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# **1888 – The Media Representation of the Whitechapel Murder Victims**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts  
in History at Massey University**

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## **Dedication**

*To Mum*

*Thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me, even when I didn't think I could do it. I just wish you were here to see that I finally did it.*

## **Acknowledgements**

To dad, Joss, Wendy, Lauren, Marie, Noeline, and my Twitter and gym families – thank you for always checking up on me, encouraging me, and supporting me. You kept me sane.

Special thank yous: to James Halcrow for using his own valuable time to look for Metropolitan Police files for me at the British Archives during his PhD research trip to the UK in 2021. To Deborah Finberg, for offering advice and taking the time to help me edit this thing. To Sarah Giles, for your advice towards the end when I was struggling.

My supervisor, Kirsty Carpenter, thank you for all of your support and your constructive criticism, without which I would not have made it. We got there in the end!

## **Special Dedication**

*To the six women who lost their lives during the Autumn of Terror in 1888.  
I hope I have gone some way to giving them their voices back.*

## Introduction

This thesis aims to answer two questions about the victims of Jack the Ripper. First, how were the victims of this murderer portrayed by their contemporary media and the police who worked the case. Second, it seeks to assess the literary legacy of Jack the Ripper, often referred to as 'Ripperology' and how it has evolved over time. This will bring together and analyse the field of research that has grown up around the female victims: Martha Tabram, Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elisabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly, and the media surrounding their killing by Jack the Ripper.

The Whitechapel Murders of 1888 took place in the East End of London and since then much has been written about the murderer who committed these atrocities. However, until recently, little has been focused explicitly on the victims. Some authors are beginning to change this, turning their focus away from the killer and the possible suspects towards the lives that were lost. This gives the women a voice they have been denied for more than a century. Why did this omission occur? Because the media and academic research have played an integral part in the way in which the victims of these violent crimes have been portrayed and excluded. In 1888, it barely mentioned these women, despite the spike in writings based entirely on their murders. Articles focused on the grisly details, possibly because that was so much more exciting for the readers and, as more murders happened, the fact that the killer had not been caught became a macabre fascination. Readers paid little attention to the women the killer left in his wake or their shattered lives.

This thesis is not, therefore, a study of Jack the Ripper; it is a study of the victims and how they have been portrayed by the media of their time. It also encompasses a study of the police officials (who worked on the case and published on the topic years after the events) and of the modern scholars and Ripperologists. Its goal is not to determine the best candidate for the killer's identity; because that has been copiously researched and published for decades.<sup>1</sup> It will probe whether these women were treated fairly or simply

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<sup>1</sup> As evidenced by the bibliography for this thesis, there are countless books about Jack the Ripper and, more specifically, the killer's identity. There are still many more out there that did not get used here due to their lack of relevance to the topic of the victims. Amongst those published are the following: Harrison, Michael. *Clarence: Was He Jack the Ripper?* W. H. Allen, 1972; Knight, Stephen. *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*. George G. Harrap & Co Ltd, 1976; Morley, Christopher J. *Jack the Ripper: 150 Suspects*. Ashley Press, 2004; Cornwell, Patricia. *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper – Case Closed*. Penguin Putnam, 2002.

only remembered as unfortunate prostitutes who became murder victims. It is impossible to discuss the victims without including their killer at some point, unless their story is cut off before they meet their end, as Hallie Rubenhold does in her book, *The Five*, published in 2019.<sup>2</sup> This study details the lives of the five women right up until their final nights. She does not mention Jack the Ripper beyond the introduction, stating:

*My intention in writing this book is not to hunt and name the killer. I wish instead to retrace the footsteps of five women. . .*<sup>3</sup>

Although Jack the Ripper is mentioned considerably more in this thesis than in Rubenhold's book, it is still a study of the women who met with the murderer rather than one of the murderer himself.

Although I was personally aware of the case for some time, having seen the Hollywood film *From Hell* in 2001, and knew of the killer, the suspects and some of the theories, I knew little of the victims themselves, including the Canonical Five, or any of the other possible women touted as potential victims of the same murderer. I could not name them for certain or knew in what order they died, and I realised what a grave disservice this was to these women and their memories. This happens all too often in true crime media although many are trying to change this by turning the focus away from the killers and onto the victims in podcasts, books, and television. As such, following the narrative of how six murdered women were portrayed by the media felt like the best course to take in order to shed some light on who they were as women and to ascertain why they have been obscured over the years.

The first Ripper book published in 1929 was likely also the first true crime book ever written and, in that book, the author stated that there is "little need or perhaps cause to approach the women of the East End, much less the five canonical victims of Jack the Ripper, as victims", and herein lies the problem.<sup>4</sup> From the very beginning these women were treated with little respect or sympathy; they were always referred to as prostitutes or

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<sup>2</sup> Rubenhold, Hallie, *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killer by Jack the Ripper*. London: Transworld Publishers, 2019, 86.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Frost, Rebecca, *The Ripper's Victims in Print*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2018, Loc383.

“unfortunates” and this led many to overlook their personal circumstances. In fact, William Stewart in his 1939 book, *Jack the Ripper: A New Theory*, even went so far as to state outright that the victims were at fault for putting themselves in danger in the first place; he referred to these women as being “accessories to their own deaths”.<sup>5</sup>

There is an entire genre of true crime books and history dedicated to the study of Jack the Ripper called Ripperology, and it has grown in popularity since the 1970s when renowned Ripperologist Donald Rumbelow first published *The Complete Jack the Ripper* in 1975.<sup>6</sup> This study typifies the characteristics of this group of writers, many following publications taking a similar approach to their own retelling of the Jack the Ripper case. The majority of those who publish in the area have been men and, to this day, men still make up the vast proportion of experts in the field. Women do study and publish in the field, but make up a much smaller number, yet very few of all of these authors have dedicated a large part of their writings to the victims. Amongst those who have, two of the most recent being Rubenhold’s *The Five* and Rebecca Frost’s *The Ripper Victims in Print* in 2018. Both of these books are of central importance to this thesis; the former due to its comprehensive background and biographical look at five of the victims, and the latter due to its focus on the books written in the past century and the amount of space dedicated to the victims themselves by each significant publication from the 1920s onwards, often pointing out the fact that the majority were written by men.

Newspapers provide key source material for the study of the six Whitechapel Murder victims and their media representation because so much of what we know about the Whitechapel Murders comes from the media of the time. Unfortunately many of the original Metropolitan Police files have been lost over the decades and during the move from Old Scotland Yard to New Scotland Yard, along with files going missing from the British Archives. 1888 was a time when it seemed that every newspaper in Britain reported on the murders and many overseas did too, however, the focus of this study is the British newspapers, the majority of which were London-based, including the *Echo*, *Star*, *Times*, *East London Advertiser*, and the *Illustrated Police News*. All of these newspapers had much to say

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Loc673.

