Unsolved Mysteries:
The Identity of Jack the Ripper and His Century-Long Legacy

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Kyli Lynn Shellenberger

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Anthony Edmonds

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2003

Expected Date of Graduation - May 3, 2003
Abstract

Jack the Ripper was a serial killer who stalked prostitutes in the East End of London in 1888. His identity remains unknown, despite the life-long attempts of a multitude of individuals to uncover the truth behind the mystery. The legacy of Jack the Ripper has garnered the attention of individuals all over the world for more than a century, which was due in part to the large amount of media coverage regarding the case. This project focuses on each of the murders and the victims, the possible perpetrators, and the causes for the worldwide craze surrounding Jack the Ripper. I researched the lifestyle of London inhabitants in 1888 and the impact of the press coverage of the case. My tour of the area and firsthand experiences with the East End were a part of this process as well. Although my research did not uncover a definitive solution to the mystery, I provide hypotheses concerning the identity of Jack the Ripper and the foundation of his legacy.
Acknowledgements

-I owe a great deal of thanks to Dr. Anthony Edmonds for his insight, direction, and influence in the production of this project. I thank him for providing me the opportunities to experience London and all it had to offer, and to understand what it means to be passionate about something. I am grateful for his advising me and having such an important influence on my life.

-An important thank you is owed to Dr. Joanne Edmonds for her help in choosing this particular topic and also for assisting me in my journey through “Modern London.”

-I thank Dr. Carolyn Malone for her help in locating the resources that pointed me in the right direction during my quest for knowledge. Jack the Ripper and the London Press was a goldmine!

-Thanks to Natalie Barr for allowing me extensive use of her DVD, which provided both entertainment and insight into the topic.

-Thanks to Liz Grau, Kris Berger, and Jessica Schnur for accompanying me on the late-night tour of Jack the Ripper’s haunts in the cold and for the pints at the Ten Bells afterwards.
Introduction

Laurence Sterne said, “The desire of knowledge, like the thirst of riches, increases ever with the acquisition of it.” This quotation appears on the title page of Jack the Ripper and the London Press. There is no means of more accurately expressing the way in which the story of Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel murders can take hold of a person and become intensely consuming. I first began my study of Jack the Ripper as a project for a course examining the history of London. It was merely an interesting topic, one that brought together my education in criminology, psychology, and history. What began as a simple project became something of an obsession for me. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know. My research has become quite extensive, spanning almost two years. I never intended to become so entirely involved and overwhelmed with the story of this serial killer. I quickly came to understand how scores of individuals over the last hundred years could dedicate their lives and careers to researching this particular mystery.

The term “Ripperologist” is used to describe experts in the field of Jack the Ripper history. These individuals have played an integral part in exposing a great deal of information regarding the case and developing the multitude of theories concerning the killer’s true identity. Ripperologists, like any other experts, deserve a great deal of respect, as they have devoted countless hours to their research and have made a number of important discoveries and advances in the field. Although the mystery may never truly be solved, Ripperologists and their students, myself included, will most likely continue to be consumed by their Ripper research, which feeds the thirst for knowledge of individuals around the world. Perhaps it is because his identity has never been discovered; maybe it is because of the violent way he stalked and slaughtered
unfortunates in one of the world’s richest cities; or quite possibly it has something to do with how the crimes struck fear into the hearts of an entire nation, but whatever the cause, Jack the Ripper has intrigued the world for more than a century, making him even more powerful than he was once thought to be.

Jack the Ripper is the nickname of a serial killer who violently murdered prostitutes in London’s East End in 1888. The name originates from a letter written to Scotland Yard by someone who claimed to be the killer, which was published during the time of the murders. It has since been widely accepted within popular culture as the murderer’s calling card. He was also called the Whitechapel Murderer and "Leather Apron." The true identity of Jack the Ripper is not known and may never be.

Jack the Ripper was not the first serial killer, but he was the first to appear in a large city just after the media became a driving cultural force. All activities relating to Jack the Ripper were published daily. The press even covered the feelings of the inhabitants of the East End and their response to the crimes. The whole world was clued in to what was going on in London due to the emergence of the powerful press. It was the press coverage that made these murders a "new thing", something that the world had never known before. The press was also partly responsible for creating many Ripper myths. Along with the media, the Ripper made himself into one of the most "romantic" figures in history. He forced the whole world to take notice of him by terrifying an entire city. Because he was never caught, the mystery of his identity not only adds romanticism to the case, but it causes a myriad of people to devote their lives to solving this intellectual puzzle.¹
The Murders

The Jack the Ripper murders took place in the fall of 1888. They covered a one-mile area of Whitechapel, Spitalfields, Aldgate, and the City of London proper. Five murders are generally accepted to be the work of Jack the Ripper, although no one can be certain. It may have been only four. Some think he killed as many as nine women. There will never be a definitive resolution to this uncertainty, which leads many people to simply accept the canonical five victims. Four of the five were killed outdoors; all were prostitutes; and most were believed to be alcoholics. There is no evidence to suggest that any of them knew each other, although there has been speculation about that matter.

The first victim was Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols. She was murdered on Friday, August 31, 1888. Polly was 43 at the time of her death. She was born in London and resided there throughout her life. Polly was a short woman with brown eyes, graying hair, a dark complexion, and five missing teeth. She married William Nichols in 1864 at the age of 22. They had five children together. The couple separated in 1881. The children remained with their father and Polly's father. William and Polly had not seen each other for three years when Polly died.²

After her separation from her husband, Polly began a pattern of moving from workhouse to workhouse, never settling in any one place. She lived with her father for a short time, but her drinking caused friction between them and she left. She moved in with Thomas Dew for several years, but she eventually left him for the workhouses. She held a position in a household as a domestic servant for a short time, but she was fired for stealing. Just before her death she was known to be residing in a doss house on Flower and Dean Street — an area that catered to prostitutes. Flower and Dean Street was described as "perhaps the foulest and most dangerous street in the whole metropolis."³ It was also known as the "evil quarter mile."³
Polly was seen several times on the night of her death. At 11:00 p.m. she was witnessed walking down Whitechapel Road, possibly soliciting trade. At 12:30 a.m. she was seen leaving the Frying Pan Public House for the lodging house on Thrawl Street, where she was turned away for not being able to produce her doss money, which was usually a “cheap 4d single for the night,” allowing one to sleep in “rooms full of small iron bedsteads, covered with a grey blanket.” She asked the deputy to save a bed for her, saying, “I’ll soon get my doss money. See what a jolly bonnet I’ve got now.” She was referring to a new bonnet that no one had before seen her wear. At 2:30 a.m. Polly ran into Emily Holland on Osborn Street. Holland described her as being drunk and staggering. Polly told Emily that she’d had her doss money three times and drunk it all away. She left, walking east down Whitechapel Road.

At 3:15 a.m. PC John Thain passed down Buck’s Row on his beat. Sgt. Kerby was in the same area at the same time. Both reported seeing nothing unusual. One half hour later Polly’s body was discovered in Buck’s Row by Charles Cross on his way to work. He was accompanied by Robert Paul. Cross believed the woman was dead, while Paul thought he heard a faint heartbeat. Her hands and face were cold, but the arms above the elbow and the legs were still warm. The two men called P.C. Neil, who rushed to the crime scene. He, in turn, called Dr. Llewellyn, the local physician. The doctor pronounced her life to have been extinct for only a few minutes upon his arrival. Buck’s Row was only a ten-minute walk from where Polly was last seen by Emily Holland.

Buck’s Row was a narrow, cobbled, mean street. One side was lined with dirty, shabby houses separated from the street by only three feet of pavement. No more than twenty feet separated one house from the next. The other side of the street was lined with dirty warehouses that cast a gloom upon the area. The street lay along a railway. Two narrow bridge roads led
across the railway to Whitechapel Road. There was only one gas light at the end of the road. Polly’s body was found across from Essex Wharf (warehouse) and Brown and Eagle Wool Warehouse in a gateway entrance to a stable yard between a board school and terrace houses.

All nearby tenants went to bed between 9:00 and 11:00 p.m., and none were disturbed by any noise until the police arrived.

At the time of her death, Polly was wearing: a black straw bonnet, reddish-brown ulster with brass buttons, brown linsey frock, white flannel chest cloth, black ribbed wool stockings, two petticoats from Lambeth Workhouse, brown stays, flannel drawers, men’s elastic sided boots with steel tips on the heels. Her possessions included: a comb, a white pocket handkerchief, and a broken piece of mirror. There was a wine glass in the gutter near where she lay.

The inquest into Polly’s murder was printed in the Daily Telegraph, but the testimony revealed little information about her possible killer. The inquiry was opened and led by Wynne Baxter, coroner for South-East Middlesex. Polly’s father testified that he hadn’t heard from or spoken to her in two years, but that she was a woman good enough to not have any enemies.

John Neil, the first police constable on the scene testified that the “deceased was lying lengthways along the street, her left hand touching the gate. I examined the body by the aid of my lamp, and noticed blood oozing from a wound in the throat. She was lying on her back with her clothes disarranged. Her eyes were wide open. Her bonnet was off and lying at her side, close to the left hand. Inspector Spratley came to the mortuary and found that she was disemboweled.” He claimed to have seen nothing unusual and to have examined the road for wheel tracks, finding nothing.

