two of the Letine Troupe, along with 4-year-old Olga Gloria Smith, marked on the census as their daughter. She is more likely to be the little girl Olga and George adopted before the murder. Olga had obviously not been persuaded to give up her chosen calling, as she was still a professional bicyclist.

The new prevailing mood of a philanthropic, caring society and the English libel laws had ironically contributed to Nathaniel's unstable state of mind.

Millicent Garret Fawcett, the renowned social reformer, had written several reports on cruelty and child labour on the circus, music hall and pantomime circuits. The reports were long overdue and obviously well-founded, but they cast a shadow over many legitimate and professional acts who took pride in their conduct and conditions.

Only weeks before the murder in June, Hesba Stretton (pen name of Sarah Smith, co-founder of the NSPCC) had written a thinly-disguised story titled 'An Acrobat's Girlhood' which was based on the Beatie Curragh report written by The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. According to his son, Curragh often read and wept over the story.

In 1888 the *Pall Mall Gazette* had published a letter containing allegations from an Oxford undergraduate that 'some boy acrobats had been trained by torture in a certain circus'. The paper printed in good faith, but was not able to substantiate the claims. The paper was forced to pay a whopping £1,500 in damages and costs. So when Nathaniel

approached the paper with his own story, the publisher was reluctant to run the same risk and declined to print his letter. According to a New Zealand newspaper, "The *Gazette* declares that if it could have been published, in all probability the murder would never have taken place."

In other words, they wished that Nathaniel had had an open outlet to publicize his grievances without fear of legal repercussions in a libel suit against the paper.

In court it was clear that Nathaniel was unwell and unable to defend himself. Dr Lyttleton Forbes Winslow gave evidence that Nathaniel was haunted and pursued by Beatie's dead spirit 'urging him to kill Letine'. Dr Bastian said that this was definitely not a borderline case, Nathaniel was 'hopelessly insane' and not fit to plead. The judge decreed that he should be sent to Broadmoor prison until he improved. He never recovered, and died there in 1915.

Nathaniel had knocked at all the legitimate doors he could think of in his search for justice. They had all been slammed in his face and he had no option than to turn his hand to revenge.

Had the *Pall Mall Gazette* run his story, would Curragh have been satisfied and put a stop to his campaign against Letine? We may never know.

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HEATHER TWEED is an artist, writer and educator based in the South West of England. She is currently researching and writing a book about an eccentric and troubled 19th Century heiress.

Tweet @heathertweed

www.heathertweed.net

Woman's Work

An Alternative Method of Capturing the Whitechapel Murderer

Part One

By NINA and HOWARD BROWN

In recent issues of *Ripperologist* two articles appeared in our column featuring contemporary commentary concerning women being used as detectives (Mrs. Frances Cobbe in the June 2017 issue, number 156, "Detectives, She Said") and the exploits of thespian John T. Sullivan ("Dragnet", issues 157 and 158),¹ who went out in female attire during the Autumn of Terror.

While neither idea achieved any success in 1888, it nevertheless demonstrated the level of concern felt by those merely reading about the atrocious murders. For most people, male or female, suggesting that a woman risk her life by walking the cobbled streets of the East End under the eerie glow of a gaslight in an effort to apprehend the armed and extremely dangerous Whitechapel Murderer would have been the last thing crossing their minds. On occasion, one comes across a well-meaning but hastily thought out letter to the editor from a civilian suggesting women be put out on the dark streets with spiked collars around their necks to thwart any attempt at throat-slashing... and even jailbirds in prison in Britain and America would chime in echoing the same poorly thought-out but sincere suggestions.

What about those whose jobs it was to capture the killer? As in cops going out in actual drag?

One G Division Detective-sergeant (Louis Robinson) was on duty in drag on 9th October in St. Pancras, resulting in a near double tragedy and which demonstrated the dangers of police patrol when in disguise as a woman:

Daily News
London
17 October 1888

THE ASSAULT ON A DETECTIVE

At the Clerkenwell Police-court yesterday, James Phillips, 37, and William Jarvis, 40, both cab washers, were charged on remand, before Mr. Bros, with cutting and wounding Detective-sergeant Robinson, G division, in Phoenix-place, St. Pancras, early in the morning of Tuesday, the 9th inst. Jarvis was further charged with assaulting and wounding Henry Doncaster, a private person, on the same occasion.

Mr. Keith Frith, instructed by Mr. Ricketts, appeared for the defence.

The evidence given at the first hearing of the case was to the effect that at the time of the occurrence. Detective-sergeant Robinson was on duty disguised in woman's clothing, watching, in company with Detective-sergeant Mather, Mr. Doncaster, and others, a man whose actions had laid him open to suspicion in connection with the East-end murders. While so engaged they were attacked by the two prisoners; Robinson received two stabs in the face from Jarvis, and kicks in the arm and ribs from Phillips, while Doncaster received a stab in the face, and had his jaw dislocated.

Michaelo Rainole, an Italian ice cream vender, said he was with the detectives on the morning of the 9th watching "the man who was supposed to be the man who killed all the women" when the two prisoners came up and asked what they were doing. Robinson took off the woman's hat which he was wearing and said "I am a police officer." He

¹ For discussion on the Sullivan incident, first discovered by the much-missed researcher Chris Scott, see forum.casebook.org/archive/index.php/t-1389.html



from the Illustrated Police News, 10th November 1888

saw Jarvis strike Robinson in the face and cause it to bleed, and he also saw Jarvis, who had something in his hand, deal Doncaster a side blow in the face. Phillips called out to some men in a yard close by to come to his assistance, and witness went to fetch some more police. Cross-examined, the witness denied that the disturbance had begun by the prisoners asking Robinson and the others what they were doing near the cabs, and by Robinson replying "Mind your own business," and thrusting Jarvis back by putting his fist against his chin. It was Jarvis who struck the first blow. He saw Jarvis on the ground, and heard some men cry out to Robinson, "Shame! Leave off hitting him." Jarvis was in a fainting condition and was bleeding when taken to the police station.

Giuseppe Molinari gave corroborative evidence.

Detective Charles Mather, G Division, said he was in company with Robinson. At the time of the occurrence he was watching the suspected person; but he saw the two prisoners come up to Robinson, and he heard some one say, "What are you messing about here for?" Robinson replied, "I am a police constable; you know me. We are watching something." The same voice then said, "Why, it's Robinson." The witness then described the assault, corroborating the previous witnesses. He arrested Jarvis, who tried to throw him. Afterwards Jarvis, who was bleeding, began to feel giddy. Witness admitted, in cross-examination, that none of the plain-clothes officers had shown their warrant cards to prove themselves detectives. They had, he said, no opportunity of doing so.

Frank Mew, police-constable 301 G, arrested Phillips, who said, when told he would be taken to the police-station, "All right, governor, it is not the first time I have been there."

The prisoners, who reserved their defence, were committed for trial, Jarvis on the charge of unlawfully wounding, and Phillips for assaulting the police.

Mr. Bros consented to allow bail, two sureties in 20/.

It would be interesting to know whether Detective Sergeant Mather was also in female attire. Like Robinson,

he received what could have been fatal wounds an inch or two either way.²



Over in America, New York City police Inspector Thomas Byrnes was usually up to making pronouncements on the performance of the Met Police and their hunt for the murderer... on occasion offering 'advice'. One such notion was to use a good number of women (without saying it outright, he undoubtedly meant women involved in prostitution) to do the trick. Byrnes is on record as having stated that he'd place women in various locations, with constables keeping an eye on them from a distance, hoping to lure the killer, and should one fall to the blade it would at least have accomplished their goal of capturing the killer creating so much terror in London and titillating the world within newspapers and by word of mouth.



Unfortunately, we do not have any police memoranda which outlines a plan to implement for civilian or police-instructed decoys to undertake this sort of activity.

With an absence of any evidence to present in regard to the Metropolitan or City Police ever using women in mind,

2 For an in-depth examination of this incident see 'Cats and Dogs in Phoenix Place' by Jon Simons, *Ripperologist* 122 (September 2011).

we shouldn't jump to the conclusion that one or both police departments did sanction covert actions. Women did go out as decoys, but without an acknowledgement or refutation from police sources it's best to simply say they occurred and we don't know, to date, who sponsored their efforts.

With or without this verification, we know that the women came from the civilian ranks, as there were no female constables on the force in 1888 and wouldn't be for another 30 years. Amelia Lewis, 21-years-old in 1888, is mentioned in an *Evening News* article from 1949 as having performed this duty.



We also know that women roaming the streets for a maniacal killer didn't occur only in 1888. An article we located from the *South Wales Echo* mentions the practice still in force during October 1890:

South Wales Echo
Glamorgan
8th October 1890

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS

It is alleged that the receipt at Scotland-yard last week of the warning letter signed 'Jack The Ripper', has been the

means of rendering the police more vigilant and creating more excitement among the inhabitants of Whitechapel.