<sup>6</sup> Rumbelow, Donald. *The Complete Jack the Ripper*. London: Virgin Books, 2013. This third significant updated edition of the 1975 book featured two key changes from the original: Rumbelow removed his own key suspect from the write up due to new information having cast considerable doubt; he also argued that Elisabeth Stride was not a Ripper victim at all.

on the subject, publishing hundreds of thousands of words on the Whitechapel Murders during the three months in which they took place and then very few after the final murder in early November. The newspapers give the modern researcher an idea of what tantalised and entertained the Victorian reader, as the reporters wrote what sold copies; Fleet Street was booming. Another source that requires special attention is *Casebook*, the premier website for all things Jack the Ripper, the contributors having painstakingly copied every newspaper clipping they have been able to find for each victim, as well as many other original documents that are often inaccessible to international researchers. As such, both *Casebook* for its ease of reading and the original newspapers from the British Newspaper Archives website were used, particularly in Chapter Two, which features the media contemporary to the murders.

*Casebook* was also useful for brief background information on the six women discussed in this study, as well as on the three key police officials featured in Chapter Three. It was also a staging point to find the best Jack the Ripper books for researching. Many books on the subject feature much of the same information, often using each other as source material. Due to this repetition, I narrowed my sample to those authors who are most well-regarded by the wider Ripperology community, such as Donald Rumbelow, Philip Sugden, and Paul Begg. For contrasting views and a fuller picture of the victims, books by Hallie Rubenhold and Tom Wescott were included, the former being the original source of inspiration for this thesis topic and the question of how the victims have been portrayed by the media for more than a century. There were also surprisingly more books focused on the media aspect of the Jack the Ripper case than originally thought, and these were also of particular use for finding other obscure books and newspaper analysis, although taking a broader look at the case, rather than specifically focusing on the victim portrayal.

The thesis begins with setting the scene of the Whitechapel Murders in London and its East End in 1888, looking at both the area and the social history of the working classes; it then delves into potted biographies on each of the six women who fell victim to Jack the Ripper between August and November of that year. Chapter Two details the way in which the contemporary news media of 1888 treated the victims after they were murdered, questioning whether the reporting was fair and balanced. Chapter Three takes a similar media focus to Chapter Two, but follows the writings of three police officials who were involved in the Whitechapel Murders investigation: Sir Henry Smith, Sir Melville

Macnaghten, and Chief Inspector Walter Dew – the chapter also determining whether or not these men treated the victims with any respect after the passage of time, or if they were solely focus on who the suspect was and how the police were perceived by the media and the public. Finally, Chapter Four takes a more modern approach to the media surrounding Jack the Ripper and his victims and is split in to two parts; the first part is a literature review of some of the most important books by Ripperologists and academics who have delved into the topic, both male and female, as well as how the difference in gender has changed the way the topic is viewed by each writer; the second part of the chapter features the legacy of Jack the Ripper, and how and why the idea of Jack the Ripper is still so popular today.

## Chapter 1

### The Face of the Victims

*All of his victims were women of the unfortunate class. Some of them had known better days. There were no lower depths to which these hapless women could sink.*

- Detective Chief Inspector Walter Dew, *The Annotated I Caught Crippen*.<sup>7</sup>

For decades Whitechapel was regarded as one of the worst districts in London, so bad that books were written about the East End during the 1800s, with titles that suggested how terrible the area was: *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, *The People of the Abyss*, *Ragged London*, *In Darkest London*, and *The Nether World* by George Gissing (1857-1903), who provided the darkly poetic description:

*...the pest-stricken regions of East London, sweltering in sunshine which served only to reveal the intimacies of abomination; across miles of a city of the damned, such as though never conceived before this age of ours; above streets, swarming with nameless populace, cruelly exposed by the unwanted light of heaven.*<sup>8</sup>

Chief Inspector Walter Dew, who worked on the Jack the Ripper murders in 1888 and writing some fifty years after the crimes, had this to say about Whitechapel:

*Whitechapel in those days was full of slums in which vice of all kinds was rampant. Sordid narrow streets, filthy and practically unlighted. Woe betide any innocent wayfarer venturing alone down any of those dark and sinister passages. So bad was the reputation of Flower-and-Dean Street that it was always 'double-patrolled' by the police. . . You would look in vain for Dorset Street. It is still there, under another*

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<sup>7</sup> Dew, Walter. *The Annotated I Caught Crippen: Memoirs of Ex-Chief Inspector Walter Dew, C.I.D.* Edited by Nicholas Connell. London: Mango Books, 2018, Loc2195-2217.

<sup>8</sup> Ackroyd, Peter. *London: The Biography*, New York: Anchor Books, 2003, 678.

*name. The street came into such ill-repute after the Miller's Court murder that the authorities decided, apparently, that it no longer deserved to be called after such a delightful county.<sup>9</sup>*

The East End and Whitechapel were not desirable areas of London, and the women who make up the Whitechapel Murders file with the Metropolitan Police had little choice about their place of residence. According to London historian Peter Ackroyd, as the 1800s progressed all of the filth of London “crept eastwards”, and at some point in the 1880s it reached critical mass.<sup>10</sup> The East End became an “abyss” and more poor people arrived and were crammed into this area than any other.<sup>11</sup> Out of that cramped and over-populated lodging houses and rookeries sprang reports of “evil and immorality, of savagery and unnamed vice”.<sup>12</sup> Whitechapel was thought to be an area that provided a permanent threat to good Victorian social order due to its accident of location.<sup>13</sup> The back streets were cut off from the main roads by railway embankments and so the “East Londoners showed a tendency to become decivilised”.<sup>14</sup> A number of works conjure up a stark image of what the East End of London was like at the time. It was “a nursery of destitute poverty and thriftless, demoralised pauperism, in a community cast adrift from the salutary presence and leadership of men of wealth and culture, and . . . a political threat to the riches and civilisation of London and the Empire”.<sup>15</sup> It was the latter that drew the attention of Charles Booth who chose the area as the for his exploratory studies into the labouring poor, which led to the creation of his maps of poverty. Whitechapel was a tough place for the police to do their jobs, some would not even attempt to go into Dorset Street, the “worst street in London” if they were alone. It was difficult for the police to track down and catch the perpetrators of violent crime, and it was especially difficult to secure the crime scenes because of all the narrow and hidden passages.

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<sup>9</sup> Dew, Walter. *The Annotated I Caught Crippen: Memoirs of Ex-Chief Inspector Walter Dew, C.I.D.* Edited by Nicholas Connell. London: Mango Books, 2018, loc2267-2268.

<sup>10</sup> Ackroyd, 2003, 678.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Fishman, W. J. *East End 1888*, London: Hanbury, 2001, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

The Victorian era was already difficult for women, however in London's East End being born a woman meant they were essentially at the bottom of the pecking order, as the Whitechapel murder victims all were.<sup>16</sup> Three quarters of English women born in the nineteenth century were working-class and this usually meant they had a very short childhood, providing they even survived it. They would be sent out to work in an overcrowded, harsh environment, their innocence stripped away at an early age, because everyone had to earn money to make ends meet.<sup>17</sup> For the East Enders categorised by Charles Booth as on or below the poverty line, it could be an unrewarding struggle for bare existence, and this was especially true of women who were alone in the world.<sup>18</sup> There were very few ways these women could earn a living, but one that so many turned to was prostitution. In the 1860s there was an estimated population of 80,000 professional prostitutes in London, as well as countless amateurs.<sup>19</sup> The Whitechapel murder victims may not have prostituted themselves for a living, but almost certainly did it to make ends meet when work in other areas dried up. Desperation often led these poverty-stricken women to the streets, it was a stark choice between street prostitution or the shame of entering the workhouse, which was the last straw for so many.<sup>20</sup> This was the life led by Martha Tabram, and the five women who would become known as the Canonical Five victims of Jack the Ripper: Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elisabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly.