Dr. Henry Llewellyn testified the following, “On reaching Buck’s Row I found the deceased woman lying flat on her back in the pathway, her legs extended. I believe she had not
been dead more than half-an-hour. I am quite certain that the injuries to her neck were not self-inflicted. There were no marks of any struggle or of blood, as if the body had been dragged.\textsuperscript{10}

Dr. Llewellyn did the post-mortem examination. On the right side of the face there was a bruise running along the lower part of the jaw that might have been caused by a blow with the fist or pressure by the thumb. On the left side of the face there was a similar circular bruise. On the left side of the neck, about an inch below the jaw, there was an incision about four inches long running from a point immediately below the ear. An inch below was a circular incision terminating at a point about three inches below the right jaw. This incision completely severed all the tissues down to the vertebrae. Dr. Llewellyn determined that the cuts must have been caused with a long-bladed knife, moderately sharp, and used with great violence. There were several incisions running across the abdomen. On the right side there were also three or four similar cuts running downwards. The wounds were from left to right, and might have been caused by a left-handed person.\textsuperscript{11}

The coroner summed up the events of the inquiry for the jury. He claimed that the deceased had to have been killed in the exact spot where she was found. There was no trace of blood anywhere, except in the spot where her neck was lying. There was enough evidence to make the assumption that her throat was cut while she was on the ground, which is also where the rest of her injuries were inflicted. He believed it was highly possible that Polly’s murderer may have been disturbed before he had finished his work with her. The jury handed down a verdict of willful murder against some person or persons unknown. Polly’s body was buried by the city in the City of London Cemetery at Manor Park.\textsuperscript{12}

Jack the Ripper’s second victim was Annie Chapman. She was murdered on Saturday, September 8, 1888. She was 47 at the time of her death. Annie was born in Paddington, from
where she moved to Windsor, and then to London. She was a short woman, with blue eyes and
dark hair. She had two missing teeth and was strongly built. Annie was under-nourished and
suffering from tuberculosis and brain disease. She had a drinking problem, but was not an
alcoholic. 13

Annie married John Chapman in 1869 in Windsor, and the couple had three children, one
of whom died at the age of twelve. They separated in 1885. Annie moved to the East End
sometime after their separation and began living with John Sivvey. She received an allowance
from her husband until his death in 1886, which is probably when she turned to prostitution as a
means of support. Annie was also known to live in a common lodging house in Dorset Street run
by Timothy Donovan. Dorset Street was known as “Dosset Street” due to the number of
common lodging houses located along its length. 14

It was known that Annie was having a relationship with Edward Stanley while she was
staying in the lodging house. They spent many weekends and nights together, and he requested
that no other man be allowed to share a bed with her at the house. He often paid for her
lodgings, as well as those of Eliza Cooper, another unfortunate who often resided at the same
lodging house. He was known as “The Pensioner,” although it later became clear that he did not
draw a pension from the army. On or around September 1, 1888, Annie had a fight with Eliza.
Eliza struck her, giving her a black eye and bruising her chest. On September 3 Annie ran into
her friend Amelia Palmer, whom she told of the fight and mentioned a desire to go hop-picking,
a frequent activity of hers and Stanley’s. The two met again the next day, and Amelia gave
Annie money for tea because she was feeling ill and had not eaten at all. 15

On the eve of her death, Annie shared a pint of ale in the kitchen of the lodging house
with Frederick Stevens. She was seen there again around 12:00 a.m. by William Stevens, who
saw her place pills into an envelope from the mantelpiece. Annie then left the house, but returned again around 1:30 a.m. She told Donovan that she didn’t have money for her bed, but not to let it, as she would soon return with the money. She was seen heading towards Spitalfields Market. Elizabeth Long saw Annie at 5:30 a.m. with a man in Hanbury Street. Minutes later, Albert Cadoch, a young man who lived there, heard a woman say, “No!” and something falling against the fence of the yard nearby.16

John Davis was the first to come across the body of Annie Chapman. He was a lodger at 29 Hanbury Street, along with his wife and three sons. He entered the backyard of his home around 6:00 a.m. He described a side passage leading into the yard, where there were two doors, neither of which was ever locked. He said he found one door shut, but not latched. He described the yard as large, closed in with wooden fences. He found Annie’s body lying on her back between the stone steps to the house and the fence. Her head was towards the house and her feet towards a wood shed. Her clothes were pulled up. The area where Annie was found was only a few hundred yards from the lodging house. The house at 29 Hanbury Street consisted of eight rooms, lived in by seventeen people, all at home at the time of the murder.17

Annie was found wearing a long black coat, a black skirt, two bodices, two petticoats, a large pocket worn under the skirt and tied about the waist, lace-up boots, red and white striped wool stockings, and a neckerchief. She possessed three brass rings (missing), scrap of muslin, a small-tooth comb, and a scrap of envelope containing two pills. This description was made by Dr. George Baxter Phillips, who saw the body at 6:30 a.m.18

The coroner’s inquest began on September 11, 1888, and was published in The Daily Telegraph. It was again opened by Wynne Baxter. The first witness was John Davis, who described coming across the body of Annie Chapman. James Kent, one of the men to first come
across the deceased’s body, told of the events of that morning. He said she had a handkerchief around her throat that was soaked in blood, and that her face and hands were smeared with blood as if she had struggled. Her hands were turned toward her throat. Annie’s legs were apart and there was blood on them. Her entrails were protruding and lying on her left side. Kent claimed to have covered her body with a tarp until the arrival of Inspector Chandler. 19

All of the tenants of the 29 Hanbury Street who testified claimed to have heard nothing unusual throughout the night and only came across the body as they heard of the murder and saw the mob starting to gather. John Richardson testified that he arrived at the house around 4:45 a.m. for work. At that time he noticed nothing unusual in the yard. He claimed that many people went in and out of the yard who did not live or belong there. Mrs. Richardson, one of the tenants, testified about a leather apron found in the yard, which she claimed was her son's. She said she had placed it in the yard and cleaned it, which is why it was found there wet. John Pizer, known as “Leather Apron,” was called to testify about his innocence. He had been persecuted around that time for supposedly wearing a leather apron and terrorizing women, which is what brought the leather apron in the yard next to Chapman’s body to the attention of the inquest. He testified as to his alibi for the night and his reason for not having come forward sooner. None of the accusations against him were true. 20

Inspector Joseph Chandler was the first officer on the scene and he testified to the following: “I saw the body of a woman lying on the ground on her back. Deceased's legs were drawn up, and the clothing was above the knees. A portion of the intestines, still connected with the body, were lying above the right shoulder, with some pieces of skin. There were also some pieces of skin on the left shoulder. The body was lying parallel with the fencing dividing the two yards. There was no cut in the clothing at all.” 21
Elizabeth Long testified about her sighting of Annie just before the murder. She claimed to have seen the deceased with a man on the side of the street next to the house. She said the man looked shabby-genteel, like a workingman. He was tall and dark. She heard him say, “Will you?” and Annie replied, “Yes.” She said that both appeared to be sober and that she did not think the encounter unusual.²²

Edward Stanley, “The Pensioner,” was called to discuss his relationship with the deceased. He testified to the existence of Annie’s missing rings. He claimed that his relationship with her was merely friendly, and that the two rarely saw each other. He said that he did not spend nights with her at the lodging house and that he did not tell Tim Donovan to see that she slept without other men. He admitted to never having drawn a pension. Tim Donovan was called to testify that Stanley was the man known as “The Pensioner” who had spent many nights with the deceased in the lodging house.²³

Dr. George Baxter Phillips, the police surgeon, testified about his dealings with the body of Annie Chapman. “I found the body of the deceased lying in the yard on her back. The face was swollen and turned on the right side, and the tongue protruded between the front teeth, but not beyond the lips; it was much swollen. The small intestines and other portions were lying on the right side of the body on the ground above the right shoulder, but attached. There was a large quantity of blood, with a part of the stomach above the left shoulder.”²⁴

Dr. Phillips said that the body was cold when he found it. “While examining the body at the mortuary, I noticed a bruise over the right temple. There was a bruise under the clavicle, and there were two distinct bruises, each the size of a man's thumb, on the forepart of the chest. There was an abrasion over the bend of the first joint of the ring finger, and there were distinct markings of a ring or rings - probably the latter.” The throat had been severed. Dr. Phillips
postulated that the incisions of the skin indicated that they had been made from the left side of the neck on a line with the angle of the jaw, carried entirely round and again in front of the neck, and ending at a point about midway between the jaw and the sternum or breast bone. There were also two distinct clean cuts on the vertebrae on the left side of the spine.  

As to the murder weapon, Dr. Phillips testified, “It must have been a very sharp knife, probably with a thin, narrow blade, and at least six to eight inches in length, and perhaps longer.” He also claimed that some portions were absent from the abdomen, which would have required some anatomical knowledge in their removal. He also believed the woman had been first cut across the throat, which was the cause of death.

The coroner recounted what was believed to be the events of the murder. “He seized her by the chin. He pressed her throat, and while thus preventing the slightest cry, he at the same time produced insensibility and suffocation. There is no evidence of any struggle. The clothes are not torn. The deceased was then lowered to the ground, and laid on her back; and although in doing so she may have fallen slightly against the fence, this movement was probably effected with care. Her throat was then cut in two places with savage determination, and the injuries to the abdomen commenced.”

The coroner believed that the injuries were made by some one who had considerable anatomical skill and knowledge. There were no meaningless cuts. He felt that the theft of the rings was only an attempt to prevent the real intention – the removal of the uterus – from being discovered.