Superintendent Arnold and the most experienced detectives would seem to be persuaded that another horrible crime is about to be enacted by the 'Terror of the East-end,' but it is believed they have more definite ground for apprehension than the communication referred to. They incline to the belief that the communication has emanated from the murderer himself and that it is a mistake to regard it as a hoax. The beats in Whitechapel and Spitalfields have been completely reorganised. Every person whose appearance or movement causes the slightest suspicion is 'shadowed' by plain-clothes men. Several arrests have been made during the last two or three nights, but in each case the 'suspect' was set at liberty almost immediately, being able to advance satisfactory proof of his innocence.

But by far the most important arrangement, in the opinion of the shrewdest detectives yet made to entrap the assassin should he attempt to add another to his already long list of crimes, is the employment of the class of women he has formerly chosen as his victims. A number of these women have practically been engaged by the authorities to aid in the endeavours to capture him. They have been converted for the time being into female detectives, and from midnight till almost daylight they are to be found prowling about in all directions.



You have to admire the moxie of those women who undertook this task.

Next month, we'll read what 'strong as a horse' Polly Murphy from Hoxton had to say about her undercover experiences just three days after the murder of Alice McKenzie in Castle Alley in July 1889

Thanks to Jerry Dunlop for the transcription of the *Daily News* article.



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

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

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Victorian Fiction

A Strange Christmas Game

By CHARLOTTE RIDDELL

Edited with an introduction and notes by Eduardo Zinna

INTRODUCTION

'My dear reader,' writes the author of the present story, Charlotte Riddell, masquerading as a male narrator, 'you are doubtless free from superstitious fancies.' Perhaps Mrs Riddell's readers were indeed free from superstitious fancies. The Victorians, however, had a vigorous interest in the occult and were keen on spiritualism, *séances*, mediums, mesmerism, Ouija boards and Tarot cards. Even if they pooh-poohed the existence of ghosts, as Mrs Riddell puts it, they were certainly open to supernatural manifestations.

Ghosts – the spirits of the dead – have always existed; not perhaps in reality, but in primitive religion, folk tales, oral tradition, early epics, urban legends, literature, the stage and, more recently, the cinema. There are ghosts in the Bible and the Odyssey, in Chinese, Indian and Japanese legends, in the works of Apuleius, Petronius and Seneca, in German poems and Icelandic sagas. To top it all, ghosts have a special affinity with England and the English. Apparitions from beyond the grave feature in the stories told by Chaucer's pilgrims on the way to Canterbury and tread the stage in the plays of Thomas Kyd, William Shakespeare and John Webster.

On Christmas Eve 1764 – a significant date – Horace Walpole, the youngest son of British Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole, published *The Castle of Otranto*, a gloomy tale filled with melodramatic trappings and uncanny incidents. Within its pages, wicked tyrants persecute young lovers, poor peasants turn out to be rich heirs, misplaced parents meet lost children, ghosts roam the castle halls, gigantic helmets fall from the heights, paintings move in their frames and doors open and close by themselves. Enough excitement for ten novels. The critics were unmoved; the public was enthralled and claimed for more. Walpole's novel was followed by countless others abounding in the complex plots, malevolent characters and clanking spectres which informed Gothic fiction

and still survive in paperback thrillers, soap operas and straight-to-DVD horror movies.



Ghosts surfaced often in the fiction published throughout the world in the early years of the nineteenth century. But it was in England in the second half of the century that they came fully into their own. The periodicals

launched to meet the demands of a growing reading class opened their pages to every manner of ghosts and their exploits. Many writers, publishers and editors contributed to their popularity, but no one did more to ensure their everlasting success than Charles Dickens. The ghost stories he wrote himself were not many in number: he included some in his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, published the seminal *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, and wrote a few more in later years. That was all. But in *A Christmas Carol* he had brought together the rituals of story-telling, ghost stories and Christmas so smoothly that they have become for ever inextricably welded. He was not the first to see the links between Christmas and ghost stories. There was an old tradition of winter's tales noted by Marlowe and Shakespeare which did not relate to the birth of Christ but to the Winter Solstice, the shortest and darkest day of the year, when the world shakes off death and embraces rebirth. But in the magazines he founded and edited, *All Year Round* and *Household Words*, and especially in their Christmas supplements, Dickens continued to publish ghost stories and to uphold the notion that they occupy a special place in Christmas celebrations. The 1852 supplement to *Household Words* was suggestively entitled *A Round of Christmas Stories by the Fire*.

Many publications followed Dickens's example, and the tradition continues to this day. The latest Christmas special of *The Spectator*, published in December 2017, contained one original ghost story and nine accounts of true encounters with ghosts by such personalities as Prue Leith, Jeremy Clarke, Susan Hill and A N Wilson – who admitted a belief in the possibility of ghosts.

Our author for this issue, Charlotte Riddell – also known as Mrs J H Riddell – was born Charlotte Eliza Lawson Cowan in 1832 in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, Ireland, where her father, James Cowan, was High Sheriff. From an early age she wanted to become a writer and completed her first full-length novel at the age of fifteen. In 1855, following the death of her father, she moved to London with her mother. Determined to earn a living by her pen, Charlotte searched everywhere for a well-disposed publisher. Despite her lack of contacts, she eventually succeeded, and in 1857 published *The Moors and the Fens* under the pseudonym F G Trafford, which she only abandoned for her own name in 1864. Unfortunately, her mother did not live to witness her success. Left to her own devices, Charlotte married a civil engineer called Joseph

Hadley Riddell. She pursued, however, her career as a writer, which eventually brought her household higher earnings than her husband's income.

The works of Charlotte Riddell comprised over 56 books, of which the best remembered are her "city novels", such as *City and Suburb* and *The Senior Partner*. Through her husband, she was knowledgeable about the City of London, where the scenes of these novels were laid. Her greatest success was *George Geith of Fen Court*, the story of a clergyman who leaves a bad marriage to become an accountant in the City. Following its publication Charlotte rose to the highest ranks of popular authors. In 1867 she acquired a partnership in *St James's Magazine* and became its editor.

Like many other women authors of her time, Charlotte made frequent incursions into the supernatural genre, producing a good number of highly regarded ghost tales and inserting macabre elements in many of her novels, such as *Fairy Water* (1872), *The Haunted River* (1877) and *The Nun's Curse* (1888). Her ghost stories were collected in *Weird Stories* (1882) and *Idle Tales* (1887).

Upon his death in 1881 Charlotte's husband left massive debts that she undertook to pay off. In spite of waning popularity and lower pay, she kept her commitment – at the cost of her financial security. After 1886 she lived in seclusion at Upper Halliford, Middlesex. She became the first pensioner of the Society of Authors, receiving a pension of 60l. a year in May 1901. Her last novel was *Poor Fellow!*, which appeared in 1902. She died on 24 September 1906 at Hounslow, and was buried in Heston Churchyard, Middlesex.

Our present Victorian Fiction offering, *A Strange Christmas Game*, first appeared in London Society's Christmas issue and the Broadway Annual in 1868. It's a deceptively simple story about a brother and sister who inherit a haunted house. Being of limited resources, they fear that the ghosts' presence might affect the value of their inheritance. After lying in wait for them they eventually see the ghosts – who are not menacing. Few ghosts really are. In the occurrence, the ghosts are engaged in the re-enactment of a card game played many years ago which provides a clue to a long-standing mystery and offers closure to the narrator and his ancestors. What is unique about this story is that one of the ghosts is the spirit of a dead man – but the other is that of a man who is still alive.

A Strange Christmas Game

By CHARLOTTE RIDDELL

When, through the death of a distant relative, I, John Lester, succeeded to the Martingdale Estate, there could not have been found in the length and breadth of England a happier pair than myself and my only sister Clare.

We were not such utter hypocrites as to affect sorrow for the loss of our kinsman, Paul Lester, a man whom we had never seen, of whom we had heard but little, and that little unfavourable, at whose hands we had never received a single benefit - who was, in short, as great a stranger to us as the then Prime Minister, the Emperor of Russia, or any other human being utterly removed from our extremely humble sphere of life.

His loss was very certainly our gain. His death represented to us, not a dreary parting from one long loved and highly honoured, but the accession of lands, houses, consideration, wealth, to myself - John Lester, artist and second-floor lodger at 32, Great Smith Street, Bloomsbury.

Not that Martingdale was much of an estate as country properties go. The Lesters who had succeeded to that domain from time to time during the course of a few hundred years, could by no stretch of courtesy have been called prudent men. In regard of their posterity they were, indeed, scarcely honest, for they parted with manors and farms, with common rights¹ and advowsons², in a manner at once so baronial and so unbusiness-like, that Martingdale at length in the hands of Jeremy Lester, the last resident owner, melted to a mere little dot in the map of Bedfordshire.

Concerning this Jeremy Lester there was a mystery. No man could say what had become of him. He was in the oak parlour at Martingdale one Christmas Eve, and before the next morning he had disappeared - to reappear in the flesh no more.