According to historian and Ripperologist Donald Rumbelow, the number of brothels in London was not easily calculated, however he does reference a *Lancet* article that suggests in 1857 one house in sixty was a brothel and one in sixteen women was a prostitute.<sup>21</sup> It would account for 6,000 brothels and about 80,000 prostitutes which tallies with the figures by Christopher Hibbert in *Social History of Victorian Britain*, but the lack of accurate census of the trade means we can only ever give estimates on the numbers.<sup>22</sup> The number may have been high due to the fact that not all of these women were full time

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<sup>16</sup> Fishman, 2001, 115.

<sup>17</sup> Perkin, Joan. *Victorian Women*, Cambridge: University Press, 1993, 169.

<sup>18</sup> Fishman, 2001, 115.

<sup>19</sup> Hibbert, Christopher. *Social History of Victorian Britain*. Great Britain: Angus & Robertson, 1975, 139.

<sup>20</sup> O'Neill, Gilda. *The Good Old Days: Poverty, Crime and Terror in Victorian London*. London: Penguin Books, 2007, 103.

<sup>21</sup> Rumbelow, Donald. *The Complete Jack the Ripper*. London: Penguin Books, 2013, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

prostitutes, many only working the streets only when necessity dictated they did so to keep a roof over their heads and to stay out of the workhouse. Brothels could potentially have been a safe haven for many of these women, but the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 led to a crackdown on brothels leading to the closure of many.<sup>23</sup> This forced women out onto the streets to continue plying their trade; the reality for many meant hanging around the pubs and common lodging houses, of which there were many.<sup>24</sup> Prostitution was often linked to drunkenness; the girls or women were often first seduced while drunk, alcohol broke down their resistance, and they began to make a bit of cash to further fuel their drinking habits or to pay for a bed at night; sadly the victims of the Whitechapel Murders were most, if not all, alcoholics.<sup>25</sup> In 1857, William Acton published his study *Prostitution*, in which he attributed women's descent into poverty partly to vanity, idleness and the love of drink, but further admitted that, "by far the larger proportion are driven to evil course by cruel, biting poverty".<sup>26</sup> It was rarely a choice for these women to prostitute themselves to make ends meet, but they did so because they had to survive, even to make fourpence for a lodging house bed at night; unfortunately the prostitutes of the East End had it worse than most. These women were often driven into prostitution by low wages from legitimate jobs, as well as the harsh conditions they could face in industries open to them, as such, it became a necessity.<sup>27</sup>

Whether these women became victims of murder because they were prostitutes or simply because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time is difficult to tell, given we do not know who their murderer was. However, Jack the Ripper lore would suggest that at least the canonical five were targeted because they were trying to make a living on those nights, and the same could also be said for Martha Tabram. They were not the only women who would have been out at the time, but they were unlucky. The sad fact is these women were victims long before their deaths; their lives were impoverished in every sense even if they did not start out that way. Marriage break-up was often a cause of poverty amongst

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<sup>23</sup> "Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885"

[https://www.swarb.co.uk/acts/1885Criminal\\_Law\\_AmendmentAct.shtml](https://www.swarb.co.uk/acts/1885Criminal_Law_AmendmentAct.shtml) – Section 13.

<sup>24</sup> O'Neill, 2007, 110.

<sup>25</sup> Zedner, Lucia. *Women, Crime and Custody in Victorian England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, 22.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>27</sup> Chesney, Kellow. *The Victorian Underworld*. London: Penguin Books, 1991, 369.

women, and that is evident in the lives of Martha, Polly, and Annie, whose lives took a severe downward turn when their marriages ended.<sup>28</sup>

They were separated from their families, alcohol being a key aspect of this estrangement in several of the cases, and they had few possessions to their names when they died.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps most importantly for these six victims, is that the most vulnerable women working in prostitution did not have a protector or a pimp, because that left them wide open to being brutalised with few people who cared about them or their whereabouts.<sup>30</sup> There would have been no one to keep an eye out for them on the nights of their murders.

The murders of these women are known by many, their names known by few, but their killer is the one who has left a frightening legacy as the foremost serial killer because no one knows who he was. Despite the lack of a killer's name or any justice for the victims, Jack the Ripper is who people remember and is the one still talked about more than his victims. There are many theories regarding his identity with countless books on the subject, which do often mention the victims but not in any deep and meaningful way beyond their name and the horrific way each of them died. The quest to discover the killer's identity is still a popular past time and career path for armchair detectives, true crime enthusiasts and historians, and it seems unlikely to ever stop. Discovering once and for all who Jack the Ripper was, is virtually non-existent now that it has been more than 130 years since the killings took place. A handful of historians, amateur and professional, have set out to change focus in recent years, to give the victims more of a voice than their killer has been given, to discuss them like the real people they were rather than near-nameless bodies left behind by an unknown murderer.

These are those women.

### **Martha Tabram 1849-1888**

The deaths of Emma Smith and Martha Tabram are collectively known as the Bank Holiday Murders, both having been killed on bank holidays in April and August respectively.

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<sup>28</sup> Thane, Pat. "Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England." *History Workshop* 6, no. Autumn (1978): 33.

<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, 2007, 159-160.

<sup>30</sup> Perkin, 1993, 221.

However, only Martha is usually linked to the Canonical Five because the manner of her death fit the modus operandi of Jack the Ripper, whereas Emma's did not.

Martha was the youngest of five children born to Charles Samuel White and Elisabeth Dowsett, who separated when she was young, her father passing away from illness unknown when she was just 16 years old.<sup>31</sup> In 1868, at 20, Martha married Henry Samuel Tabram on Christmas Day, but after two children, sons, they split up in 1875 due to Martha's heavy drinking, a sad commonality amongst the many victims of violent assaults of this time.<sup>32</sup> To begin with, although the separation was not amicable, Henry did continue to provide for Martha, so that she would not have to go out on her own and potentially take up a dangerous profession; he would pay a total of twelve shillings per week for three years.<sup>33</sup> Due to her incessant pestering of him for money and after finding out that she had taken up with another man, he reduced it to 2s 6d, and soon refused to support her at all.<sup>34</sup>

The man Martha spent the next twelve years with, on and off, was Henry Turner, and he too, soon ended up having trouble with Martha because of her drinking, saying at her inquest that, "since she has been living with me, her character for sobriety was not good. If I gave her money, she generally spent it on drink".<sup>35</sup> She was often out late at night and when she finally returned, she would claim that she had been taken to the police station due to "hysterical fits", however Turner was certain that these were brought on by drunkenness, having witnessed the fits himself. Come 1888, Turner was no longer in regular employment and could not support Martha or her drinking habit anymore, and approximately five weeks before her murder, the couple left their last lodging house, weeks behind on rent. By the time of Martha's murder, Turner was living in a working man's home on Commercial Street, while Martha tried to earn a living selling trinkets and prostituting herself, and like many caught in the clutches of alcoholism at the time, what money she did make was likely spent on drink rather than lodgings.<sup>36</sup>