The jury entered a verdict of willful murder against a person or persons unknown. Annie Chapman’s body was buried by the city in the Manor Park Cemetery.
The third victim of these violent murders was Elizabeth Stride. She was murdered on Sunday, September 30, 1888. She was 45 at the time of her death. She was born in Sweden and moved to London in 1866. Elizabeth, also known as Long Liz, was of average height, had light eyes, dark hair, and a pale complexion. She was missing all her teeth in her lower left jaw. She was quiet, good-natured, with a good heart. She attempted to make an honest living, but was occasionally forced to turn to prostitution. She did have a drinking problem.29

Long Liz spent her life in Sweden working as a domestic servant, although she was also registered by police as a prostitute. She was first registered in London in July of 1866 as an unmarried woman. She may have had family in London, but it was said that she came looking for a "foreign gentleman." She married John Thomas Stride in 1869. Liz and Stride eventually separated, although it is not known when.30

Long Liz lived on and off at the common lodging house at 32 Flower and Dean Street from 1882 onwards. In 1885 she began living with Michael Kidney, although she left him periodically. He claimed that her absences were due to her excessive drinking, which caused severe problems in their relationship. She appeared before a magistrate on charges of drunk and disorderly at least eight times in the two years before her death. Liz often took financial assistance from the Swedish church during her separations from Kidney.31

Michael Kidney saw Elizabeth Stride for the last time on September 25. She was registered at 32 Flower and Dean Street on September 26. She claimed to have been there because of a quarrel with Kidney, but he denies having fought with her before she left. On the eve of Liz’s death, Elizabeth Tanner paid her cleaning two rooms in the lodging house. At 6:30 p.m. Tanner had drinks with her, and the two walked back the lodging house together. At 8:00
p.m. she left the house. She was seen leaving the Bricklayer's Arms Public House around 11:00 p.m. with a short man. The two were extremely affectionate.\textsuperscript{32}

Mathew Packer claimed he sold grapes to Liz and a man around 12:00 a.m. It is not known whether or not this is true. Police Constable William Smith spotted Liz at 12:35 a.m. on Berner Street, opposite the International Worker's Club. Israel Schwartz said that at this hour he saw a man stop a woman and try to pull her into the street. He said the woman screamed as the man threw her down. Schwartz crossed to the other side of the street. There he saw another man lighting a pipe. The man who had thrown the woman down called, "Lipski" to the man across the street. (The term 'Lipski' was significant due to the recent Lipski murder, which was the poisoning of a young girl. The murder caused a great deal of anti-Semitism, and the name Lipski became an anti-Semitic slur in the East End.) Schwartz continued to walk away, but realized the second man was following him. He ran, and the man did not catch up to him. He identified the body of Liz in the mortuary as the woman he had seen on the street.\textsuperscript{33}

At 1:00 a.m. Louis Diemschutz entered Dutfield's Yard with his cart and pony. He came across a body with his whip. He believed the person to be drunk or asleep. He entered the Workingman's Club to get help. Upon returning outside, the three men discovered that the woman was dead from a cut in her throat. Many Ripperologists believe that Diemschutz's arrival scared away the Ripper before he had a chance to mutilate the body. Diemschutz believed it was possible that the Ripper was still in the yard when he entered, due to the warmth of the body and the odd behavior of his pony after he entered the yard.\textsuperscript{34}

The area where Liz's body was found was similar to that of the previous two victims. Dutfield's Yard was located on Berner Street and could be entered through a pair of wooden gates. The Worker's Club was on the north side of the yard as one entered the gates. On the
west side was a sack manufacturer. On the south side were three artisan's dwellings converted from older buildings. There was no light. The International Worker's Educational Club was a two-story building where amateurs performed. Elizabeth's body was found lying next to the wall of the club.  

At the time of her death, Elizabeth Stride was wearing a long black cloth jacket, fur trimmed around the bottom with a red rose pinned to it, a black skirt, a black crepe bonnet, a neck scarf, a velveteen bodice, two petticoats, a white chemise, white stockings, and spring sided boots. Found in her possession were two handkerchiefs, a thimble, and a piece of wool around a card. In the pocket of her underskirt were a key (for the padlock Michael Kidney had tried to use to lock her up), a piece of lead pencil, seven buttons, a broken piece of a comb, a metal spoon, a dress hook, a piece of muslin, and two small pieces of paper. In her hand was a packet of Cachous, pills used by smokers to sweeten their breath.

Dr. George Baxter Phillips performed the post-mortem on Elizabeth Stride. He arrived at the scene shortly after the discovery of her body and asserted that the deceased had not eaten any grapes, as evidence might have suggested. He reported, "The body and face were warm and the hands cold. The legs were quite warm. Deceased had a silk handkerchief round her neck, and it appeared to be slightly torn. I have since ascertained it was cut. The throat was deeply gashed and there was an abrasion of the skin about one and a half inches in diameter, apparently stained with blood, under her right arm."  

Dr. Phillips found mud on the left side of the face and matted in the head. There was a clear-cut incision on the neck. It was six inches in length and commenced two and a half inches in a straight line below the angle of the jaw, one half inch in over an undivided muscle, and then
becoming deeper, dividing the sheath. The cut was very clean and deviated a little downwards. The arteries and other vessels contained in the sheath were all cut through.\(^{38}\)

The coroner's Inquest into this murder began on October 1, 1888 and was printed in *The Daily Telegraph*. It was again opened by Mr. Wynne E. Baxter. Lewis Diemschutz recounted his version of the events the night he found the body of Elizabeth Stride. He entered into evidence that every person at the club that night had been questioned and searched upon the discovery of the body, and none were found in possession of any weapons. Constable Henry Lamb searched all the club members, and he testified not to have found any traces of blood upon any of those present.\(^{39}\)

Mr. Frederick William Blackwell testified that he was the first physician to arrive on the scene at approximately 1:15 a.m. He described what he found. "The deceased had round her neck a silk scarf, the bow of which was turned to the left and pulled very tight. In the neck there was a long incision that exactly corresponded with the lower border of the scarf. The incision in the neck commenced on the left side, 2 inches below the angle of the jaw, and almost in a direct line with it, nearly severing the vessels on that side, cutting the windpipe completely in two, and terminating on the opposite side 1 inch below the angle of the right jaw." His opinion was that the murderer probably caught hold of the silk scarf, which was tight and knotted, and pulled the deceased backwards, cutting her throat in that way. The throat might have been cut as she was falling, or when she was on the ground.\(^{40}\)

William Marshall, who saw Elizabeth with a man in the hours before her death, testified about his encounter. He claimed he saw her talking to a middle-aged man who was fairly well-dressed. He heard the two speaking and believed the man seen with the deceased had been well-educated. He was able to give a relatively clear description about what each was wearing but
little else due to the lack of lighting in the street where he saw them. James Brown also testified
about having seen the deceased with a man that night. He gave a relatively similar description of
the man. Constable William Smith had also encountered the couple that evening and he
described them as well.41

The coroner recounted the masses of the evidence given during the five days of inquiry.
He said, “With regard to the man seen, there were many points of similarity, but some of
dissimilarity, in the descriptions of the three witnesses; but these discrepancies did not
conclusively prove that there was more than one man in the company of the deceased, for every
day’s experience showed how facts were differently observed and differently described by honest
and intelligent witnesses.”42

The jury returned a verdict of willful murder against some person or persons unknown.
The body of Elizabeth Stride was buried by the city in the East London Cemetery at West Ham.43

Jack the Ripper’s fourth victim was Catherine Eddowes, also known as Kate Kelly. She
was murdered on September 30, 1888, only a short time after Elizabeth Stride’s death. This
night came to be known as the “double event” or the “double murder.” Catherine Eddowes was
46 at the time of her death. She was born in Wolverhampton, but her family moved to London
when she was very young. Catherine was a short woman with dark hair and hazel eyes. She was
known to be intelligent but had a fierce temper. At the time of her death she was suffering from
Bright’s disease, which is a form of uremia. She had a severe drinking problem.44

Catherine left home at 21 with Thomas Conway, an older pensioner from the Royal Irish.
The couple made a living travelling around various small towns selling cheap books written by
Conway. They had three children together. At the time of her death, Catherine was estranged
from all of her children, mostly due to her drinking. She separated from Conway in 1880 and
took up with John Kelly, whom she did not marry. The two lived together at Cooney’s lodging house at 55 Flower and Dean Street, where they first met. It is believed that she was not involved in prostitution.  

Catherine and John often went hop picking in the fall. They did not fare well. By the time they returned to the city, neither had any money. They ran across a woman who gave them pawn tickets for a shirt for Kelly. When the two returned to Cooney’s, they didn’t have enough money for a double bed, so Catherine stayed at the casual ward in Shoe Lane. She returned to Cooney’s the next day – September 29 – and decided to pawn a pair of Kelly’s boots for money, which they used to buy food and drink. Catherine left, saying she would find her daughter and ask for money, which was a frequent occurrence. Her daughter always refused to see her and had moved since they had last spoken, so Catherine could not have seen her that day. Kelly never saw Catherine alive again.

At 8:00 p.m. Catherine was seen drunk, doing fire engine imitations in the street in Aldgate. She fell asleep in the street and was arrested. She was taken to the Bishopsgate Police Station, where she was held until she was sober. At the station, she gave the name of Mary Ann Kelly. She was released around 1:00 a.m. She left the station in the opposite direction of Flower and Dean Street. She was next seen in Mitre Square approximately thirty minutes later. Joseph Lawende, a commercial traveller, saw Catherine there with a man whom he described as looking like a sailor. Ten minutes later her body was discovered by Police Constable Watkins.