Over night, one Mr Wharley, a great friend and boon companion of Jeremy's, had sat playing cards with him until after twelve o'clock chimes, then he took leave of his host and rode home under the moonlight. After that no person, as far as could be ascertained, ever saw Jeremy Lester alive.

His ways of life had not been either the most regular, or the most respectable, and it was not until a new year had come in without any tidings of his whereabouts reaching the house, that his servants became seriously alarmed

concerning his absence.

Then enquiries were set on foot concerning him - enquiries which grew more urgent as weeks and months passed by without the slightest clue being obtained as to his whereabouts. Rewards were offered, advertisements inserted, but still Jeremy made no sign; and so in course of time the heir-at-law, Paul Lester, took possession of the house, and went down to spend the summer months at Martingdale with his rich wife, and her four children by a first husband. Paul Lester was a barrister - an over-worked barrister, who everyone supposed would be glad enough to leave the bar and settle at Martingdale, where his wife's money and the fortune he had accumulated could not have failed to give him a good standing even among the neighbouring country families; and perhaps it was with such intention that he went down into Bedfordshire.

If this were so, however, he speedily changed his mind, for with the January snows he returned to London, let off the land surrounding the house, shut up the Hall, put in a caretaker, and never troubled himself further about his ancestral seat.

Time went on, and people began to say the house was haunted, that Paul Lester had 'seen something', and so forth - all which stories were duly repeated for our benefit when, forty-one years after the disappearance of Jeremy Lester, Clare and I went down to inspect our inheritance.

I say 'our', because Clare had stuck bravely to me in poverty - grinding poverty, and prosperity was not going to part us now. What was mine was hers, and that she knew, God bless her, without my needing to tell her so.

The transition from rigid economy to comparative wealth was in our case the more delightful also, because we had not in the least degree anticipated it. We never expected Paul Lester's shoes to come to us, and accordingly it was not upon our consciences that we had ever in our dreariest moods wished him dead.

Had he made a will, no doubt we never should have gone to Martingdale, and I, consequently, never written

1 Common rights: rights, as of pasturage or fishing, in land or water belonging to another.

2 Advowsons: rights of presentation to benefice.

this story; but, luckily for us, he died intestate, and the Bedfordshire property came to me.

As for the fortune, he had spent it in travelling, and in giving great entertainments at his grand house in Portman Square. Concerning his effects, Mrs Lester and I came to a very amicable arrangement, and she did me the honour of inviting me to call upon her occasionally, and, as I heard, spoke of me as a very worthy and presentable young man 'for my station', which, of course, coming from so good an authority, was gratifying. Moreover, she asked me if I intended residing at Martingdale, and on my replying in the affirmative, hoped I should like it.

It struck me at the time that there was a certain significance in her tone, and when I went down to Martingdale and heard the absurd stories which were afloat concerning the house being haunted, I felt confident that if Mrs Lester had hoped much, she had feared more.

People said Mr Jeremy 'walked' at Martingdale. He had been seen, it was averred, by poachers, by gamekeepers, by children who had come to use the park as a near cut to school, by lovers who kept their tryst under the elms and beeches.

As for the caretaker and his wife, the third in residence since Jeremy Lester's disappearance, the man gravely shook his head when questioned, while the woman stated that wild horses, or even wealth untold, should not draw her into the red bedroom, nor into the oak parlour, after dark.

'I have heard my mother tell, sir - it was her as followed old Mrs Reynolds, the first caretaker - how there were things went on in these self-same rooms as might make any Christian's hair stand on end. Such stamping, and swearing, and knocking about on furniture; and then tramp, tramp, up the great staircase; and along the corridor and so into the red bedroom, and then bang, and tramp, tramp again. They do say, sir, Mr Paul Lester met him once, and from that time the oak parlour has never been opened. I never was inside it myself.'

Upon hearing which fact, the first thing I did was to proceed to the oak parlour, open the shutters, and let the August sun stream in upon the haunted chamber. It was an old-fashioned, plainly furnished apartment, with a large table in the centre, a smaller in a recess by the fire-place, chairs ranged against the walls, and a dusty moth-eaten carpet upon the floor. There were dogs³ on the hearth, broken and rusty; there was a brass fender, tarnished and battered; a picture of some sea-fight over the mantel-piece, while another work of art about equal in merit hung between the windows. Altogether, an utterly prosaic and yet not uncheerful apartment, from out of which the ghosts flitted as soon as daylight was let into it, and

which I proposed, as soon as I 'felt my feet', to redecorate, refurnish, and convert into a pleasant morning-room. I was still under thirty, but I had learned prudence in that very good school, Necessity; and it was not my intention to spend much money until I had ascertained for certain what were the actual revenues derivable from the lands still belonging to the Martingdale estates, and the charges upon them. In fact, I wanted to know what I was worth before committing myself to any great extravagances, and the place had for so long been neglected, that I experienced some difficulty in arriving at the state of my real income.

But in the meanwhile, Clare and I found great enjoyment in exploring every nook and corner of our domain, in turning over the contents of old chests and cupboards, in examining the faces of our ancestors looking down on us from the walls, in walking through the neglected gardens, full of weeds, overgrown with shrubs and birdweed, where the boxwood⁴ was eighteen feet high, and the shoots of the rosetrees yards long. I have put the place in order since then; there is no grass on the paths, there are no trailing brambles over the ground, the hedges have been cut and trimmed, and the trees pruned and the boxwood clipped. But I often say nowadays that in spite of all my improvements, or rather, in consequence of them, Martingdale does not look one half so pretty as it did in its pristine state of uncivilised picturesqueness.



Although I determined not to commence repairing and decorating the house till better informed concerning the rental of Martingdale, still the state of my finances was so far satisfactory that Clare and I decided on going abroad to take our long-talked-of holiday before the fine weather

3 Dogs: metal utensils placed in fireplaces to hold burning wood or a grate.

4 Boxwood: evergreen shrubs or small trees.

was past. We could not tell what a year might bring forth, as Clare sagely remarked; it was wise to take our pleasure while we could; and accordingly, before the end of August arrived we were wandering about the continent, loitering at Rouen, visiting the galleries at Paris, and talking of extending our one month of enjoyment into three. What decided me on this course was the circumstance of our becoming acquainted with an English family who intended wintering in Rome. We met accidentally, but discovering that we were near neighbours in England - in fact that Mr Cronson's property lay close beside Martingdale - the slight acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy, and ere long we were travelling in company.

From the first, Clare did not much like this arrangement. There was 'a little girl' in England she wanted me to marry, and Mr Cronson had a daughter who certainly was both handsome and attractive. The little girl had not despised John Lester, artist, while Miss Cronson indisputably set her cap at John Lester of Martingdale, and would have turned away her pretty face from a poor man's admiring glance - all this I can see plainly enough now, but I was blind then and should have proposed for Maybel - that was her name - before the winter was over, had news not suddenly arrived of the illness of Mrs Cronson, senior. In a moment the programme was changed; our pleasant days of foreign travel were at an end. The Cronsons packed up and departed, while Clare and I returned more slowly to England, a little out of humour, it must be confessed, with each other.

It was the middle of November when we arrived at Martingdale, and we found the place anything but romantic or pleasant. The walks were wet and sodden, the trees were leafless, there were no flowers save a few late pink roses blooming in the garden.

It had been a wet season, and the place looked miserable. Clare would not ask Alice down to keep her company in the winter months, as she had intended; and for myself, the Cronsons were still absent in Norfolk, where they meant to spend Christmas with old Mrs Cronson, now recovered.

Altogether, Martingdale seemed dreary enough, and the ghost stories we had laughed at while sunshine flooded the rooms became less unreal when we had nothing but blazing fires and wax candles to dispel the gloom. They became more real also when servant after servant left us to seek situations elsewhere; when 'noises' grew frequent in the house; when we ourselves, Clare and I, with our own ears heard the tramp, tramp, the banging and the clattering which had been described to us.

My dear reader, you are doubtless free from superstitious fancies. You pooh-pooh the existence of ghosts, and only 'wish you could find a haunted house in which to spend a night', which is all very brave and praiseworthy, but wait

till you are left in a dreary, desolate old country mansion, filled with the most unaccountable sounds, without a servant, with no one save an old caretaker and his wife, who, living at the extremest end of the building, heard nothing of the tramp, tramp, bang, bang, going on at all hours of the night.

At first I imagine the noises were produced by some evil-disposed persons who wished, for purposes of their own, to keep the house uninhabited; but by degrees Clare and I came to the conclusion the visitation must be supernatural, and Martingdale by consequence untenable. Still being practical people, and unlike our predecessors, not having money to live where and how we liked, we decided to watch and see whether we could trace any human influence in the matter. If not, it was agreed we were to pull down the right wing of the house and the principal staircase.

For nights and nights we sat up till two or three o'clock in the morning; but just to test the matter, I determined on Christmas-eve, the anniversary of Mr Jeremy Lester's disappearance, to keep watch by myself in the red bed-chamber. Even to Clare I never mentioned my intention.