Martha's last known address was 19 George Street, next door to both Emma Smith and Rose Mylett (a later victim of murder loosely linked to Jack the Ripper), although no

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<sup>31</sup> Begg, Paul and Bennett, John. *The Complete and Essential Jack the Ripper*. London: Penguin Books, 2013, 9.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Martha Tabram." <https://casebook.org/victims/tabram.html>

mention has ever been made that they knew each other. She was last seen by Turner on Leadenhall Street, near the Aldgate pump on August 4, just two days shy of the attack that would leave her dead.<sup>37</sup> As with other victims, her final hours are fairly well known, if vague, due to witness accounts; on August 6, Martha went out with her friend Mary Ann Connelly, also known as Pearly Poll, and they were seen several times throughout the Bank Holiday evening, often in the company soldiers.<sup>38</sup> They went their separate ways shortly before midnight when Martha went into George Yard with a Private, while Poll did likewise elsewhere with a Corporal. Between 11:45pm and 3:30am is when Martha was murdered, potentially by the soldier she had been with, although that was never corroborated, and Pearly Poll turned out to be a very unreliable witness. At 1:50am, Elizabeth Mahoney, who lived in the George Yard buildings, returned home and saw nothing unusual; at 2:00am, PC Thomas Barrett saw a young Grenadier Guardsman near the entrance to George Yard who claimed he was waiting for “a chum who went off with a girl”; at 3:30am, Alfred Crow, who lived in the George Yard Buildings, saw what he thought was a homeless person sleeping on the first floor landing, but as this was such a common occurrence he thought no more about it.<sup>39</sup> It was not until John Reeves left his lodgings in George Yard around 4:45am that the body of Martha Tabram was discovered on the same stairwell Alfred Crow saw his homeless person; this time, thanks to the morning light, it was clear that the body was lying in a pool of blood.

The manner in which Martha was murdered is what has led so many to suggest she was actually the first victim of the serial killer who would soon be coined Jack the Ripper; it was brutal and sexual in nature, based on the fact that her body was found with her legs spread, as well as the fact that most of the 39 stabs wounds were centred around her breasts and groin area. Knife wounds that target reproductive organs would soon become a signature of Jack the Ripper, hence the linking together of the five murders over the next three months, and why Martha is considered by many to be the real first victim.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 13

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 14

### **Mary Ann “Polly” Nichols 1845-1888**

Polly Nichols was born Mary Ann Walker in 1845 in London to Edward Walker, a blacksmith, and Caroline. Little is known about her mother, but her father was still alive and well at the time of her death in 1888, living in Camberwell.<sup>40</sup> Polly’s life until 1881, although working-class, seemed to be decent; she married William Nichols, an employee of Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Co., and they had five children born between 1866 and 1879, the eldest lived with his grandfather Edward in 1888, when his mother was killed. The other children continued to live with their father after their mother left the family. The marriage ended in 1881, with several conflicting reasons as to why. Polly’s father spread the rumour that William had been having an affair with a nurse who took care of his wife during her last confinement, while William found out that after she had left him, she took up work as a prostitute and he filed for desertion.

As with many destitute working-class people, Polly began to spend a lot of time in the Workhouse, a fate many tried to avoid due to the horrendous conditions in these places, some even going so far as sleeping on the streets to avoid it. The last five years of Polly’s life are well-documented due to her repeatedly becoming an inmate at various workhouses, most commonly Lambeth Workhouse; this living situation was broken up by occasionally living with her father or taking up with another man between 1883-1887 called Thomas Dew.<sup>41</sup> In May of 1888, Polly wrote to her father to tell him that she had found employment as a servant with a religious, teetotal couple, unfortunately by August she was back in a workhouse, and from there her last known address was at a lodging house in the notorious Flower and Dean Street.<sup>42</sup> As is common with the other victims under discussion, Polly’s whereabouts in her last hours are well-documented due to eye-witness accounts as reported in the inquest, where she was seen both on the streets and in her lodging house. Her final two to three hours have been immortalised forever in two well-known quotes. The first from when she was kicked out of her lodgings for not being able to produce her doss money; Polly replied, on her way out the door, “I’ll soon get my doss money. See what a jolly bonnet I’ve got now”, apparently indicating to a new black bonnet she was wearing.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 27

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 27

<sup>42</sup> East London Observer. “The East End Tragedies.” 8 September 1888.

<sup>43</sup> The Times. “Another Murder in Whitechapel.” 1 September 1888.

This quote has been taken in two ways; there is a group that thinks she meant she was going to use the bonnet as a ploy to gain male attention to make her doss money through prostitution, and others such as Hallie Rubenhold, who think she meant to sell the bonnet for the doss money; but as she was in possession of the bonnet upon her death, it is hard to determine exactly what she meant. The second quote, said to her friend Ellen Holland, who she met up with around 2:30am on August 31, regarding her living situation for that night, was, "I've had my doss money three times today and spent it", further telling her friend that she spent it on alcohol.<sup>44</sup> Her doss money was 4d per night, so she potentially had up to a shilling at her disposal throughout the day from trinket selling or prostitution.<sup>45</sup>

Little over an hour after her meeting with Ellen Holland, Polly's body was discovered in Buck's Row by a carman called Charles Cross, who was on his way to work in the early hours of the morning. He was joined by another man, Robert Paul, who believed that Polly was actually still clinging to life when they found her based on the temperature of her upper arms and his feeling what he believed to be a faint heartbeat. However, neither man wanted to be late for work and shockingly they left her where she was after covering her up with her skirts and alerting the first police officer they came across. In the meantime, Polly was discovered again, this time by PC John Neil who called for help, that included a doctor, Rees Ralph Llewellyn, who lived nearby and pronounced her death and said it had only been a matter of minutes.<sup>46</sup> As would be the case with the other murders under discussion, there were no apparent witnesses to the attack itself. Polly's body was identified by a Lambeth Workhouse inmate by the name of Mary Ann Monk, who presumably had known Polly quite well; it was later confirmed by her estranged husband, William.<sup>47</sup>

### **Annie Chapman 1841-1888**

Annie Chapman was the eldest of the canonical five Ripper victims and perhaps the most "well to do" prior to her fall from grace. She was born to George Smith, a Private in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of Lifeguards and Ruth Chapman, and had four younger siblings.<sup>48</sup> A friend,

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<sup>44</sup> Rubenhold, Hallie. *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper*. London: Transworld Publishers, 2019, 83.

<sup>45</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Mary Ann 'Polly' Nichols." <https://casebook.org/victims/polly.html>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Rubenhold, 2019. 85.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 89

Amelia Palmer, described her as a “sober, steady going woman who seldom took any drink”, however it became apparent after her marriage that Annie did, in fact, have a problem with alcohol.<sup>49</sup> She married at the age of 28 to a coachman by the name of John Chapman, with whom she had three children, however the eldest daughter Emily died of meningitis at the age of twelve, and the son was to be sent to live in a home as a cripple.<sup>50</sup> Compared to other victims, the addresses Annie lived in as a married woman were quite a step up, two different mews in London before her husband took a job as a domestic coachman in Windsor.