At the time of her murder, Catherine was wearing a black straw bonnet, a black cloth jacket trimmed in fur, a dark green chintz shirt, a man’s white vest, a brown linsey bodice, a grey petticoat, a green alpaca skirt, a blue skirt, a white calico chemise, a pair of men’s lace-up boots, and brown ribbed knee stockings. Catherine was found with several possessions. They were
two small blue bags, two clay pipes, a tin box of tea, a tin box of sugar, an empty tin matchbox, twelve pieces of rag, piece of linen, piece of shirting, one piece of red flannel with pins and needles, six pieces of soap, small-tooth comb, a table knife, a metal spoon, a red leather cigarette case, a ball of hemp, one piece of apron, several buttons and a thimble, a mustard tin containing two pawn tickets, a printed handbill, part of a pair of glasses, and one red mitten. 48

London police surgeon Dr. Frederick Gordon Brown arrived at Mitre Square at approximately 2:00 a.m. His post-mortem report was quite lengthy, due to the severe damage done the victim. "The throat was cut across. The intestines were drawn out to a large extent and placed over the right shoulder -- they were smeared over with some feculent matter. A piece of about two feet was quite detached from the body and placed between the body and the left arm, apparently by design. She must have been dead most likely within the half hour. There was no spurting of blood on the bricks or pavement around and no marks of blood below the middle of the body." 49

The face was extremely mutilated. There was a cut about a quarter of an inch through the lower left eyelid, dividing the structures completely through. There was a scratch through the skin on the left upper eyelid, near to the angle of the nose. The right eyelid was cut through to about half an inch. 50

The throat was cut across to the extent of about six or seven inches. A superficial cut commenced about an inch and a half behind the left ear and extended across the throat to about three inches below the lobe of the right ear. The big muscle across the throat was divided through on the left side. The large vessels on the left side of the neck were severed. The larynx was severed below the vocal chord. The death was immediate and the mutilations were inflicted after death. 51
The front walls of the abdomen were laid open from the breastbones to the pubes. The liver was stabbed as if by the point of a sharp instrument. The abdominal walls were divided in the middle line to within a quarter of an inch of the navel. The cut then took a horizontal course for two inches and a half towards the right side. It then divided round the navel on the left side, and made a parallel incision to the former horizontal incision, leaving the navel on a tongue of skin. The incision went down the right side of the vagina and rectum for half an inch behind the rectum. There was a stab of about an inch on the left groin. The left kidney was taken out and removed. It was supposed that the cut was made by someone on the right side of the body, kneeling below the middle of the body.52

The coroner's Inquest into the murder of Catherine Eddowes began on October 4, 1888, and was published by *The Daily Telegraph*. It was opened by Mr. S.F. Lanham, the coroner for the City of London. Edward Watkin of the City Police gave evidence about his discovery of the body in Mitre Square. He had been by the spot at 1:30 a.m. and seen nothing, but when he returned at 1:44 a.m., he found the body of the deceased. He saw no one during his beat. Frederick William Foster testified that it would only take twelve minutes to walk the distance between Mitre Square and Berner Street, where Elizabeth Stride was murdered. Dr. Frederick Gordon Brown made it very clear that the killer had to have had anatomical knowledge and very special skill to commit such an act.53

Joseph Lawende testified about having seen the deceased with a man only moments before her death. He saw her with her hand on the chest of the man as they were talking. He gave a description of the man but said he would not know him if he saw him again. He did not overhear their conversation, but neither had appeared angry.54
The next witness was Constable Alfred Long who had found a bloodstained piece of the deceased’s apron in Goulston Street. (This piece was later sewn to the apron found on Eddowes, confirming that it had belonged to her.) Long testified that there was a message written in chalk on the wall above where he found the apron. It read, “The Jews are the men that will not be blamed for nothing.” There was confusion about the placement of the words and the spelling of Jews, which was believed to be spelled “Juwes.” Long made a note of the writing in his book, and he was fairly sure of his testimony. He did not know if the writing was recent, but the piece of apron was wet with blood when he found it. Daniel Halse, a detective officer, also testified about the writing found on the wall. He had instructed that it be photographed, but it was not.

The police feared a riot or outbreak among the Jews in the area, which was known as Old Jewry. The Jewish population had already been implicated by a great number of citizens as having connections with the murders. According to historian W.J. Fishman, “1888 was the year that the ‘problem’ of foreign immigration finally broke surface, and the old scapegoat, the Jew, was available in all his vulnerability.” Many blamed the Jews, and they felt compelled to fight back. Consequently, the writing was rubbed out shortly before 5:00 a.m., which aroused a great deal of controversy and suspicion directed towards the police force.

The coroner only said it was clear that an innocent woman had been killed, and that her murderer had obviously endeavored to mutilate her body so as to render it unrecognizable. The jury returned a verdict of willful murder against some person or persons unknown. Catherine Eddowes’ body was buried by her family in the City of London Cemetery at Manor Park.

The Ripper’s fifth, and supposedly final victim, was Mary Jane Kelly. She was approximately 35 years of age when her murder occurred on November 9, 1888. She was born in Limerick, Ireland, and moved to Wales at a young age. Kelly arrived in London in 1884. She
was the most attractive of all the victims and certainly the youngest. She was fairly tall, with blond hair, light eyes, and a fair complexion. Kelly was clean, intelligent, quiet, and very well-liked.58

Most of what is known about Mary came from Joseph Barnett, a man who was living with her prior to her death. Due to conflicting information, it is commonly believed that most of the story she gave Barnett about her life was embellished. Mary married a collier named Davies at the age of 16, but he was killed only a few years later. She then moved to Cardiff where she worked as a prostitute. Upon her arrival in London, she stayed with nuns and went to work as a domestic servant. Barnett said Mary worked in a high-class brothel and often accompanied a gentleman to Paris. No one knew how she came to live in the East End.59

In 1886 Mary was living with a man named Joseph Fleming somewhere near Bethnal Green. She moved away from him into Colley’s lodging house in Thrawl Street, which is where she met Joe Barnett. The couple was generally happy and caused little trouble unless they were drunk. The two lived together in George Street, Paternoster Court, and Brick Lane. In early 1888 they moved to Miller’s Court off Dorset Street, where they shared a single room until Mary’s death. Barnett left Mary in early September of that year. Up until that time he had been giving her money to live on, and as a result of his departure, Mary was forced to return to the streets to make a living.60

On November 7 Thomas Bowyer saw Mary in Miller’s Court with a man who closely resembled the gentleman seen with Elizabeth Stride, as described by Mathew Packer. Joseph Barnett stopped to see Mary at 7:30 p.m. on November 8. Mary was not seen again until 11:00 p.m. that night, when she was witnessed drinking with a young man at the Britannia. She was
very drunk. At 11:45 p.m. Mary was seen by Mary Ann Cox with a stout man outside of
Miller's Court. He was carrying a pail of beer.⁶¹

George Hutchinson saw Mary at 2:00 a.m. She approached him on Flower and Dean
Street and asked for some money, which he could not give her. She left in the direction of
Thrawl Street. Hutchinson saw her meet up with a man and watched them converse and laugh.
The man had a parcel of some sort in his hand. The two left together, walking towards Dorset
Street. Hutchinson thought the man was “Jewish-looking.” He followed the couple to Miller’s
Court, where he heard Mary say, “All right, my dear. Come along. You will be comfortable.”
The two kissed and entered the court. Mary was not seen again, although many people claimed
to have seen her alive the next day and were ignored by the police.⁶²

At 10:45 a.m. John McCarthy, owner of Miller’s Court, sent Thomas Bowyer to collect
past due rent money from Mary. Bowyer knocked and received no response. Because the door
was locked, he pushed the curtains back, looked inside the room, and discovered the body.
Several hours later, the police smashed in the door to Mary Kelly’s room with an axe handle, and
found her clothes folded on a chair. She was wearing a chemise. Her boots were in front of the
fireplace.⁶³

Mary Kelly’s room was 13 Miller’s Court. It was partitioned off from the rest of the
building. The entrance was a door at the end of an arched passageway. Anyone entering or
leaving Miller’s Court had to pass her room. It was twelve feet square in size. There was a
fireplace across from the door. The room had two small windows. There was a bedside table
next to the door. The bed was beside the table, with its head at the door wall. A man’s coat
hung over the window in place of a curtain. Remnants of clothes were found in the fireplace.⁶⁴
Dr. Thomas Bond was called upon to examine the body and the scene. His post-mortem report was quite lengthy and gruesome, as the crime apparently was. "The body was lying naked in the middle of the bed. The whole of the surface of the abdomen and thighs was removed. The breasts were cut off, the arms mutilated by several jagged wounds and the face hacked beyond recognition of the features. The tissues of the neck were severed all round down to the bone." The uterus and kidneys were found, along with one breast, under the head, and the other breast was by the right foot. The liver was between the feet, the intestines were by the right side of the body, and the spleen was by the left side. The flaps removed from the abdomen and thighs were on the table. The face was gashed in all directions. The nose, cheeks, eyebrows, and ears were all partly removed.

Dr. George Baxter Phillips was also present at the scene and testified at the inquest. "The mutilated remains of a female were lying two-thirds over towards the edge of the bedstead nearest the door. She had only her chemise on, or some underlinen garment. The blood was produced by the severance of the cartoid artery, which was the cause of death. The injury was inflicted while the deceased was lying at the right side of the bedstead."

The coroner's Inquest concerning the murder of Mary Jane Kelly began on November 12, 1888, and was opened by Dr. M.P. Macdonald. It was printed by The Daily Telegraph. Joseph Barnett was the first witness to give testimony. He identified Mary's body in the mortuary by only her eyes and ears. Caroline Maxwell also testified as to having seen and spoken with Mary Kelly at or around 10:00 a.m. the morning after her murder. Her testimony is generally ignored.
The jury returned a verdict of willful murder against some person or persons unknown. The remains of Mary Kelly were buried in St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic Cemetery at Leytonstone.68

The Puzzle

The identity of Jack the Ripper became the question of the day and everyone was looking for an answer. The Ripper may have gone insane, left for America, or committed suicide. The police continued to investigate the crimes, putting forth great effort to solve every case. Every piece of evidence was inspected time and time again. Much of this evidence is still in tact today.