About ten, tired out with our previous vigils, we each retired to rest. Somewhat ostentatiously, perhaps, I noisily shut the door of my room, and when I opened it half an hour afterwards, no mouse could have pursued its way along the corridor with greater silence and caution than myself.

Quite in the dark I sat in the red room. For over an hour I might as well have been in my grave for anything I could see in the apartment; but at the end of that time the moon rose and cast strange lights across the floor and upon the wall of the haunted chamber.

Hitherto I had kept my watch opposite the window; now I changed my place to a corner near the door, where I was shaded from observation by the heavy hangings of the bed, and an antique wardrobe.

Still I sat on, but still no sound broke the silence. I was weary with many nights' watching; and tired of my solitary vigil, I dropped at last into a slumber from which I was awakened by hearing the door softly opened.

'John,' said my sister, almost in a whisper, 'John, are you here?'

'Yes, Clare,' I answered, 'but what are you doing up at this hour?'

'Come downstairs,' she replied, 'they are in the oak parlour.' I did not need any explanation as to whom she meant, but crept downstairs, after her, warned by an uplifted hand of the necessity for silence and caution.

By the door - by the open door of the oak parlour, she paused, and we both looked in.

There was the room we left in darkness overnight, with a bright wood fire blazing on the hearth, candles on the chimney-piece, the small table pulled out from its accustomed corner, and two men seated beside it, playing at cribbage.⁵



We could see the face of the younger player; it was that of a man of about five-and-twenty, of a man who had lived hard and wickedly; who had wasted his substance and his health; who had been while in the flesh, Jeremy Lester. It would be difficult for me to say how I knew this, how in a moment I identified the features of the player with those of a man who had been missing for forty-one years - forty-one years that very night. He was dressed in the costume of a bygone period; his hair was powdered, and round his wrists there were ruffles of lace.

He looked like one who, having come from some great party had sat down after his return home to play at cards with an intimate friend. On his little finger there sparkled a ring, in the front of his shirt there gleamed a valuable diamond. There were diamond buckles in his shoes, and, according to the fashion of his time, he wore knee-breeches and silk stockings, which showed off advantageously the shape of a remarkably good leg and ankle.

He sat opposite to the door, but never once lifted his eyes to it. His attention seemed concentrated on the cards.

For a time there was utter silence in the room, broken only by the monotonous counting of the game.

In the doorway we stood, holding our breath, terrified, and yet fascinated by the scene which was being acted before us.

The ashes dropped on the hearth softly and like the snow; we could hear the rustle of the cards as they were dealt out and fell upon the table: we listened to the count - fifteen-one, fifteen-two, and so forth - but there was no other word spoken till at length the player whose face we could not see, exclaimed, 'I win; the game is mine.'

Then his opponent took up the cards, sorted them over negligently in his hand, put them close together, and flung the whole pack in his guest's face, exclaiming, 'Cheat! Liar! Take that!'

There was a bustle and a confusion - a flinging over of chairs, and fierce gesticulation, and such a noise of passionate voices mingling, that we could not hear a sentence which was uttered.

All at once, however, Jeremy Lester strode out of the room in so great a hurry that he almost touched us where we stood; out of the room, and tramp, tramp up the staircase, to the red room, whence he descended in a few minutes with a couple of rapiers under his arm.

When he re-entered the room he gave, as it seemed to us, the other man his choice of the weapons, and then he flung open the window, and after ceremoniously giving place to his opponent to pass out first, he walked forth into the night-air, Clare and I following.

We went through the garden and down a narrow winding walk to a smooth piece of turf sheltered from the north by a plantation of young fir-trees. It was a bright moonlit night by this time, and we could distinctly see Jeremy Lester measuring off the ground.

'When you say "three",' he said to the man whose back was still toward us. They had drawn lots for the ground, and the lot had fallen against Mr Lester. He stood thus with the moonbeams falling full upon him, and a handsomer fellow I would never desire to behold.

'One,' began the other; 'two,' and before our kinsman had the slightest suspicion of his design, he was upon him, and his rapier through Jeremy Lester's breast. At the sight of that cowardly treachery, Clare screamed aloud. In a moment the combatants had disappeared, the moon was obscured behind a cloud, and we were standing in the shadow of the fir-plantation, shivering with cold and terror.

But we knew at last what had become of the late owner of Martingdale: that he had fallen, not in fair fight, but

5 Cribbage: card game played with pack of 52 cards and a board of 61 holes on which points are scored with pegs.

foully murdered by a false friend.

When, late on Christmas morning, I awoke, it was to see a white world, to behold the ground, and trees, and shrubs all laden and covered with snow. There was snow everywhere, such snow as no person could remember having fallen for forty-one years.

'It was on just such a Christmas as this that Mr Jeremy disappeared,' remarked the old sexton to my sister, who had insisted on dragging me through the snow to church, whereupon Clare fainted away and was carried into the vestry, where I made a full confession to the Vicar of all we had beheld the previous night.

At first that worthy individual rather inclined to treat the matter lightly, but when a fortnight after, the snow melted away and the fir-plantation came to be examined, he confessed there might be more things in heaven and earth than his limited philosophy had dreamed of.

In a little clear space just within the plantation, Jeremy Lester's body was found. We knew it by the ring and the diamond buckles, and the sparkling breast-pin; and Mr Cronson, who in his capacity as magistrate came over to inspect these relics, was visibly perturbed at my narrative.



'Pray, Mr Lester, did you in your dream see the face of - of the gentleman - your kinsman's opponent?'

'No,' I answered, 'he sat and stood with his back to us

all the time.'

'There is nothing more, of course, to be done in the matter,' observed Mr Cronson.

'Nothing,' I replied; and there the affair would doubtless have terminated, but that a few days afterwards when we were dining at Cronson Park, Clare all of a sudden dropped the glass of water she was carrying to her lips, and exclaiming, 'Look, John, there he is!' rose from her seat, and with a face as white as the tablecloth, pointed to a portrait hanging on the wall.

'I saw him for an instant when he turned his head towards the door as Jeremy Lester left it,' she exclaimed; 'that is he.'

Of what followed after this identification I have only the vaguest recollection. Servants rushed hither and thither; Mrs Cronson dropped off her chair into hysterics; the young ladies gathered round their mamma; Mr Cronson, trembling like one in an ague fit, attempted some kind of explanation, while Clare kept praying to be taken away - only to be taken away.

I took her away, not merely from Cronson Park, but from Martingdale. Before we left the latter place, however, I had an interview with Mr Cronson, who said the portrait Clare had identified was that of his wife's father, the last person who saw Jeremy Lester alive.

'He is an old man now,' finished Mr Cronson, 'a man of over eighty, who has confessed everything to me. You won't bring further sorrow and disgrace upon us by making this matter public?'

I promised him I would keep silence, but the story gradually oozed out, and the Cronsons left the country.

My sister never returned to Martingdale; she married and is living in London. Though I assure her there are no strange noises now in my house, she will not visit Bedfordshire, where the 'little girl' she wanted me so long ago to 'think seriously of', is now my wife and the mother of my children.

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

Reviews

Included in this issue:

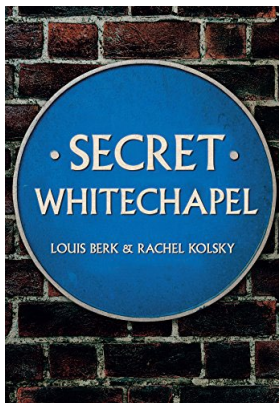
Secret Whitechapel, Victorian Policing, A Moment in Time and more

THIS TIME AROUND. It's not often that nobody publishes a book about 'Jack the Ripper', but that's the case this time round! Nevertheless, I've had enough to keep me busy when I've not been kept busy moving house. No doubt next month will be full of Ripper books.

Paul Begg

SECRET WHITECHAPEL

Louis Berk, & Rachel Kolsky
Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2017
www.amberley-books.com
softcover & ebook
96pp; Illus
ISBN:1445661985
softcover £14.99 & ebook £12.00



'Do you want to discover where Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky attended the London Congress of the future Communist party of Russia, or visit a rural idyll at the heart of Whitechapel? Who was Tommy Flowers and where was Joseph Merrick first seen by Dr Frederick Treves? Why are there artworks on the Spitalfields pavements and

maidens' faces decorating so many walls? What are the secrets behind the graceful but unadorned Georgian building façades?'

So asks the blurb on the back cover of *Secret Whitechapel*, and suddenly I do want to know the answers to these things. I especially want to know who Tommy Flowers was and why I have never heard of him.

I now know, of course, but I'm not telling.

Louis Berk and Rachel Kolsky, a photographer and teacher and a Blue Badge Tourist Guide respectively, collaborated on the surprisingly interesting and entertaining *East End Jewish Cemeteries* published by Amberley in 2017, and Berk published *Whitechapel in 50 Buildings* in 2016.