The marriage ended with mutual consent in 1884 or 1885 and while the reason is unknown, a police report states that it was due to Annie’s “drunken and immoral ways”, having been arrested several times in Windsor for drunken behaviour; although it seems her husband was also a heavy drinker, due to his dying of cirrhosis of the liver and dropsy Christmas Day of 1886, which also deprived Annie of his generous maintenance payments.<sup>51</sup> Until his death he was paying his estranged wife 10s per week by Post Office order and, according to Amelia Palmer, when Annie found out about his death, she was very upset when speaking of him and her children, and that “since the death of her husband she seemed to have given away all together”.<sup>52</sup>

During 1886 Annie was living in a lodging house at 35 Dorset Street, often referred to as the “worst street in London” according to George Duckworth who was researching the area on behalf of Charles Booth for his map of poverty in London.<sup>53</sup> It was thought to be a den of disrepute, full of thieves, prostitutes, and bullies, all living together in the lodging houses. Its notoriety as a horrendous place was so well known that author Fiona Rule wrote an entire book about that street.<sup>54</sup> The lodging house Annie lived in catered for up to 300 people at one time. Until her husband’s death, Annie made ends meet by selling crochet-work and flowers, so it is thought that she turned to prostitution once money from her husband dried up. She took up with a man by the name of Edward Stanley, a bricklayer’s mate known as “The Pensioner”, who claimed to be a member of the military and was

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<sup>49</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Annie Chapman.” <https://casebook.org/victims/chapman.html>

<sup>50</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 41

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Annie Chapman.” <https://casebook.org/victims/chapman.html>

<sup>53</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 139.

<sup>54</sup> Rule, Fiona. *The Worst Street in London*. Great Britain: Ian Allan Publishing, 2010, loc52.

drawing a pension, however he later admitted that he had lied about that.<sup>55</sup> Stanley contributed to Annie's upkeep though, paying for her lodging at 35 Dorset Street, although he did have stipulations in place, and told the deputy of the lodging house that if Annie ever turned up with another man, he was to deny her entry.

In the days leading up to her death, Annie was in a violent altercation with her friend and roommate Eliza Cooper, and though no specific details have been given about the fight, all versions of it seem to revolve around Edward Stanley. The fight resulted in Annie receiving a black eye and bruises on her chest, which her friend Amelia made note of on September 3 when they met up in Dorset Street.<sup>56</sup> Annie was seen again the following day by Amelia and complained of feeling ill and said she may go to the casual ward for a couple of days to get better; she had previously fallen ill in 1887 with what was most likely tuberculosis, which had been longstanding by her death to the point that it was affecting her brain tissue.<sup>57</sup> Had Annie not been murdered, it seems likely that the Tuberculosis would have killed her. There were no sightings of her on September 5 and 6, so it is possible she went into a casual ward; however there is no record of her in any of them to support this, but by the 7<sup>th</sup> she had acquired a bottle of pills.<sup>58</sup>

On the evening of September 7, Annie was seen by several different people, including Amelia around 5pm when she was sober, and while she claimed to feel too ill to do anything, she decided she had to go out and ply her trade, or else she would have nowhere to sleep for the night.<sup>59</sup> Presumably at this stage Stanley was not paying her rent anymore. At 12:10am Annie was back in the lodging house kitchen, and according to Frederick Stevens, another lodger, she was worse for the drink; similarly, William Stevens, a lodger and printer, saw her in the kitchen at roughly the same time, and when she left, he assumed she had gone to bed, however she had gone out.<sup>60</sup> At 1:35am she returned to the lodging house again, eating a baked potato, but she only entered to let the lodging house deputy, Donovan, know that she did not have enough money for her bed, but she did have enough for food and drink; he chastised her about it, but she was quite certain she would be

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<sup>55</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 42.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 141.

<sup>58</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 42.

<sup>59</sup> The Times. "The Whitechapel Murders." 11 September 1888.

<sup>60</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 44.

back shortly with her lodging money.<sup>61</sup> The last sighting of Annie alive was at 5:30am, when a woman called Elizabeth Long spotted her with a man, and a few moments after this, Albert Cadosch, living at 27 Hanbury Street, was in the backyard using the outhouse when he claims he heard a woman saying “No!” followed by a thud against a fence.<sup>62</sup> It was just before 6:00am that Annie’s body was discovered by John Davis, a carman, who alerted the officers at Commercial Street Police Station. This second murder already showed a certain escalation in its sexual nature and butchery; her legs being found drawn and parted, as well as the deep, jagged wound across her throat, the blood spatter was several inches up the fence behind where she lay. However, the most disturbing part of the crime scene, was that her abdomen had been entirely cut open and her intestines had been carefully lifted out of her body and draped over her shoulders, whilst her uterus had been removed and no trace of it was found in the vicinity.<sup>63</sup> This sort of mutilation is what led to the suspicion that the person responsible was an expert in some way, a medical man or a butcher, someone who could walk around with the implements required and not receive a second glance.

### **Elisabeth Stride** 1843-1888 (The Double Event)

Born Elisabeth Gustafsdotter in Torslanda, Sweden, Elisabeth Stride was the only foreign victim of the Whitechapel Murders, however she had been in Britain for around twenty years by the time of her death.<sup>64</sup> She grew up on a farm before moving into Gothenburg and, of all the victims, remains the only one who was an established prostitute, beginning in her days in Sweden, where she was registered by the police in 1865 after giving birth to a stillborn daughter.<sup>65</sup> In October and November of that same year she was treated at a special hospital for venereal disease, presumed to be syphilis, and because of this, she had to report to the police several times to determine if she was healthy enough to continue working in her profession.<sup>66</sup> By November 14 she was deemed healthy and no longer had to report to the police. Early the following year she moved to a Swedish parish in London and registered as an unmarried woman in July 1866.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 47

<sup>63</sup> *Lancet*, 29 September 1888.

<sup>64</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 62.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 174

<sup>67</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 62-63.

In 1869 she married John Stride at St Giles in the Fields and while living at East India Dock in Poplar, they opened a coffee shop, moving the shop in 1870 to another location in Poplar until the business was taken over by John Dale in 1875.<sup>68</sup> Unlike the other victims, Elisabeth sought attention, and specifically, she tried to make a name for herself as a victim of the *Princess Alice* steam ship incident in the Thames 1878. She claimed that she lost her husband and children in the disaster and that her palate was damaged by being kicked in the mouth by a fellow passenger when getting to safety.<sup>69</sup> Although more than 600 people died in this disaster, no corroboration of evidence was ever discovered for Elisabeth's account and, in fact, her husband's death is recorded as being in 1884. Her later post-mortem states that there was no damage to her hard or soft palate, so it is presumed she made this story up to gain sympathy and aid from the Swedish Church.<sup>70</sup>

Like so many others, Elisabeth ended up at a lodging house in the same area, on Flower and Dean Street, and while her husband was still alive at this stage in 1882, it seems reasonable to assume that the marriage had fallen apart. Little more is known about Elisabeth until 1885 when she is living with a man called Michael Kidney, a waterside labourer; according to Kidney she was frequently absent when drinking.<sup>71</sup> Over the next few years, Elisabeth often received alms from the Swedish Church and spent some time in Poplar Workhouse and was occasionally arrested for drunk and disorderly behaviour, but throughout this time she remained with Kidney. She appeared in front of the magistrate eight times in the two years preceding her death on similar charges. One of the last people to see her alive in her final days was Dr Thomas Barnardo, who had taken to street preaching and went on to open a home for destitute boys. He had visited one of the lodging houses acquainted with Elisabeth and would then be able to identify the body found a few days later as Elisabeth Stride, one of the women he saw in the lodging house kitchen.<sup>72</sup>