The witness reports are very few and succinct. Each individual gave a short report as to the identity of the men seen with the victims in the hours before their deaths. Patrick Mulshaw saw a man with Polly Nichols around 4:00 a.m. He was “suspicious” looking. Mulshaw heard the man say, “Watchman, old man, I believe somebody is murdered down the street.” Emily Walter saw a foreign-looking man with Annie Chapman at 2:00 a.m. He was about 37, with a dark beard and moustache. He was wearing a short, dark jacket, a dark vest and trousers, a black scarf, and a black felt hat. She heard him ask the victim to enter to enter the backyard of 29 Hanbury Street. Elizabeth Long saw a man with Annie Chapman at 5:30 a.m. He had a dark complexion, was about age 40, was taller than Chapman, and was wearing a brown deerstalker hat and possibly a dark overcoat. She said the man looked shabby genteel. He said to the victim, “Will you?” J. Best and John Gardner saw an English man with Elizabeth Stride at 11:00 p.m. He was about 5’5” tall, had a black moustache, was weak-looking, and was wearing a morning suit and a billycock hat. William Marshall saw a middle-aged man with Elizabeth Stride at 11:45 p.m. He was a small, stout man, wearing a black coat, dark trousers, a cutaway coat, and a
round cap with a sailor-like peak. He said, “You would say anything but your prayers,” in an English accent. Mathew Packer saw a younger man with Elizabeth Stride just after midnight. He was taller, wearing a long black coat and a soft felt hawker hat. He was quiet speaking. PC William Smith saw a similar man with Elizabeth Stride at 12:30 a.m. He was around age 28, clean-shaven, and of respectable appearance. He was wearing a hard, dark felt deerstalker hat and dark clothes. He was carrying a newspaper parcel. James Brown saw a similar man with Elizabeth Stride around 12:45 a.m. He was a stout man, wearing a long, black, diagonal coat that reached his heels.69

Israel Schwartz supposedly saw Elizabeth Stride at this same time. He saw two men with her. The first man was around 30, of medium height, with brown hair and a small moustache. He had a full face, broad shoulders, and a fair complexion. He was wearing a dark jacket and trousers, as well as a black cap with a peak. He heard this man yell, “Lipski!” The second man was about 35, was rather tall, and had light brown hair and a fresh complexion. He was wearing a dark overcoat and an old, black, hard felt hat with a wide brim. He was carrying a clay pipe. Schwartz was a Hungarian immigrant who was known to be a Jew. His testimony as to this encounter was typically ignored at the time. Schwartz was unable to determine if the two men knew each other or were together. There was confusion about whether the shout of ‘Lipski’ was directed towards him because he appeared to be Jewish or if it was the name of the second man.70

Joseph Lawende saw a man with Catherine Eddowes at 1:30 a.m. He was about 30, of medium height, with a fair complexion. He had a brown moustache and was wearing a salt-and-pepper coat, a red neckerchief, and a gray, peaked cloth cap. He was “sailor-like.” James Blenkinsop saw a well-dressed man, also at 1:30 a.m. The man said, “Have you seen a man and
a woman go through here?” Mary Ann Cox saw a man with Mary Kelly at 11:00 p.m. She was a short, stout man, with a blotchy face and a carroty moustache. He was shabbily dressed, wearing a billycock hat. He was holding a quart can of beer. George Hutchinson saw a man with Mary Kelly at 2:00 a.m. This man was about 34-35, of medium height, and looked Jewish and respectable. He had dark hair, a pale complexion, and a slight moustache curled at each end. He was wearing a long, dark coat, collar cuffs of astrakhan, and a dark jacket. He was also wearing a light waistcoat, a thick gold chain with a red stone seal, dark trousers, button boots, and a white shirt with a black tie. He had on a dark hat, turned down in the middle, as well as a red kerchief.71

It is difficult to say which, if any, of these men was Jack the Ripper. Each of the sightings could have been the same man, since it was dark and the descriptions are not likely accurate as a result. It is possible that none of these men murdered the women they were seen with. There are several similarities in all the witness reports, though, so it is likely that at least a few of the sightings were legitimately of the murderer. However, we cannot discern the identity of the killer simply by using the witness reports.

In addition to eyewitness accounts, thousands of letters were sent to the police during the “Autumn of Terror,” but only a few are believed to actually be from the Ripper himself. Most were found to be fakes, written by newspapermen attempting to start new stories. Some people believe all the letters were hoaxes. Experts assert that at least three were genuine. Those three are now known as the Dear Boss letter, the Saucy Jack postcard, and the From Hell letter.

The Dear Boss letter was received on September 27, 1888, at the Central News Agency. This letter was printed in newspapers with the hope that someone might recognize the handwriting. The text of the letter is as follows:
Dear Boss,

I keep on hearing the police have caught me but they won't fix me just yet. I have laughed when they look so clever and talk about being on the right track. That joke about Leather Apron gave me real fits. I am down on whores and I shan't quit ripping them till I do get buckled. Grand work the last job was. I gave the lady no time to squeal. How can they catch me now. I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little games. I saved some of the proper red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I can't use it. Red ink is fit enough I hope ha. ha. The next job I do I shall clip the ladys ears off and send to the police officers just for jolly wouldn't you. Keep this letter back till I do a bit more work, then give it out straight. My knife's so nice and sharp I want to get to work right away if I get a chance. Good Luck.

Yours truly

Jack the Ripper

Dont mind me giving the trade name

PS Wasn't good enough to post this before I got all the red ink off my hands curse it No luck yet. They say I'm a doctor now. ha ha

The Saucy Jack postcard was received on October 1, 1888, also at the Central News Agency. The handwriting is similar to that of the 'Dear Boss' letter. It makes reference to the letter and to the murders of the previous night. Those who believe in the postcard's authenticity
argue that it mentions the double event before it was even described to the press. It also mentioned the removal of Eddowes’ ear. The text of the postcard is as follows:

“I was not codding dear old Boss when I gave you the tip, you'll hear about Saucy Jacky's work tomorrow double event this time number one squealed a bit couldn't finish straight off. ha not the time to get ears for police. thanks for keeping last letter back till I got to work again.”

Jack the Ripper

The ‘From Hell’ letter was received on October 16, 1888, by George Lusk, president of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee. It was delivered with a three-inch-square cardboard box, and inside was half a human kidney preserved in wine. This kidney was found to be very similar to the one removed from Catherine Eddowes, although a connection cannot be conclusively proven. The text of the letter is as follows:

From hell.

Mr Lusk,

Sor I send you half the Kidne I took from one woman and prasarved it for you tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise. I may send you the bloody knif that took it out if you only wate a whil longer

signed

Catch me when you can Mishter Lusk
The Theories

The identity of the author or authors may never be known. There is an ongoing debate concerning this issue of identification. However, suffice it to say that most of the officers on the case and many of today's Ripperologists feel that at least these three are genuine and should be considered serious evidence.

Because of the work of the police and the research of current Ripperologists, several theories have come about concerning the identity of Jack the Ripper. At least a dozen are seriously considered today, and new theories are constantly being developed. It is impossible to say which—if any—is correct. Because the truth of the Ripper’s identity might never be known, speculation is easy, and there will continue to be a search for answers. The list of suspects may continue to grow far beyond the massive length it has already reached.

Frederick Bailey Deeming, a known murderer, is one suspect whose story makes his candidacy as a suspect seem highly unlikely. He had an unusually strong relationship with his mother and became emotionally distraught upon her death. After suffering from an attack of "brain fever," Deeming never recovered and went a bit mad. He often said that his strange behavior was a result of his mother dictating his actions from her grave.75

Deeming eventually married and fathered four children. He moved his family to Australia, South Africa, and then back to Liverpool. They appeared to live peacefully there, until the neighbors noticed the family had seemingly disappeared. Deeming's explanation was simply that they had gone away. He moved back to Australia and married again. His new wife later mysteriously disappeared. He contended that she had gone abroad. After Deeming vacated their home, the owner attempted to rent it out, but was unable to do so due to a horrid stench coming from the dining room. Upon lifting the floorboards of the room, the body of Deeming's
second wife was discovered. Her throat had been cut and her body was in advanced stages of
decomposition. The same process was carried out at Deeming's previous home in Liverpool.
There the bodies of his first wife and all four of his children were discovered. All of their throats
were cut.\textsuperscript{76}

Deeming was arrested in 1892 for these heinous crimes. While in prison he told people
that he was indeed Jack the Ripper, although he never confessed to anyone of authority. He was
in Whitechapel in 1888. Newspapers reported that he was even seen buying knives there.
However, his history shows that he was, or at least should have been, in South Africa at the time
of Ripper murders. The only real connections he had with the murderer were his insanity and the
method he used to kill his family. Many still contend that he is a valid suspect. Frederick Bailey
Deeming was hanged on May 23, 1892.\textsuperscript{77}

George Chapman, whose real name was Severin Antoniovich Klosowski, was a killer,
but he was a poisoner. He was a Polish man, a carpenter, and also a surgeon. He arrived in
London sometime during 1888. After his arrival he became a hairdresser's assistant in the East
End. There he married, although he had left a wife in Poland. The new couple eventually
moved to Jersey City, New Jersey, where Chapman found work in a barbershop. The two
fought, and he even attacked his wife with a knife. He said he meant to kill her. Mrs. Chapman
eventually returned to London alone.\textsuperscript{78}

Chapman returned to London in 1892 but could not reconcile with his wife. He then met
Annie Chapman (not the Ripper victim), and the two began to live together. He ended up
bringing home another woman to live with them, so Annie left him – pregnant. He refused her
any help. He took on her surname to escape his sordid history with women. Chapman met
another woman and pretended to marry her, as she was unaware that he was already legally
married. The two opened musical barbershops together and did rather well for a while. However, Chapman consistently beat his wife.\textsuperscript{79}

Sometime in the late 1890’s, Chapman purchased tartar emetic from a chemist’s shop. Tartar emetic is a white powder, soluble in water, that contains antimony – a colorless, odorless, and tasteless poison. Antimony in large doses causes slow, gradual, and painful death. It also helps preserve the body for long periods of time.\textsuperscript{80}

Chapman’s new wife eventually died mysteriously. He met and married another woman named Bessie Taylor shortly after. He was abusive towards her as well and even threatened her with a gun. Bessie soon began suffering from the same disease as her husband’s last wife and grew increasingly sicker over time. Chapman seemed barely moved by the death of his wife, which aroused some suspicion.\textsuperscript{81}

After his wife’s death, Chapman married again. His new wife, Maud Marsh, soon became very ill. Her family noticed and called a doctor in to take care of her. This frightened Chapman into giving her a large dose of the poison, killing her the very next day. Traces of arsenic and antimony were easily found in her body. Chapman was arrested immediately after the post-mortem. His true identity was quickly discovered. The bodies of the other Chapman wives were exhumed and found to be quite fresh. He was charged with their deaths as well. The jury found him guilty. He was hanged on April 7, 1903.\textsuperscript{82}

Inspector Abberline believed Jack the Ripper had been caught when Chapman was arrested, thinking the details fit together rather well. The date of Chapman’s arrival in England in 1888 coincided with the beginning of the murders. Also, the murders stopped while Chapman was in America in the early 1890’s. Similar murders began in America during his stay there. Chapman also had a medical past, as a result of his apprenticeship with a surgeon in Germany.
He had a regular job, which most believe the Ripper had since all murders took place on the weekends. He was a free man with little responsibility, as the Ripper must have been since he was free to wander about at all hours of the night. Chapman's first wife also once said he was in the habit of staying out into the early hours of the morning.83

Jack the Ripper was a sexual serial murder, as well as a misogynist. Chapman had an unusual sexual drive and was also a misogynist. He was also a serial murderer. Chapman, however, didn't very well fit the physical descriptions given by witnesses. He was far younger than most said the killer was, although he was a foreigner and did appear to be so. Many use his history as a poisoner as a reason to refute the theory, but Abberline believed it was perfectly possible for him to poison and mutilate. Either way, he was cold-blooded serial killer.