One of the things I particularly liked about this book

were the architectural descriptions that made me look at some of the buildings in a new way. For example, in the south-east corner of St George's Gardens, Cable Street, there is a sadly neglected little building that's now pretty much derelict. You probably wouldn't give it a second look, other than to wonder why such derelict eyesores aren't demolished.

But it was built as a mortuary in 1876, and Berk and Kolsky explain the significance of this, but, as they say, it was also where the body of Elizabeth Stride was taken in 1888.

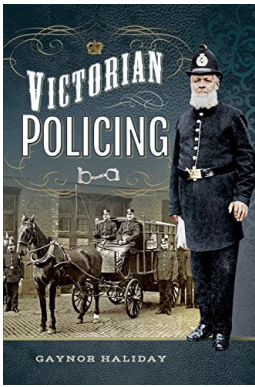
That makes this little building really important to me, but I have to admit that it is otherwise seems unremarkable – until Berk and Kolsky point out that 'this mortuary is classic Victorian gothic with wonderful ornamental detail.' They go on to describe 'alternate layers of different coloured brickwork with lines of terracotta to create an intricate pattern...' and 'beautiful cream-glazed tiles' that lined the walls of the infectious diseases room. Why oh why is this place being allowed to rot...?

I now look at these buildings in a different light. Thank you *Secret Whitechapel* for an eye-opening trip!

VICTORIAN POLICING

Gaynor Haliday
Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword, 2017
www.pen-and-sword
softcover & ebook
186pp; illus, appendices, notes, biblio, index
ISBN:1526706121
softcover £12.99 & ebook £9.35

Author Gaynor Halliday's great-great-grandfather was a copper in the Bradford Borough Police Force. By all accounts he was physically capable, facing up to many violent criminals on 'the dark and grimy Bradford streets', was frequently assaulted, and made numerous



arrests. He was good at his job, was reprimanded only once in a career that spanned thirty-nine years from 1852 until 1891, and yet never progressed beyond constable. Particularly interesting is that he was one of fifty-eight of Bradford's street characters painted by professional watercolour artist John Snowden. It's easy to see

why Haliday began researching this gentleman, whose name was Thomas Bottomley, but her interest in him soon expanded to embrace a variety of aspects of life as a bobby in the nineteenth century.

Gaynor Haliday's book is similar in scope to Neil RA Bell's *Capturing Jack the Ripper: In the Boots of a Victorian Bobby in Victorian London* and the overall picture presented by both books is that policing back then was a tough and thankless job. It was uncomfortable and somewhat unpleasant from the moment the copper donned his uniform at the start of the working day (or night). It could be uncomfortable, especially the ill-fitting and leaky boots, and the leather stock worn around the neck to protect against garroting. The collar caused the policeman to walk with a rather haughty, superior appearance, which some people naturally found offensive. Other complaints concerned the supposedly waterproof cape and leggings, which combined with the leaky boots to make uncomfortable to be out and about in the rain – maybe one reason why a fair number of policeman found some respite in the local boozer, or would shelter in an alley with a welcome cup of tea. Furthermore, uniforms were provided by the Force, but if the policeman elected to pay out of his salary for something that was actually warm and waterproof, the chances are he'd be reprimanded.

Things changed over time, of course, and efforts were made to improve the lot of coppers on the beat – at least some senior officers were concerned for the welfare of their men: remember Sir Charles Warren's obsession with boots? Conditions when Thomas Bottomley joined the Bradford force in 1852 were from those that prevailed when he retired nearly forty years later.

One of the benefits of a book like Neil Bell's is that it focusses on the conditions for policemen in one year, 1888, and in particular on those policemen investigating the Ripper murders. Haliday takes in the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century and focuses on the provincial forces. I don't think Jack the Ripper gets a single mention. Chapter by chapter, Haliday describes the policeman's life from his recruitment and training, through the responsibilities and difficulties of keeping

order on the streets, engaging with criminals, the dangers of making an arrest, controlling the crowds that gathered at demonstrations and other public events, and finally the range of misdemeanours that could gain a policeman a reprimand, loss of pay, or dismissal.

There's a good selection of photographs, my favourite being of a police sports day: six coppers racing for the finishing wire, all in uniform and helmets. I don't know why, but I found that photo very cheering; an enlargement hanging on my office wall to bring a smile on even the gloomiest of grey, rainy, workaday mornings.

VICTORIAN MURDERS

Jan Bondeson

Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2017

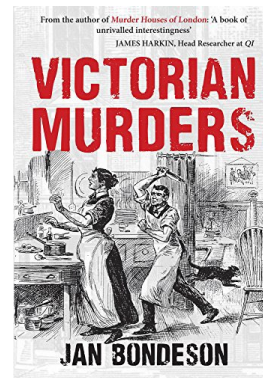
www.amberley.books.com

softcover & ebook

320pp; illus; sources; index

ISBN:9781445666303

softcover £14.99 & ebook £11.58



Writing in the *London Review* in 1864 about the recently published *Illustrated Police News*, one commentator was less than impressed; 'We must say that we do not think the morality of the lower orders will be at all benefited by its publication...' Now, I can't say whether the 'lower orders' were adversely affected or not,

but the *Illustrated Police News*, which had begun life on 20 February 1864, was published every Saturday for the next seventy-four years, so it clearly had an appeal! And that appeal was an appetite among the 'lower orders' (and the higher orders too, I suspect) for reading about crime, especially murder.

Interestingly, Jan Bondeson says the readership of the *Illustrated Police News* was largely male. Reading about real crime still seems to be largely male. Females revel in fictional blood, manufacturing lots of murders. The giants of crime fiction seem to be women, led by the Golden Era queens of the genre like Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers, to the great crime novelists of today, like Patricia Cornwell and the aptly-named Karin Slaughter. Anyway, aside from that observation...

In this latest collection of true crime cases from the late Victorian period, Bondeson has collected fifty-six cases of murder committed between 1867 and 1900, all culled from the pages of the *IPN*.

As Bondeson explains in his informative introduction, he had access to a ledger labelled 'Victorian Murders'. It contained cuttings from a number of newspapers,

particularly the *IPN*. From the tales told in the *IPN*, Bondeson chose to investigate fifty-six.

They begin in 1867 with the horrible murder of Fanny Adams, a little girl killed and butchered by a clerk named Frederick Baker, who infamously noted in his diary, '24th August, Saturday – killed a young girl. It was fine and hot.' The book concludes in 1894, with the murderous 'East End lothario' James Canham Read. In between there are well-known cases such as Florence Bravo and Mary Eleanor Percy and a whole host of murders that have faded in the collective memory.

As you will have guessed, as these stories have been taken from an illustrated newspaper, the book reproduces lots of those original line-drawings, and these add an extra dimension to the generally short narratives.

As with pretty much everything Jan Bondeson writes, this is an interesting collection of murders, well-known and not so well-known.

THE PUG WHO BIT NAPOLEON: ANIMAL TALES OF THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

Mimi Matthews

Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword History, 2017

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

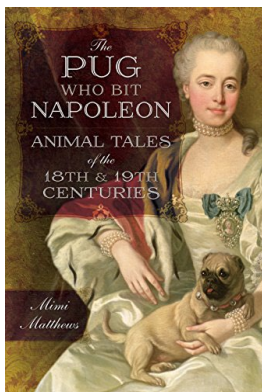
www.mimimatthews.com

softcover & ebook

180pp; index, notes, sources

ISBN:1526705001

softcover £12.99 & ebook £10.79



I may be wrong, and with the week I'm having I probably am, but the Latin *fortuna audaces iuvat*, or something like that, is often translated as 'fortune favours the brave' and means something like a 'courageous action will be rewarded'.

The trouble is, Fortune doesn't favour the brave. Not always.

When it comes to consummating one's marriage there can be few things worse than having a bad tempered dog in the bed, especially it is very protective of its mistress and barks furiously at the first sign of intimacy. Such a thing destroys one's concentration. Or I suppose it does. And I can imagine that the act of consummation would be made all the more difficult if one was at the same time trying to kick the dog out of bed. But the whole enterprise can be turned into an utter debacle if you actually succeed in removing the beast from the bed, only to have it return, furious, and take a lump out of your thigh, leaving you with a silent prayer that it was just your thigh.

If you don't believe me, ask Napoleon.

On their wedding night, when the words 'Not tonight, Josephine' were far from Napoleon's lips, he clambered into bed with Josephine and her pug. 'I wished to remove him; it was quite useless to think of it. I was told that I must either sleep elsewhere, or consent to share my bed,' Napoleon reportedly said to a friend. He was considerably annoyed, but eventually gave way.

As Napoleon began to pay his attentions to Josephine, the pug began barking. Napoleon pushed the dog from the bed. The dog got back on the bed and viciously bit Napoleon in the calf.

The pug was deeply attached to Josephine and also notoriously bad tempered. Napoleon had bravely entered Josephine's bed, but on this occasion Fortune, which was the name of the little pug, did not favour the brave. It bit him.