Elisabeth's final night, September 29, began like the others, heading out in the early evening to ply her trade. She was first seen around 6:30pm at the Queen's Head Public House by Elizabeth Tanner, with whom she drank with before walking back to the lodging

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<sup>68</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 191

<sup>69</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 63

<sup>70</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Elizabeth Stride." <https://casebook.org/victims/stride.html>

<sup>71</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 64.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

house.<sup>73</sup> She was seen leaving the lodging house again between 7:00pm and 8:00pm, one of the witnesses, Catherine Lane, was given a large piece of green velvet by Elisabeth and asked to hold onto it until she returned. The lodging house watchman, Thomas Bates, specified that Elisabeth showed him she had 6d on her person when she left, possibly to prove that she had the money to come back for her bed that night.<sup>74</sup> She was seen several more times that evening in the company of a man, one of the witnesses being Police Constable William Smith, at 12:35am, near the International Working Men's Educational Club. The final sighting that night was by Israel Schwartz of 22 Helen Street, who claimed to have seen a woman near a gateway on Commercial Road, being roughly manhandled and thrown to the ground; he said that he heard her scream three times before he fled the scene and later identified the body as that same woman.<sup>75</sup> Ideally for the police, they now had two witnesses to a man with a victim prior to her death. However both of those witnesses gave different descriptions of the man, but if Schwartz is to be believed, and there is no reason he should not be, then his description is probably that of the murderer, and not that of PC Smith's.

Unlike the previous murders, Elisabeth Stride was not butchered, and so the theory arose that the Ripper was interrupted and had to flee before he could finish his grisly work. It was believed that the arrival of Louis Diemschutz with his pony and wagon scared the murderer, because the pony shied away from where it was supposed to go, causing a fuss. He entered the yard just after calming his pony and believed that the Ripper was still there, judging by the warm temperature of the body he found; this took place at 1:00am.<sup>76</sup> Elisabeth Stride would become known as the first victim of the Double Event.

### **Catherine Eddowes 1842-1888 (The Double Event)**

Catherine was born in Wolverhampton to George Eddowes, a tin plate worker, and Catherine, and had four sisters.<sup>77</sup> She was educated at St John's Charity School; most of her siblings entered Bermondsey Workhouse after their mother died, while she went into the

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<sup>73</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 209.

<sup>74</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Elizabeth Stride." <https://casebook.org/victims/stride.html>

<sup>75</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 215

<sup>76</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Elizabeth Stride." <https://casebook.org/victims/stride.html>

<sup>77</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 220.

care of their aunt and was then in attendance at Dowgate Charity School.<sup>78</sup> It is because of this education that friends spoke of her as being an “intelligent, scholarly woman” after her death. At the age of 21 she left her aunt’s home with a man called Thomas Conway, a pensioner from the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish, and they moved to Birmingham, where they made a living selling cheap books of lives written by Conway.<sup>79</sup> They travelled all over and in the course of this, returned to Wolverhampton to have a child; they had three children between 1865 and 1873, but by 1881, the relationship had broken down and Catherine left taking their daughter, and Conway took their surviving son.<sup>80</sup>

In 1881, Catherine moved into Cooney’s Lodging House at 55 Flower and Dean Street, one of the notorious East London addresses, where she met John Kelly, a man who was regularly employed by a fruit salesman. According to the deputy at Cooney’s, Catherine was “not often in drink and was a very jolly woman, often singing”, and she was usually back at the lodging house for the night between 9pm and 10pm; nor was she apparently in the habit of walking the streets, and he had never seen her with any man other than Kelly.<sup>81</sup> Kelly himself spoke of Catherine fondly, agreeing that she was not in the habit of drinking, but if she did then it was in excess, while her sister, Eliza Gold, said that she was a sober woman. Every year, Catherine and Kelly went hop picking during the season, including in 1888, however it did not go well this final time due to there not being enough work available for all who turned up.<sup>82</sup> When they arrived back in London on September 28, they had no money but Kelly was able to earn 6d, which he wanted to share with Catherine; she took 2d and told him to take the 4d and get a bed at Cooney’s for the night, while she took a bed at the casual ward in Shoe Lane.<sup>83</sup> According to the superintendent of the casual ward, Catherine was well known there, but she had not been there for some time when she returned that night. He claimed that when she arrived back from hop picking, she said, “I have come back to earn the reward offered for the apprehension of the Whitechapel murderer. I think I know him”. This was a very premonitory speech if she truly did say these words.

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<sup>78</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 81.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Daily Telegraph. “London Tragedies. Arrests and Searches. The Aldgate Crime.” 5 October 1888.

<sup>82</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 82.

<sup>83</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Catherine Eddowes.” <https://casebook.org/victims/eddwes.html>

On the morning of September 29, Catherine returned to Cooney's Lodging House to see Kelly after being kicked out of the casual ward for unspecified trouble. The couple decided to pawn Kelly's boots for food money, and they were seen eating their breakfast in the lodging house kitchen late that morning. They were without money again by the afternoon and Catherine decided to visit her married daughter in Bermondsey to beg for some money. Kelly stated in the inquest that he did not know if she ever made it to her daughter's, stating "I only wish she had, for we had lived together for some time and never had a quarrel".<sup>84</sup> Things got worse for Catherine that evening when she was taken into custody for public drunkenness, so it can be assumed she managed to get hold of some money; she was taken to Bishopsgate Police Station at 8:45pm where, when asked for her name, she replied "Nothing". She remained in the cell for several hours, being heard singing at 12:15am, before asking when she was to be released; the PC on duty told her, "When you are capable of taking care of yourself", to which she claimed she already was. At 12:55am, Catherine was released into the night on her own and was seen heading in the direction of Aldgate High Street where she had been found drunk hours earlier.<sup>85</sup> She was last seen by Joseph Lawende just outside Mitre Square with a man, and he would later identify the body found as being the same woman he saw. At 1:45am, Catherine's body was discovered in Mitre Square, less than an hour after Elisabeth Stride was last seen alive.<sup>86</sup>

This murder showed even more escalation of violence than that of Annie Chapman, including the intestines having been pulled out and draped over her shoulder; the body was confirmed to still be warm, so they were certain the murder had only taken place only in the previous half hour or so and potentially by the man seen by Lawende. It has oft been thought that because the Ripper was interrupted with Elisabeth Stride that he went above and beyond viciousness when he killed Catherine Eddowes.