One of the most interesting theories concerning the identity of Jack the Ripper is known as the Royal Conspiracy, often called "The Final Solution." The theory is a bit far-fetched, but it does capture the imagination and brings together many aspects of the crimes and possible suspects. It is today still very popular. Some do believe this theory makes sense and is the only possible answer to this century-long mystery. Because of the lack of facts and evidence, it will probably always be questioned and refuted, as any good (or bad) theory is.

Joseph Sickert developed the theory and told the story to the BBC in the 1970's. His father was Walter Sickert, who lived in the East End in 1888. According to this theory, Walter Sickert befriended Prince Albert ("Eddy"), son of Queen Victoria, and the two spent a great deal of time together. Eddy met a girl named Annie Elizabeth Crook during his time acting as a commoner with Sickert. She got pregnant, and the two lived together until the Queen discovered the relationship. She demanded that the situation be "handled," as Annie was a commoner and a Catholic. Eddy and Annie's apartment was raided and each was taken away separately. Their
child, Alice Margaret, escaped. According to Sickert, Sir William Gull, the Queen’s personal
physician, had Annie put into a hospital where experiments were performed on her to alter her
memories of the experience. The experiments caused her to become epileptic and insane.\textsuperscript{84}

The couple had hired Mary Kelly as a nanny. Baby Alice was with her when their
apartment was raided, and they were taken away. Mary gave the child to nuns and went back to
her life in the East End. She talked to everyone about the Prince and his affair. She enlisted the
help of her friends Polly Nichols, Liz Stride, and Annie Chapman to help her use her information
to pressure the government for money. Gull and John Netley devised a plan to quickly silence
the women. They created Jack the Ripper as a symbol of Freemasonry, a semi-secret fraternal
organization. Sir Robert Anderson was enlisted to help cover up the crimes and act as a lookout
during the murders. The murder of Catherine Eddowes was apparently a mistake because she
had sometimes used the alias of Mary Kelly and the men got confused. They then silenced the
real Mary Kelly. They also came up with the idea of using Montague Druitt as a scapegoat for
the crimes.\textsuperscript{85}

Oddly enough, Alice Margaret grew up oblivious to any of what was going on and
eventually married Walter Sickert! They had a son together. Sir William Gull died shortly after
the murders. Netley attempted to run over Alice Margaret with a cab, but he was stopped by an
angry mob. He was eventually drowned in the Thames. Sickert apparently spent his entire life
suffering from guilt over the murders, since it was he who had introduced Eddy to Annie, which
began the series of treacherous events.\textsuperscript{86}

One of the most interesting parts of the theory is the involvement of the Masons.
Theorists say that the murders were ritual reenactments of the murder of Mason Hirem Abiff in
Soloman’s Temple by three Mason initiates, Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum. Other evidence
implicating the Masons includes the fact that a mitre and a square were symbols of Masonic tools, hence the murder in Mitre Square. Mitre Square was also a frequent meeting place for the Masons. The murders were supposedly committed to show Masonic power. The involvement of the Masons in this apparent conspiracy is convenient because they are a secretive body that does not allow anyone to consult files or question them. Therefore, nothing involving the Masons can easily be proven. 87

This theory is the subject of the recent theatrical release from the Hughes Brothers, From Hell. The entire film is based on the idea of Sir William Gull as Jack the Ripper, involved in a conspiracy with the Royal Family, the Masons, and several important London officials. 88 However, recent information shows that Annie Crook actually had her daughter with her for much of the time before her death. Also, the baby’s birth certificate shows the father as William Crook, who was Annie’s father. That leads to the reasoning that her daughter was not Eddy’s, but was a product of incest. Also, the location where the raid that separated Eddy and Annie occurred did not even exist in 1888. However, despite these facts, the theory remains popular. To many it is little more than popular fiction, although a few Ripperologists still hold a great deal of credence in the idea of a “Royal Conspiracy.”

Walter Sickert was recently implicated in an entirely different theory, which was the focus of crime fiction writer Patricia Cornwell’s latest book. Cornwell came into contact with the Ripper case while touring Scotland Yard, and spent years researching the life and history of Walter Sickert. She offers a vast amount of evidence to support her assertion that Sickert was Jack the Ripper. He did, indeed, live in the East End in 1888. He was a painter and frequented late-night music halls. Sickert apparently had a physical affliction, and even after several major surgeries, he was left unable to consummate any of his three marriages. Cornwell asserts his
inability to perform the sexual act left him angry with women in general, and caused him to have a great deal of rage towards women who made a living by having sex. Her theory holds that a great deal of his morbid paintings reflect the horrible acts Sickert committed in Whitechapel. \(^89\)

The base of Cornwell’s theory, however, is the thousands of Ripper letters received by the police in 1888. She asserts that a majority of them were actually written by Sickert himself. She also feels that the letters alone are proof enough that he committed the crimes, assuming he did indeed write them, because of their confessional nature. Her research into the letters produced hundreds of pages concerning the paper the letters were written on, the watermarks on the paper, the handwriting connections in many of them, the postmarks on the envelopes, and the ink used to write them. In her book Cornwell manages to connect the paper type and watermarks to Sickert and his family, the ink to his artwork, the handwriting to his personal letters, and the postmarks to his traced whereabouts at any particular time. “It is obvious that the Ripper wrote far more of the Ripper letters than he has ever been credited with. In fact, I believe he wrote most of them. In fact, Walter Sickert wrote most of them. Even when his skilled artistic hands altered his writing, his arrogance and characteristic language cannot help but assert themselves.” \(^90\) Patricia Cornwell presents an interesting theory involving a man who has not often been implicated as a suspect in the Ripper case. She did a great deal of work and research in developing this new theory and has amassed a great deal of evidence to serve as proof. Her theory is rather convincing and she clearly puts a great deal of faith in it as the absolute truth. As a result, Ripperologists all over the world who have access to Cornwell’s latest addition to the masses of Ripperature have given new credence to the theory of Walter Sickert as Jack the Ripper. \(^91\)
Francis Tumblety is another suspect worthy of consideration. He is currently the main suspect for most Ripperologists and enthusiasts. Very little is known about Tumblety’s history. Even his birthplace is a mystery, although it may have been in Canada or Ireland. He was born sometime around 1833, although that date is questionable. Sometime during the decade after his birth, his family moved to Rochester, New York. He peddled pornography on canal boats there during his childhood. He also worked in a drug store. Around 1850 Tumblety left New York for Detroit, where he started a career as an Indian herb doctor. He then moved to Montreal where he established himself as a prominent physician. He was arrested in 1857 for attempting to abort the pregnancy of a prostitute. He was eventually released and there was never a trial.92

In the late 1850’s Tumblety moved to Saint John, Canada, where trouble caught up with him again. A male patient of his died while taking medicine prescribed by him. Tumblety attempted to place the blame on the man’s wife. This did not work, and he fled for Maine. Over the next few years, he traveled from one major city to another, eventually ending up in Washington, D.C. at the start of the Civil War. He pretended to be a Union army surgeon and claimed to be friends with President Lincoln and General Grant. During this time Tumblety’s severe hatred for women became known. He fiercely denounced all women, especially “fallen” women.93

A Colonel Dunham, a friend of Tumblety’s said, “He invited us into his office. One side of this room was entirely occupied with cases, outwardly resembling wardrobes. When the doors were opened quite a museum was revealed -- tiers of shelves with glass jars and cases, some round and others square, filled with all sorts of anatomical specimens. The ‘doctor’ placed on a table a dozen or more jars containing, as he said, the matrices (uteri) of every class of women. Nearly a half of one of these cases was occupied exclusively with these specimens.”94
If this story is true – and many assume it is – it reveals the possibility that Tumblety was indeed the misogynist doctor that Jack the Ripper was believed to be. He most certainly embodied a great hatred for women that would allow him to commit such gruesome crimes without guilt or conscience. Also, his collections of uteri would explain those missing from the victims.