This is the story that gave the title to Mimi Matthews' smashing book, and I am very grateful that the title piqued my curiosity. In the 18th and 19th centuries the animal story was enormously popular and crossed all cultural and economic boundaries - animals depicted in stories or paintings attracted everyone from the queen to commoner.

The stories told by Mimi Matthews range from Burgo and Barnaby - which, if you don't know, were two bloodhounds trialled but never used in the hunt for Jack the Ripper - to a killer shark and the 4-foot alligator caught in the Thames. The waterman who caught the latter - a man named Pockling - managed to haul it into his boat and getting it to land took it to the famous establishment of Mr Charles Jamrach in the Ratcliff Highway.

The Pug Who Bit Napoleon is a fine collection of animal stories from the 18th and 19th centuries and they make very entertaining reading. But the outstanding thing about this book is the wealth of excellent colour illustrations, from Mr Agasse's study of a red fox or Orlando Hodgson's drawing of the maiden lady with her extraordinary collection of pets - something which was far from rare, cats being a particular favourite (I recall that in old age Florence Maybrick surrounded herself with cats.)

After reading some heavy titles of late, it was a delight to settle down one chilly afternoon in a warm room and relax with this exceedingly well-written collection of animal tales. Only a chocolate biscuit with my cup of tea would have made life better.

A MOMENT IN TIME

Veronica Lucan

London: Mango Books, 2017

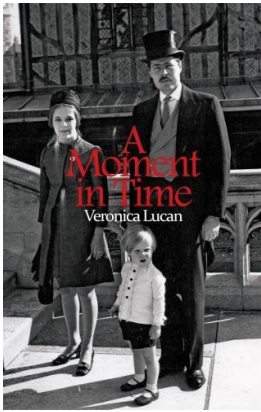
www.mangobooks.co.uk

hardcover & ebook

291pp; illus (many in colour), index

ISBN:1911273240

hardcover £20 & ebook £7.99



In late September 2017, police forcibly entered a mews cottage in fashionable Eton Row, west of Buckingham Palace. The resident hadn't been seen for three days and inside the cottage she was found dead, the inquest held a short time later concluding that she had died from a cocktail of alcohol and pills. She had killed herself in the belief that she had Parkinson's

disease; it was a self-diagnosis and wrong.

Her name was Veronica Lucan and not long before she had finished this book, her autobiography. It was a story she had often been urged to write, in particular to tell her side of the tragic series of events that happened one cold November night forty-three years earlier. She had always resisted the urging, but as she approached the end of her life she wanted to set the record straight, and it was a terrific coup for fledgling publisher Mango Books to have secured the publication rights.

There can be few in Britain who haven't heard of Lord Lucan – and there is no shortage of reading material available about him; indeed, in March Laura Thompson will be bringing out a revised edition of her *A Different Class of Murder*, originally published in 2014, in which she promises to shed more light on 'the volatile mental state' of Veronica, Lady Lucan - but for readers below a certain age and for our readers in foreign parts, a brief account of the story that makes this book so important, might be useful.

On the evening of 7 November 1974, Veronica Lucan had staggered into the Plumbers Arms at 14 Lower Belgrave Street, London. She was covered with blood, almost hysterically frightened, and shouted, "Murder, murder, I think my neck has been broken. He tried to kill me. Please look after my children".

The Lucan family was until then known for George Bingham, 3rd Lord Lucan, who died on 10 November 1888 (the day after Mary Kelly was murdered; surprisingly he's never been advanced as a Jack the Ripper suspect!), is one of the three men commonly blamed for the tragic charge of the Light Brigade at Balclava in 1854. His infamy was eclipsed by the 7th Lord Lucan, John Bingham, who that November night bludgeoned to death his child's nanny, 29-year-old Sandra Rivett, having mistaken her for Lady Lucan. On realising his mistake, he'd then attempted to kill Lady Lucan, hence her bloody and hysterical appearance in the Plumbers Arms.

Their marriage had foundered and the couple had separated, but Lord Lucan, a professional gambler

nicknamed 'Lucky', could not accept that he was heading towards the divorce court. The separation had also put an extra burden on his finances, which were none too healthy, his gambling having accrued considerable debts.

After Lady Lucan had fled the family home, Lord Lucan drove a borrowed car to the house of some friends in Uckfield, which coincidentally is just down the road from where I am writing this review! After writing some letters there, he drove to Newhaven, where his car was found. He was never seen again.

The questions arising now are whether he killed Sandra Rivett and attacked his wife, or hired someone to kill his wife who mistook Sandra Rivett for her, of whether he simply saw an intruder as he passed the house and went in to investigate. An endless, tireless, and for many a tiresome number of books have argued theories and speculated about Lord Lucan's fate.

As said, Lady Lucan has been pretty quiet about it all, but now she tells her side of the story. This book isn't particularly well-written and I think Veronica Lucan tells an understandably biased version of events, but there is a genuine pathos here – she had clear mental issues, she was abused by her husband, and thereafter lived a sad and tragic, albeit privileged, life. Most upsetting and to some extent baffling of all was her estrangement from her children and family. Following the murder, the children went to live with her sister, Christina Shand-Kydd, and Lady Lucan remained estranged from them for the rest of her life, even cutting them entirely from her will.

Lady Lucan evidently carried the burden of Sandra Rivett's death on her conscience; her concluding words are, 'I will eternally regret that an innocent women died because of my relationship with my husband.'

This book was apparently very important to Lady Lucan. 'She was very determined to finish it,' said her editor, Pam McCleave. The book makes for interesting reading whether you give a tinkers about Lord Lucan's fate or not. And it is, of course, a hugely interesting and even valuable contribution to the quite extensive literature about Lord Lucan.

Recommended.

CONVICTED: LANDMARK CASES IN BRITISH CRIMINAL HISTORY

Gary Powell

Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2018

www.amberley-books.com

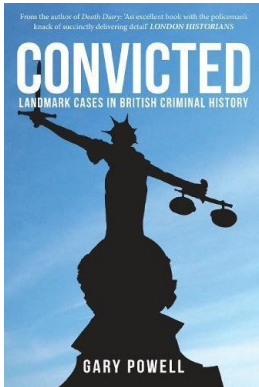
softcover

288pp; illus; biblio

ISBN:9781445670522

£14.99

Property fraud doesn't sound very exciting and it probably isn't, except for those involved, but that's



the crime for which Edwin and Lorraine McLaren were convicted at Glasgow High Court on 16 May 2017 – and entered the history books.

The reason is that the McLaren's trial had begun in September 2015, and that meant that by its conclusion in May 2017 it had become the longest running trial in British

history. It was also one of the most expensive. And for the McLarens it was a bit of a bummer; they went to prison for eleven and two years respectively!

Gary Powell doesn't say much more about this trial, and what he does say takes about half a page, but the case serves to illustrate what his book is all about – landmark criminal cases. One hundred in all, stretching from the execution of Charles I in 1649 (the only instance of regicide in British history) to the McLaren case in 2017.

Think of it as a sort of *Guinness Book of Records* of crime.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS DOWNFALL: THE LIFE AND MURDER OF HENRY, LORD DARNLEY

Robert Stedall

Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword, 2017

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

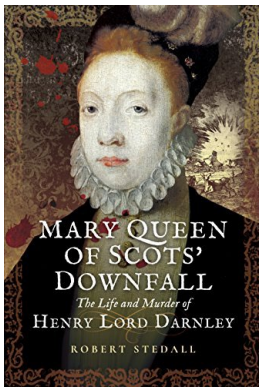
maryqueenofscots.net

hardcover & ebook

330pp; illus; genealogical tables; references and notes; index.

ISBN:1473893313

hardcover £25 & ebook £18



He was well-connected, athletic, strong, good at singing and dancing, he played the lute, could speak several languages, was skilled with weapons, and could ride well. And besides all that, he wooed and won a queen. But he was also vain, arrogant, liable to be violent when drunk, and an untrustworthy liability.

His name was Henry Stuart, Lord

Darnley, and there were plenty of people in high places who would have wanted him out of the way, including Mary, Queen of Scots, but who actually ordered the deed done? That's one of the great mysteries of history and as Robert Stedall observes in the opening lines of his preface, 'Henry, Lord Darnley, gained more notoriety in death than during his lifetime'.

In early February 1567, Queen Mary arranged for Darnley to stay in a three-storey house called Kirk o' Field in Edinburgh, three quarters of a mile from Holyrood. He

was recovering from what was said to have been smallpox, though it has been suggested that it was syphilis, and ostensibly the Queen had him settled there to recuperate. He didn't like the accommodation, but Mary insisted and eventually Darnley acquiesced. He was there in the early hours of the morning on 10 February when there was an explosion, two barrels of dynamite having been ignited beneath the room in which Lord Darnley was sleeping. The Kirk o' Field and a neighbouring building were utterly destroyed.