### **Mary Jane Kelly c.1863-1888**

Not much is known about the final canonical victim of Jack the Ripper, and what is known was told by her partner Joseph Barnett, who only knew it from Mary Jane herself. Much of her life story has been considered embellished as there is not much corroborating

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Begg, et al., 2013 84.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

evidence to suggest she was telling the truth. It was best said by Hallie Rubenhold in *The Five*, that “Mary Jane had been whatever she wished to be, and in the wake of her death, she became whatever Joseph Barnett wished to commemorate”.<sup>87</sup> She was born in Ireland and moved to Wales with her family when she was a child; it is claimed that she spoke fluent Welsh and a friend, Maria Harvey, said that she was, “much superior to that of most persons in her position in her life”.<sup>88</sup> Many said she was a quiet sober woman, but when she drank, she could be very noisy; she was “not a notorious character” and she was a “good, quiet, pleasant girl” who was well-liked.<sup>89</sup> Her father, John Kelly, worked in an iron works in Caernarvonshire or Carmarthenshire and Mary Jane claimed to have had six or seven brothers and one sister. Her general appearance and way of carrying herself led those who knew her to believe that she had come from a fairly well-off family, “well to do people”, and she was an “excellent scholar and an artist”.<sup>90</sup> She appeared for all intents and purposes not the same sort of victim as the previous victims of the Whitechapel Murders.

Mary Jane arrived in London in 1884 when she was around 21 years old, and according to Barnett, she took up work in a high-class brothel in the West End; she was often accompanying the same man in a carriage and to Paris, which she did not enjoy.<sup>91</sup> For up to two years, she lived on the Ratcliffe Highway, another area well-known for a violent slaying of a family in the early 1800s, and come 1886, she was living in Cooley’s Lodging House in Thrawl Street, where she met Joseph Barnett, and they became known as a friendly and pleasant couple who caused trouble only when drunk.<sup>92</sup> It is possible she is the same Mary Jane Kelly who was fined 2/6 by Thames Magistrate Court on September 19, 1888, for being drunk and disorderly.<sup>93</sup> The couple moved around a lot, often because they could not pay their rent and so had to leave or were kicked out of previous lodgings, eventually settling in Mary Jane’s final residence of 13 Miller’s Court, a single, self-contained room. In August or September of 1888, Barnett lost his job which led to Mary Jane returning to the streets to help make ends meet, and it is during this time that Barnett decided to leave her. He claimed, during the inquest, that he left because she was allowing other

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<sup>87</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 335.

<sup>88</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Mary Jane Kelly.” [https://casebook.org/victims/mary\\_jane\\_kelly.html](https://casebook.org/victims/mary_jane_kelly.html)

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 98.

<sup>92</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Mary Jane Kelly.” [https://casebook.org/victims/mary\\_jane\\_kelly.html](https://casebook.org/victims/mary_jane_kelly.html)

<sup>93</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 317.

prostitutes to stay in the room; he said that she only let them stay because “she was good hearted and did not like to refuse them shelter on cold bitter nights”.<sup>94</sup> However, he did still visit Mary Jane nearly every day after they split up and on the night of November 9 he saw her in the company of another woman, possibly Lizzie Albrook, who also lived at Miller’s Court.

One of the fullest final conversations had with one of these victims took place between Mary Jane and Albrook, who told the inquest that Mary Jane said to her, “Whatever you do, don’t you do wrong and turn out as I did”. Further stating that Mary Jane had often told her she was sick of the way she lived her life and was hoping to eventually gain enough money to go back to Ireland; she added that she did not “believe that she would have gone out as she did if she had not been obliged to do so to keep herself from starvation”.<sup>95</sup>

Unlike the other victims, there were no confirmed sightings of Mary Jane that final night between 8:00pm and 11:45pm, only an unconfirmed story of her drinking at the Ten Bells Public House and that she was very drunk at the Britannia around 11:00pm and in the company of a young man. When she returned home at 11:45pm, Mary Ann Cox spotted her with a man carrying a pail of beer; she later heard Mary Jane singing in her room, a song called “A Violet from Mother’s Grave”.<sup>96</sup> The last confirmed sighting of Mary Jane that night was at 2:00am by George Hutchinson, who she asked for some money that he could not afford to give; he saw her walk towards Dorset Street with a man carrying a parcel before they headed to Miller’s Court. Around 4:00am, two different tenants at Miller’s Court claim to have woken up to the sound of someone crying “Oh, murder!”, but it was apparently such a common cry in the district that neither thought much of it.<sup>97</sup> It was not until 10:45am, when Thomas Bowyer was sent by his boss, John McCarthy, to retrieve rent money from Mary Jane, that the body was discovered in the room. There was no answer at the door, so he pushed aside the curtain through a broken window and spotted the gory scene inside, before fleeing to get McCarthy, who after seeing the mutilation that had taken

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<sup>94</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 100.

<sup>95</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Mary Jane Kelly.” [https://casebook.org/victims/mary\\_jane\\_kelly.html](https://casebook.org/victims/mary_jane_kelly.html)

<sup>96</sup> Rubenhold, 2019, 333.

<sup>97</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 101.

place, ran for the Commercial Street Police Station where he spoke to Inspector Walter Beck.

This was by and far the most horrific of the crime scenes attributed to the murderer known as Jack the Ripper; Mary Jane was utterly destroyed by the killer to the point that she was unrecognisable. However, her murder also led to a number of unique events due to the nature of the indoors crime scene, not least the earliest crime scene photographs ever taken.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 104.

## Chapter 2

### Media Representation of the Victims - 1888

*The enduring fascination of this case has attracted retired and service police officers, writers and film-makers for over a century. There will never be a conclusive explanation, but the case of Jack the Ripper grips the popular imagination to this day, and it makes armchair detectives of us all. Meanwhile, reality and art have combined to create a nightmare vision of Victorian London, a city haunted by imaginary sleuths and actual murderers, a fantasy world in which the fictional Sherlock Holmes pursues the real Jack the Ripper through foggy streets and narrow alleyways forever.*

- Catharine Arnold, *Underworld London*<sup>99</sup>

In the 134 years since the Whitechapel Murders began, they have featured in some way or another in the media, be it contemporary newspaper articles, pamphlets, or ballads, to modern films and podcasts. As the style of media has changed, the interest in the killings has not, with more books written about them in the past decade than were written in the first fifty years after the murder. Countless articles were written about the murders in the late 1800s, and has now extended into the modern era in novels, podcasts, television shows, and movies, as well as websites. Murder media was a hugely popular sensation in the Victorian era, and it exercised a powerful fascination on the Victorian imagination. It was the beginning of the true crime genre that is still so popular today. What made the Jack the Ripper crimes so interesting, is that the mutilation of corpses was a previously unknown phenomenon, as such, the very fact of what happened to these women after their deaths baffled the Victorian mind, primarily because these crimes were seemingly without any motive.<sup>100</sup> The publishing industry capitalised on this at every level, from court reports in reputable outlets like *The Times*, to the lurid illustrations in the *Illustrated Police News*. Once these sources had been exhausted, those hungry for more of the horrors could turn to “sensation novels”, serialised mystery stories that would leave the readers desperate for

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<sup>99</sup> Arnold, Catherine. *Underworld London*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2012, 215.

<sup>100</sup> Frost, Rebecca. *The Ripper's Victims in Print*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2018, Loc186.

more with each episode.<sup>101</sup> Little has changed since 1888 and crime, especially murder, is still big business in the media, particularly with the advent of podcasts and the rise in true crime fanatics, which has led to a growing demand for true crime related books, documentaries, and websites.