Tumblety was arrested several times over the next few years for impersonating an officer and wearing medals he had not earned. He was even arrested for the assassination of President Lincoln because he chose to use the wrong alias. He was able to escape those charges and soon after made the decision to move to England. Over the next few years he traveled across America and Europe. He eventually returned to Liverpool in 1888. Soon after, he was arrested on charges of gross indecency and indecent assault with force and arms. These charges indicated homosexual activities. On the 12th of November, 1888 Tumblety was charged on suspicion of his involvement in the Whitechapel murders. He was bailed out and a trial was set for December 10. He fled to France and from there returned to New York City.95

Officials in New York were prepared for his return, but port officials did not track him down. Many newspapers reported that some men from Scotland Yard had followed him to America. Inspector Andrews did follow a suspect to New York around that time, but it is not clear whether or not he was following Tumblety. Chief Inspector Byrnes discovered Tumblety’s whereabouts and had him under surveillance but was unable to make an arrest. Police were aware that there was no proof of Tumblety’s involvement in the Whitechapel murders. Also, the crime was not extraditable. Police continued to watch him closely, but he eventually disappeared. He was next known to be in Rochester in 1893 with his sister. He died in 1903 in St. Louis. He was a wealthy man at the time of his death.96
Francis Tumblety was not a suspect in the case of the Ripper murders until 1993. It was then that the Littlechild Letter was discovered. It was written by Chief Inspector John Littlechild in response to a journalist's questions. The authenticity of the letter has been established. It mentions Tumblety as a 'very likely suspect.' Many accepted this solution right away. Tumblety was in London at the time of the murders, he hated women – especially prostitutes – and he had anatomical knowledge. He collected wombs. The murders stopped when he fled back to America. He was wealthy, which would assist him in traveling and purchasing new clothing. He was good at evading police and capture, even when he was under heavy surveillance. One final piece of incriminating evidence has only recently come into light. After the death of Francis Tumblety, three brass rings were found on the night table in his room. They are believed to be the missing rings of Annie Chapman.97

As the facts and evidence pile up, Francis Tumblety becomes an extremely likely Jack the Ripper. Oddly enough, there was no press coverage in England concerning him. American newspapers delved thoroughly into the story. There is speculation that Scotland Yard wanted to keep Tumblety a secret from the press in order to avoid the embarrassment of losing their top suspect. It is quite possible that he was always a main suspect; he was simply never caught. Today many enthusiasts accept him as the true Jack the Ripper. There is some opposition to this theory, though, due to the fact that he was a homosexual. Homosexual serial killers tend to concentrate on male victims. However, Tumblety did have an intense hatred for prostitutes. Is Francis Tumblety the real Jack the Ripper? It is possible, along with all the other various theories.

I myself prescribe to the Tumblety theory. Although there is little more evidence to validate this theory as opposed to any other, I simply find this particular explanation far more
believable and rational than any of the others. Although there is no definitive proof for many of the details that comprise the theory, it is well thought out and makes a great deal of sense. Tumblety fits the profile of Jack the Ripper. He can be placed in the London area during the fall of 1888. Those that knew him were aware of his misogynist obsessions and his deviant behaviors. He had the requisite medical knowledge to perform the intricate mutilations that the Ripper was known for, even if he did not obtain this knowledge in a legitimate manner. He may or may not have had in his possession the missing rings of one of the victims. This fact alone may be mere speculation, but it is extremely intriguing. Even more interesting is that Tumblety was one of the few suspects actually placed under police surveillance. To my knowledge he was the only individual actually charged with possible involvement in the murders. Had he not been adept at escaping and evading the police, possibly he would have been found guilty at trial and this mystery would not be a mystery at all. I believe there is enough valid information to support Tumblety as a major suspect, if not the killer himself, and I put a great deal of credence in this new theory. Although a great deal more information is necessary to definitively prove this theory, I do believe that eventually many experts will consider Francis Tumblety the most likely suspect in the case. However, I do not believe that even a definitive determination of Tumblety as the Ripper will cause a cessation in the obsession with Jack the Ripper. For more than a century, citizens around the world have been intrigued, entertained, and captivated by this case. Even a solution will likely not alter this history of fascination. The obsession has survived more than one hundred years, and will likely endure well into the future.

The allure of the case became clear just after the murder of Annie Chapman. Two other murders had occurred recently – those of Martha Tabram and Annie Chapman – but they didn’t garner a great deal of attention because it wasn’t unusual to find East End prostitutes dead from
one reason or another. Times were hard and they were, after all, “unfortunates.” However, a series of murders of similar victims occurring in a relatively short period of time in close vicinity to one another was like a child screaming for attention. The press attacked the story, the police began to release information, the government was quick to get involved, and London citizens were suddenly a great deal more alert and informed. Jack the Ripper was quick to catch the attention of London, and it was not long before the rest of the country was paralyzed with fear as well.

According to Ripper historian L. Perry Curtis, Jr., “In the autumn of 1888, reporters dwelled on the ‘thrill of horror’ that ran through the country as a result of the atrocities taking place in Whitechapel.” Newspapers were quick to pick up on the stories. The coverage dragged on as long as the newspapers could muster up new readers. There were no other news media to provide alternative versions of what the newspapers presented. The newspapers, therefore, were able to shape citizens’ views of what was happening in the world, as it was all they knew. Newspapers became Londoners’ prime source of information regarding what was happening in the East End. Few dared to venture to Whitechapel to gain firsthand access to the atrocities, so the masses were forced to read about the horror in the comfort of their own homes. Jack the Ripper was the first serial killer to work during a time when the media was becoming a driving cultural force. He quite possibly played a role in increasing the popularity and importance of the newspapers and news media. Individuals all over England were eager to hear of what was happening in the slums of London, and newspapers were, they believed, the most reliable source. As a result, by 1888, London had thirteen morning and nine evening national daily papers. Circulation rose into the hundreds of thousands during the wake of the Ripper
murders, which was far more than ever before. The media quickly learned that crime waves were the key to a future in reporting the news and boosting circulation.

The public was eager to read about local crime. Curtis, Jr., says, “Tales about crime and social unrest always appeal to respectable readers regardless of their class, sex, ethnicity, or religious beliefs, because they live in a world of binary opposition between good and evil.”

England became obsessed with issues of good and evil as a result of the Ripper murders. The Ripper was clearly evil, but were his victims? Jack the Ripper was a predator of prostitutes, women who made a meager living with little or no morality. Much of the English population wondered whether this really was a case of good against evil, or if the Ripper wasn’t doing the city some good by ridding London of some of its ‘worst’ citizens and scaring the rest of them into leading law-abiding lives. The Ripper crimes touched the value systems, beliefs, and morals of men and women everywhere. The news media were able to play on these vulnerabilities, which aided the Ripper in affecting populations far away from Whitechapel. As readers learned these crimes had the ability to significantly influence their own lives, they became far more captivated with the case and began to pay closer attention to what was happening in London. As a result, newspapers gave the crime story increasingly more attention in the days leading up to the Double Event and the slaying of Mary Kelly.

The murders in Whitechapel quickly became harrowing mysteries, and coverage was sure to boost the readership of any newspaper. Curtis, Jr., asserts, “Ripper news certainly awakened readers to the existence of a new kind of horror for which there was no simple explanation. Lacking firm clues and familiar motives, Fleet Street [newspapers] had little choice but to dwell on the sheer horror of the mutilations and the elusiveness of the bravado killer, who flaunted his deeds, but left no clues behind.” Journalists were forced to employ a wide variety of
innovative tactics to create new story ideas and keep their readers interested. There appeared to be no limit to the length reporters would go to uncover or create Ripper-related news. There was no precedent in journalism on how to handle a case of this sort. Because newspaper reporting and media coverage were such a new phenomenon, there was no definitive method for handling a case where there was no suspect or motive and few leads to follow. As a result, many journalists simply focused their stories on the gore of the murders, the mystery the Ripper left behind, and the fear he instilled in all of England.

Curtis, Jr. sums up this topic, saying: "The press coverage of the Whitechapel murders reveals much about the late Victorian culture. Readers of these stories yearned for reassurance that the criminal justice system worked and that the villain would pay dearly for his wickedness. Murder news thus reflected the Victorian obsession with character and virtuous conduct. The fundamental issues of morality and depravity also underlay the reporting of these horrors." The media coverage of the Ripper murders not only reveals a great deal about the culture of the time, but it also lay a foundation of "Rippermania" for years to come. The press attention to the case was only the beginning of Jack the Ripper’s rise to fame. Over the years the entire world became fascinated with the case. If not for the newspapers that reported the case in 1888, knowledge of the case would not have spread as quickly or as far as it did. There would also be little concrete historical evidence remaining regarding the case. The press coverage created a reference for those interested in Jack the Ripper, so that the facts would remain in tact, rather than fading away to mere rumors and becoming legends of another century. The media made certain that Jack the Ripper would be able to live in infamy, which is exactly what he has done.

Curtis, Jr. notes, "One of the fastest-growing light industries of the late-twentieth-century publishing world, what is known as "Ripperature" has attracted a worldwide audience."
simple internet search of Jack the Ripper will produce thousands of website results. There are groups such as the Cloak and Dagger Club that are based on Ripper history. There are Ripper conventions all over the world. Terms such as Ripperature and Ripperology are not uncommon and are accepted as a part of regular language. Individuals have dedicated their entire lives to studying the crimes and attempting to solve the mystery. Writers such as Patricia Cornwell have deviated from their customary fiction writing to focus attention on Jack the Ripper, adding to the masses of books written about the Whitechapel slayings. In 2002 a major motion picture about the Ripper, entitled From Hell was released by Hollywood, and it was not the first movie made about him. Curtis, Jr. says, “Jack the Ripper has inspired almost one hundred books and pamphlets, as well as countless articles, more than twenty films, a few operas, and at least one ghoulish comic book based on the Masonic conspiracy theory.” The BBC has created several documentaries on Jack the Ripper, some of which even produced new theories. In 1988 all of England celebrated the so-called ‘birthday’ of Jack the Ripper and memorialized his victims with celebrations and memorabilia, including “Ripper T-shirts, tea towels, coffee mugs, wall plaques, and a computer game.” The recent releases of From Hell and Patricia Cornwell’s novel Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed have reinvigorated the worldwide craze concerning Jack the Ripper. Clearly, what was once a tragedy that affected an entire nation and took the lives of an ambiguous number of innocent women, is now a part of worldwide popular culture.