Who had ignited the dynamite? But mystery upon mystery, the following morning the bodies of Darnley and his valet, William Taylor, were found in a neighbouring orchard and an examination of their bodies indicated that they had not died in the explosion. Beside the bodies, carefully positioned and laid out in a row, were a chair, a piece of rope, a dagger, the king's nightgown, and a quilt.

In the extraordinarily well-researched *Mary Queen of Scots' Downfall: The Life and Murder of Henry, Lord Darnley*, Robert Stedall tells the story of Darnley and sheds considerable light on his murder, reaching some new, unexpected, and frankly compelling conclusions.

But be warned, this is not a lightweight read, especially if you're not all that familiar with Tudor Scottish history. I'm glad I made the effort, though, and I can't imagine a more detailed or clearer exposition of the facts. The big question, of course, is whether or not Mary, Queen of Scots, was implicated in Darnley's death. What did Stedall's analysis conclude? I'm not going to tell you, it would spoil the read.

This is an absorbing historical murder mystery and Stedall, an author clearly immersed in his subject, has produced a well written, exhaustively researched account that is bound to become a classic.



Other books received but for which I was unable to write a review this time round were four titles from Pen and Sword: *Women and the Gallows 1797-1837* by Naomi Clifford, which looks at the cases of several women who paid the ultimate penalty for various crimes. *In The Mind of a Female Serial Killer* by Stephen Jakobi, which looks at four cases of female serial killers. *Burned at the Stake* by Summer Strevens, an account of the short life and crime of Mary Channing, who was burned at the stake in 1706 in front of 10,000 people. And the unexpectedly delightful and highly enjoyable elegant *Etiquette in the Nineteenth Century* by Mallory James. All will be fully reviewed next time.

All reviews by Paul Begg.

Fiction Reviews

By DAVID GREEN

Included in this issue:

These Darkening Days, Sculpting Murders and more

THESE DARKENING DAYS

Benjamin Myers
Mayfly Press, 2017
ISBN 978-1911356073
Paperback, 362pp.
£7.99



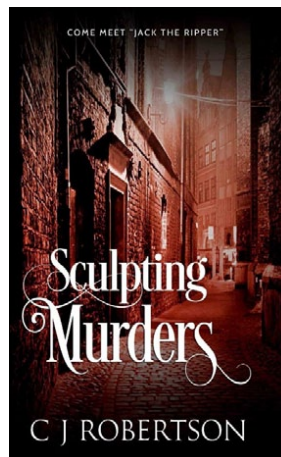
These Darkening Days is a sequel of sorts to Benjamin Myers' highly-acclaimed 2016 novel *Turning Blue*. The first book delved into the ugly secrets of an isolated Yorkshire village in winter; this follow-up explores an outbreak of violence and murder in an unnamed west Pennine town (Hebden Bridge) in autumn.

Once again we are in the company of jaded newspaper reporter Roddy Mace and cold case detective James Brindle. In part, the novel draws its inspiration from the real-life Halifax Slasher case of 1938, when a vicious series of razor, knife and hammer attacks on local people, mostly women, were later revealed to have been self-inflicted injuries brought about by mass hysteria and panic. The area of the West Riding depicted in this novel is supposedly prone to 'valley fever', a kind of seasonal affective disorder characterised by headaches and depression, restlessness, abnormally high suicide rates and self-abuse. Add to this the Slasher affair and the echo of old folk crimes reverberating in the background like tinnitus, and you have all the ingredients for a brooding tale of death and mutilation from the moorlands of the English north.

Benjamin Myers is writing some of the best crime fiction in Britain today. This is unequivocally an excellent book, a twisted psychological thriller drawn from the history texts but tapping into all manner of contemporary anxieties and fears.

SCULPTING MURDERS

CJ Robertson
Black Cat Press, 2017
ISBN 978-1979313728
Kindle Edition, 206pp.
£2.24



Jack has developed a new sculpting material, a kind of resinous plaster that can be fashioned into life-like human flesh. He lives on Bucks Row in a mock-Tudor house with a fenced-off front garden(!). After celebrating his discovery in the pub with his best friend Elspeth, he is approached by Mary Ann Nichols. She wants him to fake her death. If he can sculpt a replica of her body out of his miracle clay and apply 'fatal injuries' to it, then she will be presumed dead – a murder victim – and she can start life over again in a new place.

Well, it certainly captured my interest. The premise reminded me a bit of John Varley's story 'Air Raid'. Is plotting a fake murder a crime? Is faking your own death wrong? Benjamin Myers writes about attack victims who inflicted their own wounds and murder victims who committed suicide; now, CJ Robertson looks at murder victims who are not dead and dead bodies that were never alive.

This is her first book, which has been self-published through her own press. It's very much an apprentice effort with many rough edges and a mostly implausible plot. But she has crafted an exciting and original thriller that promises much for the future.

WHO WAS JACK?

Andy S. Chatfield

2017

Kindle Edition, 134pp.

£3.73



Andy Chatfield is writing a series of novels about a crack team of American and British time travellers who journey back in time to solve mysteries and puzzles. They've investigated the fake moon landings staged by NASA; now, after some debate, they settle on Whitechapel for their next adventure. It's on with the Time Travel watches and back

to Bucks Row just before 3.15 a.m. on the morning of 31 August 1888. Their mission: to discover the identity of Jack the Ripper.

Right on cue they witness Polly Nichols soliciting an elderly gent carrying a black doctor's bag; from their hiding place in a stable yard, they watch in horror as she is butchered with a cut-throat razor and then a second blade. Covertly trailing the Ripper back to his home in Finsbury Circus, they are shocked to learn that a woman anxiously awaits Jack's return. Except she doesn't call him Jack. She calls him Sweeney. Is Jack the Ripper actually Sweeney Todd, continuing his bloodthirsty habits from decades earlier? Are the Ripper victims going to be chopped up into pies? Back the Time Team go to Fleet Street in the 1850s to investigate the Demon Barber.

Andy Chatfield seems to be enjoying himself, licking his lips at the thought of a second helping of slash and mash. And I have to admit, I quite enjoyed his grisly story, too. What I thought was going to be a fairly predictable time travel yarn turned out to be a sophisticated and rather ingeniously worked out entertainment. In an author's note we are advised to read the three earlier volumes first, and it's true that some of the developments in the second half of the book, which concern intrigues surrounding the Time Travel team itself, are difficult to follow in isolation. But the story soon returns to Jack and Sweeney and those crusty meat pies. *Who Was Jack?* will surely quench your appetite for Victorian crime fiction.

FROM HELL: HUNTING JACK THE RIPPER

Gabriel Knight

2018

Kindle Edition, 184pp.

£2.18



This is Book 2 in the author's *Keeper of the Seven Keys* chronicle. There is a new patient at the Bethlem Asylum and Hospital for Obscure Mental Diseases. She is the innocent, maltreated young beauty Eleonora Rudd, traumatised into catalepsy following her encounter with a depraved cannibal killer in Cape Town. While she receives treatment – one doctor feels

she needs to be shocked out of her shock, frightened beyond her fear – her paramour, Edgar Dupin, and his Dutch gravedigger companion Rowlf Maarschalk, take lodgings in Southwark. A fellow lodger turns out to be Aaron Kosminski.

Meanwhile, evil is brewing in London; the Ripper has struck several times already, and public unease is mounting. Knowing of Dupin's involvement in tracking down the South African cannibal, Scotland Yard engage him as an advisor in their Ripper investigations.

Dupin and Rowlf are given a tour of the Berner Street and Mitre Square murder sites. What intrigues the consultants is the ease with which the killer seemingly vanishes from a crime scene. Rowlf has a theory:

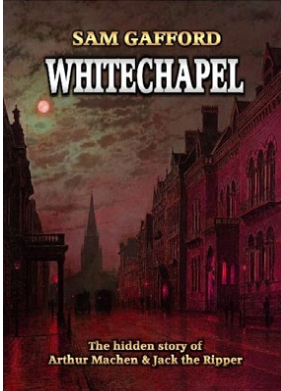
In Africa I have seen a leopard pounce from a higher vigil, rip a hole in a gazelle, and leap away into a tree when interrupted or chased off, leaving no more than a few droplets of blood on the slain animal itself and nothing around it—without sound, without trace, leaving a devastated carcass behind within seconds.

But Dupin in particular is a damaged man. He is suffering memory lapses and terrifying nightmares. Can he be trusted? What exactly is his involvement in the Ripper murders?

From Hell is a dark Gothic fantasy very much in the tradition of Poe and Hoffmann. The prose may be a little over-wrought in places, but it's well-suited to the nauseous horrors and unsettling material being presented. Gabriel Knight has created a scary tale about emotional disturbance and bygone London in the grip of terrible forces.

WHITECHAPEL

Sam Gafford
 Ulthar Press, 2017
 ISBN 978-1546898948
 Paperback, 544pp.
 \$24.95



Sam Gafford has written a big, ambitious novel exploring the relationship between Jack the Ripper and the Welsh horror fiction writer Arthur Machen. It's perhaps closer to a supernatural thriller than a work of historical crime fiction, and the book's focus on mystical and occult experience lends the story a macabre, otherworldly feel

despite its metropolitan setting.