The London Walks

One of the most popular London Walks is devoted to the pop culture icon. Donald Rumbelow, one of today’s highly reputable Ripperologists, leads a number of the daily tours
around the important Jack the Ripper landmarks. While in London, I was fortunate enough to experience one of these historical tours. The tour began at the Tower Hill Underground Station on London's east side. I had opted to attend one of the night walks, which added a bit of authenticity to the event. As we walked up Houndsditch Minories Road, I was surprised by how old and rundown the area appeared. I was well aware that in 1888, the East End was by far the worst area of London to live in. During Jack the Ripper's era, "the desperately unfortunate sought refuge in the narrow, rotten houses behind the main streets. Their occupants pursued vile and grotesquely unsavoury trades. The East End had the worst slums, the worst overcrowding, the worst death rates. It also housed London's immigrants." The East End has always had a bit of an unfavorable reputation. In his book London's East End, Chaim Bermant says, "The East End, however, was not merely sunk in paganism and poverty, but, to judge from the daily press, it was steeped in vice, the home of every type of delinquent." As a result of my knowledge about the area's history, I had assumed that over an entire century some important official would have made an effort to repair the area and render it more livable. While some work had been done to make it a bit more respectable, it was clearly not the safest or nicest place in London to live. The East End had managed to uphold its reputation as London's slum for more than a century.

As we began the tour, I learned that Houndsditch Minories Road fell between the jurisdictions of Scotland Yard and the City of London Police, which was a huge issue during the Ripper investigation. The two investigative agencies did not work very well together and rarely shared information. There were often arguments over appropriate jurisdictions in the case. Animosity between the two agencies caused a great number of delays and missed opportunities. It is possible that the case would have been solved long ago had the agencies worked together.
A great deal of information may now be lost forever due to this petty separation of intentions and ideals.

As we walked up the road and listened to explanations of police rivalry, the tour passed through an opening between two buildings and entered into a small, open area that was surrounded by tall buildings. We were in Mitre Square, the site of the murder of Catherine Eddowes. I was amazed to be standing there, looking at the very spot where the victim’s body had once lain. Jack the Ripper had passed through those very same walls where I was standing at that moment. I felt a powerful sense of restlessness as the tour group stood and listened to the story of Catherine Eddowes’s murder.

The tour continued on up Whitechapel High Street, where the guide pointed out an area to the left, up Goulston Street, and asked that we remember that spot, as it would have great significance later. Very shortly afterwards we arrived at Berner Street where Elizabeth Stride, the Ripper’s second victim, was killed. We entered into Dutfield’s Yard and stood in what we were told was more or less the very same spot where Stride’s body was found. The guide told us the entire story of the Double Event and explained the significance of Goulston Street, which is where the piece of bloody apron had been found. Ripperologists now believe the Ripper dropped the piece of apron on his mad dash out of the area. Above the area where the apron was found, of course, was where the infamous chalk inscription had once been. As the tour continued, I became increasingly in awe of the significance of what I was seeing.

The third stop on the walk was what was formerly known as Buck’s Row, the site of the killing of Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols. Hers was the first of the Ripper murders – or at least the first canonical victim. We were unable to get to the exact area where the body was found due to construction and architectural changes. However, the tour brought us close enough to get a real
feeling for what the area was like in 1888. We walked through dark alleys with no lighting. The streets were still cobbled. Although we were told much had changed, it felt as if we were back in the Whitechapel of 1888. I was sufficiently uncomfortable and uneasy being there, even knowing it was unlikely that anyone alive during the “Autumn of Terror” could still be there, much less Jack the Ripper himself. However, the tour allowed the Ripper murders to come to life.

As the walk headed on to Hansbury Street, where Annie Chapman was killed, the group was introduced to the Ripper letters and postcards. Most Ripperologists now believe that members of the press created most of these letters in order to create new stories and arouse excitement in the East End. We were read the “Dear Boss” letter, the “Saucy Jack” postcard, and the “From Hell” letter, which are considered authentic. The guide also shared with us a few of the letters considered to be farces. Due to the thousands of letters received, little could be done to ensure prosecution for obstructing an investigation. However, according to Curtis, Jr., “this mail constitutes vivid proof of how the news from Whitechapel inspired some readers to venture beyond prurience and become bit players in the ongoing Ripper horror show.”110 Apparently everyone wanted to get involved and have a piece in the Ripper action, despite the consequences to the case itself.

The final stop on the tour was the site of the murder of Mary Jane Kelly. We were able to see Dorset Street as it once was, although Miller’s Court no longer existed. Having visited all of the known Ripper sites, we all suddenly came to a mutual understanding of what had really taken place during the Autumn of Terror and how it had culminated in this very place. Not only were we better informed about the havoc Jack the Ripper caused, but we saw where it all had happened and understood some of what living in the East End had to have been like during that
time. The Ripper walk brought all my research and knowledge to life for me and gave me a new sense of understanding about what I was studying. My obsession with the Ripper did nothing but increase as a result of my exciting tour experience.

At the tour’s end, I headed over the Ten Bells, an actual Ripper pub that was in existence during 1888. Many even believe that the Ripper victims frequented the place. The Ten Bells is now an “official” Ripper site. It was a quaint place with an old appearance. The tables had short stools and were old and carved on. Old bottles of wine were covered in red wax from the candles burning in them on each table. The walls were plastered with newspaper articles from 1888 about Jack the Ripper, as well as photographs and drawings from that time period. There was no music, only the hushed chatter of the few people in the place. Members of the staff minded their own business. When I came out of the toilets, I was afraid there was someone standing behind the door, waiting for me. I was sufficiently uncomfortable. The pub owners successfully recaptured the atmosphere the pub must have had in 1888. As the culmination of my real-life Ripper experience, I couldn’t have been more pleased. The London Walks provided me an opportunity to see first-hand what I had previously only read about and gave my work a much greater significance for me.

**Conclusion**

Jack the Ripper significant not only to me because of the countless hours I have put into researching his story, but also to the rest of the world because of the historical legacy he left behind. He is today considered one of the first real serial killers. He is certainly the first killer to emerge when the press was just beginning to have an important impact on mass society and culture. He left behind few clues as to his identity or how he chose his victims. He wrought terror upon one of the world’s major cities and then seemingly disappeared without a trace. He
affected how the world viewed Scotland Yard and police practices in general. He affected how
citizen's everywhere went about their daily lives. One hundred years later countless numbers of
individuals have devoted their lives to researching his case and attempting to prove his identity.
According to Fishman, "Had his identity been discovered and had he been brought to trial, his
exploits would merely have registered another sordid tale of a murderer brought to justice...But
he was never caught, and his identity still remains the greatest enigma in the annals of unsolved
crime." Perhaps the fact that he was never caught or even identified enabled him to leave his
mark on the dark pages of history. Perhaps it is because the press played such a significant role
in making him into the icon that he is today. Or perhaps it is simply because pop culture refuses
to let the story die. Whatever the cause, it appears that Jack the Ripper, whoever he is, will most
certainly live in infamy.

Curtis, Jr. found that, "For many children – boys as well as girls – Jack became the
ultimate bogeyman, especially if their nannies tried to keep them in line by threatening to hand
them over the Jack if they did not behave." For more than a century Jack the Ripper has
haunted the imaginations of both adults and children. The abundance of books, television
documentaries, and movies attests to the continuing power of Jack the Ripper as a legendary
villain to attract and repel people to his case with equal ease. People hate him for the tragedy
and turmoil he caused, but they love his story. He was considered despicable for what he did,
but grudgingly admired for the fact that he could get away with it without ever being caught.
Jack the Ripper falls into some elusive category by having the ability to pique the interests of
thousands of people, while causing them to hate themselves and him for it. The press, however,
clearly played a significant part in the undying fascination with the case. The media's role in the
case's ability to persist for more than a century as one of the most significant historical mysteries
cannot be ignored. Then press was clearly successful in sensationalizing the murders. “If the Ripper mythos has reached new heights – or depths – of commodification in our own time,” argues Curtis, Jr., “we should not forget Fleet Street’s role in helping to stimulate and then feed the public’s appetite for gore in 1888.” The press did not need to invent a mystery, because the case was so baffling. They did not need to exaggerate the gore because the mutilations were so horrific. They merely told the story, thereby creating a legend.

Jack the Ripper was anonymous, alien, arrogant, cunning, and powerful. He made no attempt to conceal his deeds and taunted police to catch him. He kept an entire city on its toes, waiting for what would happened next, not necessarily wanting more, but knowing the terror had yet to end. One hundred years later he still has the power to captivate, enrage, and intrigue thousands of people everywhere. Chaim Bermant asserts, “Almost anyone could get away with murder in those ill-policed Whitechapel streets, and many people did, but to get away with five or six murders suggests a rare combination of good fortune and skill. He was a master of his craft, and Jack, first a source of horror and then a source of awe, finally became a sort of folk hero.” Call him what you will – folk hero, serial killer, legend, sadist misogynist – Jack the Ripper, with the help of the London press, have created one unsolved mystery that has baffled the world for a century and will likely continue as one of history’s most notorious legends.
17. Sugden, 82-85.
18. Johnno & Ryder.
20. Sugden, 73-75.
22. Johnno & Ryder.
27. Johnno & Ryder.
29. Johnno & Ryder.
30. Johnno & Ryder.
31. Sugden, 192.
32. Sugden, 197-198.
33. Bardsley.
34. Sugden, 167-168.
35. Sugden, 165-166.
36. Johnno & Ryder.
37. Johnno & Ryder.
38. Johnno & Ryder.
40. Johnno & Ryder.
41. Johnno & Ryder.
42. Johnno & Ryder.
43. Johnno & Ryder.
44. Johnno & Ryder.
46. Johnno & Ryder.
47. Bardsley.
48. Sugden, 231.
49. Johnno & Ryder.
50. Johnno & Ryder.
51. Johnno & Ryder.
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