It is 1888, and Albert Besame, the son of a Teignmouth fisherman, has come to London in search of literary fame and fortune. He is befriended by Arthur Machen, who takes pity on the naïve young Cornishman and secures him employment in a secondhand bookshop in Leicester Square. Soon they are touring Whitechapel together at night-time. They bump into Walter Sickert slumming it in the Ten Bells, and Machen renews his childhood friendship with Mary Kelly from Caernarfon. On the eve of Polly Nichols's murder, the Welshman experiences a frightening premonition of violent, painful death.

Naturally enough, Albert and Arthur get caught up in the unfolding hunt for Jack the Ripper. There is plenty to divert the reader as the two men flounder and wallow in a mire of false trails and red herrings – burglaries, royal secrets, East End musclemen, Chinese opium dens, séances, the Golden Dawn, cannibal atrocities, and dead women. There is also a Leather Apron/depraved butcher theme, and intimations of monstrosities hiding beneath the ordinary:

There are things out there, Albert, perversions walking the earth. Places where unspeakable events take place but they are not done by Man. They are done by abominations that should not exist but do!

With all this going on, Albert still has time to fall in love with his fellow lodger, Ann Simmons, a would-be singer working among the needy in the East End. And finally, could the unthinkable be true? Could Arthur Machen himself be responsible in some way for the Jack the Ripper murders?

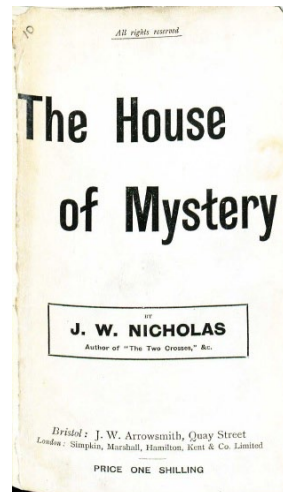
Whitechapel is such a long, full-blooded novel, and it is so richly seasoned with ideas and incidents, that

the reader risks becoming overburdened with detail. At times the story verges on a romp or a caper. But however much events might seem to be running away with him, a demented logic holds it all together. *Whitechapel* is strong on atmosphere and suspense, and the characters are deftly delineated. Sam Gafford spins an absorbing tale set against a solid London background, portrayed with affection.



PROPER RED STUFF: RIPPER FICTION BEFORE 1900

In this series we take a look at forgotten writers from the 1880s and 1890s who tackled the Jack the Ripper theme in their novels and short stories.



No. 6: J.W. Nicholas: The House of Mystery (1891)

By day, J.W. Nicholas (1862–1926) worked as a solicitor in Llandilo and Carmarthen, handling a broad range of commercial and criminal law matters; at night, he toiled into the early hours crafting his mystery and crime fiction. He acquired a certain local celebrity – notoriety, almost – as

the young lawyer on the hill who wrote spicy shilling shockers and Christmas ghost stories for the South Wales newspapers. Gradually, though, his literary ambitions faded as Nicholas took on additional civic responsibilities, first as clerk to Carmarthen County Council and then, in 1908, as the coroner for Carmarthenshire. It was Nicholas who led the enquiry into the infamous death of Mabel Greenwood, allegedly poisoned by her solicitor husband in 1919.¹ Perhaps too, as Nicholas grew older, he became increasingly embarrassed by his youthful literary productions, the tales of blood-curdling terror, the stories of monstrous animals, and, most frighteningly of all, three years after the Whitechapel murders, a gruesome novel featuring Jack the Ripper.

The House of Mystery was published in 1891 by J.W. Arrowsmith, the Bristol publishers specialising in cheap paperback books aimed at the mass market. It was his

1 Harold Greenwood was committed for trial on a coroner's warrant in 1920, but acquitted of murder at the Carmarthen Assizes the following year. See Winifred Duke (ed.), *Trial of Harold Greenwood* (London: William Hodge & Co., 1930).

fourth novel after *The Devil's Cauldron* (1886), *The Two Crosses* (1887) and *At Midnight's Chimes* (1889). He was gaining a reputation for his 'daring flights into the realm of sensationalism', and his latest offering marked a step forward both in terms of sophisticated plotting and shocking incident.

The novel centres around the criminal use of hypnotism. In his novel *Trilby* (1895), George du Maurier invented the character of Svengali, a sinister mesmerist who uses his powers to control and dominate people, but Nicholas exploited this theme four years earlier. Could Jack the Ripper be the victim of an evil hypnotist?

Charles Willing is a highly nervous young man subject to epileptic fits. He admits to being prey to black imaginings:

There are houses in certain streets of London – ordinary-looking enough outside – which are tainted ... I know one in Montague Street, where a dreadful thing happened some years ago ... Walk round to Great Coram Street hard by and look at No. 80. Why is it empty? And why has it such a wretched hangdog look? The files of the newspapers for 1873 will tell you ... the red streaks that disfigure the bedroom walls, and the crevice in that small back-parlour where for many days a mangled corpse lay hid. (*The House of Mystery*, p. 123) ²

Willing has fallen under the influence of Max Laroche, an amoral, supremely corrupt villain who concocts a scheme to make Willing, under hypnosis, the instrument of his father's murder. Over many years Laroche has regularly hypnotised Willing, gradually enfeebling him and moulding his character so that he will obey on command and not recall events afterwards. Willing has already been manipulated into harbouring thieves, robbers and other criminal elements in his first floor chambers; the next step is to induce him to kill.

Max stalks the streets at night with his gruesome black dog Custos. Women are being slaughtered in New Cross – the latest victim is Jane Straker, horribly butchered in Cubit's Court. Are these practice murders the handiwork of Charles Willing ('the dreadful Jack Ripper') acting under hypnotic suggestion?

Hypnotism and hysteria were two of the favourite topics debated by neurologists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Gilles de la Tourette published a major study of hypnotism in 1887.³ After conducting experiments in his Salpêtrière laboratory in which hypnotised subjects were ordered to commit murder with fake weapons, he argued that the majority of crimes, except possibly theft, could not be induced under hypnosis.

The House of Mystery is a fascinating fictional take on these ideas. *The Western Mail* described it as 'an eerie tale written with considerable literary skill and ingenuity. A gruesome element in the story is the introduction, in a vague, shadowy way, of the fearful "Murder fiend" of Whitechapel.' While objecting to a certain crudeness of style, the *Glasgow Herald* went on to praise the author for his 'commendable directness'. The *Yorkshire Post & Leeds Intelligencer* thought the novel 'would exercise a strong fascination over people who like dark crimes and their elucidation.'

Nicholas died in Pontypridd in 1926. He was sixty-four. In one way or another, whether as a writer of dark crime fiction or as a coroner in South Wales, violent death seemed to have accompanied him throughout his life.

- 2 I have not been able to trace a murder or an accident at this address in 1873. Harriet Buswell was murdered at 12 Great Coram Street on Christmas Eve in 1872.
- 3 *L'Hypnotisme et les États Analogues au Point de Vue Médico-Légal* (Paris: 1887).

Reviews of *The House of Mystery* taken from the *Glasgow Herald*, 16 July 1891; *Morning Post*, 29 July 1891; *Western Mail*, 15 July 1891; *Yorkshire Post & Leeds Intelligencer*, 5 August 1891.

A copy of *The House of Mystery* is in the British Library.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE we review Saul David's *The Prince and the Whitechapel Murders*, plus all the latest Ripper fiction.

DAVID GREEN lives in Hampshire, England, where he works as a freelance book indexer. He is the author of *The Hampshire Boy Ripper* (forthcoming in 2018), an account of the Percy Searle murder case of 1888.

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

THE ANNOTATED I CAUGHT CRIPPEN

BY NICHOLAS CONNELL

In 1910 Chief Inspector Walter Dew became the most famous detective in the world after a transatlantic chase resulted in him capturing the American murderer Dr Hawley Harvey Crippen. This was the first time that wireless telegraphy had resulted in the arrest of a murderer and it was Dew's final investigation for Scotland Yard.

After retiring from the Metropolitan Police and working as a private detective Dew began to write and in 1938 his autobiography *I CAUGHT CRIPPEN* was published. It subsequently became an important work for crime historians and has long been out-of-print. Dew's accounts of the Crippen case and his futile hunt for Jack the Ripper are the lengthiest ever written by a police officer closely involved in the investigations.

The latter part of *I CAUGHT CRIPPEN* deals with a variety of other cases that Dew worked on, including the arrest of the international jewel thief Harry the Valet.

THE ANNOTATED I CAUGHT CRIPPEN makes this classic work available again. It contains a full transcription of the original text, annotated with footnotes including additional material from a newspaper serialisation of Dew's memoirs that has never appeared in a book before. It also features appendices of Dew's other writings and articles written about the celebrated detective during his lifetime.

To be published February 2018.

Available now from www.mangobooks.co.uk