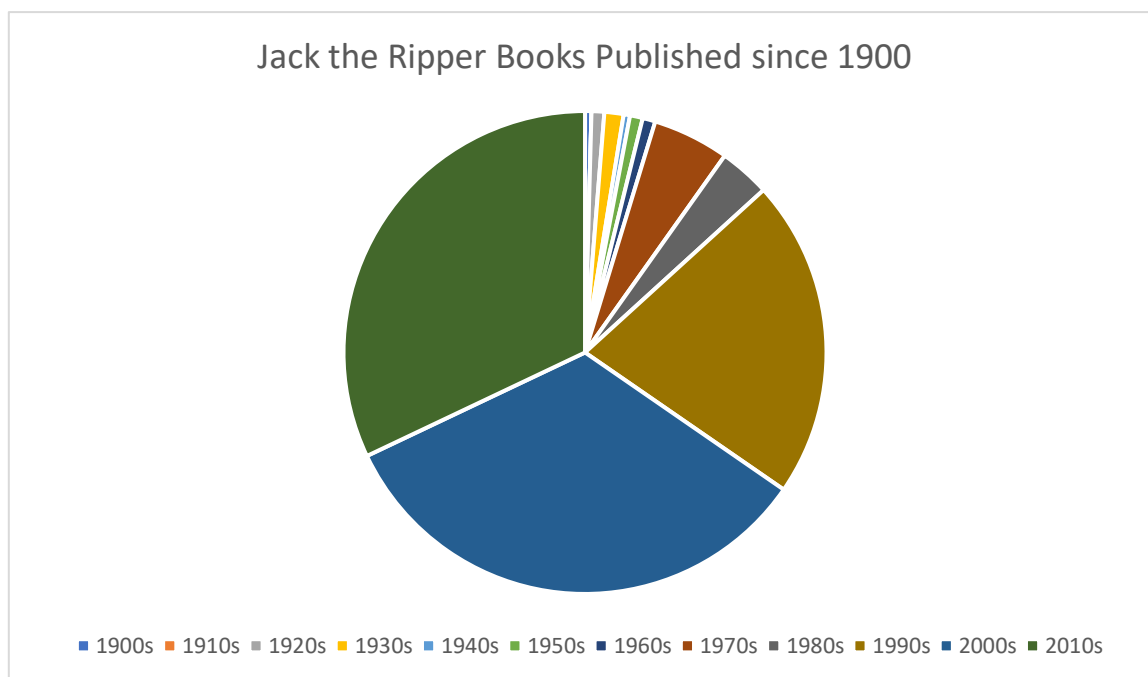


Figure 1. Chart shows growth in books published about Jack the Ripper since 1900, with little published in first half of the twentieth century and then a huge leap after the centenary in 1988, with more than 100 since 2000. Data from WorldCat.org.

As serial killings became more prolific, particularly in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, the media dived in to covering all the details for the consumption of the masses, no matter how horrific. According to L. Perry Curtis in his 2001 book, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, while feminist critics attributed the Victorian media's fondness for sensationalising murder to the "voyeuristic impulses" of the male journalists and their male audience, there was little doubt that these same murder cases and trials gained a lot of female attention as well.<sup>102</sup> Women were often seen in visitors' galleries and courtrooms, as well as making up a third of all spectators at executions up to 1868.<sup>103</sup> This has not changed, as a lot of today's true crime is consumed by women. According to research by the

<sup>101</sup> Arnold, 2012, 198.

<sup>102</sup> Curtis, L. Perry. *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*. New York: Yale University Press, 2001, 2.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

University of Illinois in 2010, 70% of all Amazon reviews of true crime non-fiction books were written by women, and 82% of all reviews on books about war were written by men.<sup>104</sup> It is possible that this number has risen since the popularity of true crime podcasts skyrocketed, many of which are hosted by women. As a result of this, particularly for the Victorians, the way murder and its aftermath was and has been represented by the media reveals a lot about not just the tastes of men who were the main subscribers to newspapers in 1888, but about the populace as a whole.<sup>105</sup> It was as true then as it is today that the way people view events is due to the media depiction of them, that our perception of the events and the victims are coloured by how they are represented to us by journalists. The murders in Whitechapel dominated the press and this led to an increase in pressure on the police to make an arrest. This also led to an image of the killer that captured the popular consciousness, that of a “genteel man” dressed all in black and carrying a doctor’s bag.<sup>106</sup> What it did not do, is leave much of an impression on the audience about the women who suffered at the hands of this killer.

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<sup>104</sup> Yates, Diana. “Women, More than Men, Choose True Crime Over Other Violent Nonfiction.” <https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367/205718>

<sup>105</sup> Curtis, 2001, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Arnold, 2012, 212.

## Contemporary Media – 1888

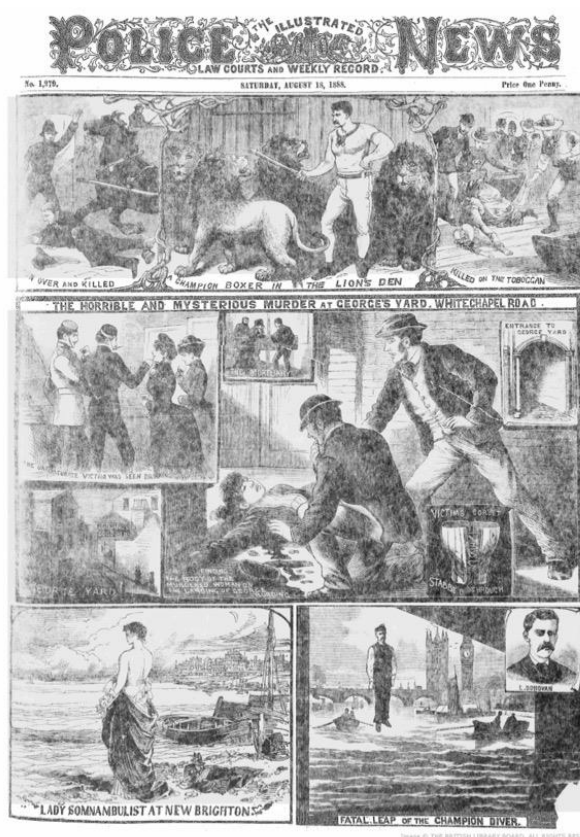


Figure 2. Illustrated Police News, featuring the murder of Martha Tabram. 18 August 1888.

Murder was fascinating to the Victorian imagination and the publishing industry capitalised on this like never before, with court room reports and lurid illustrations. However, it was the Whitechapel Murders that elevated the true crime phenomenon to a whole new level, due in part because the crimes possessed many of the same elements that made the sensation novels and serials so popular. The distinct locations, the “wretched” female victims, and the perception of the murderer who appeared as a “sinister foreign gentleman”.<sup>107</sup> The Ripper murders took place at an opportune time for Fleet Street due to the growing competition for readers, with many publications vying for attention; that autumn saw newspapers like the *Star* and *People* sell more copies than ever before, and the latter even achieved a profit for the first time thanks to the graphic accounts reported inside.<sup>108</sup> For three months the case dominated headlines and the popular image of Jack the

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>108</sup> Curtis, 2001, 115.

Ripper as a man dressed in black and carrying a doctor's bag began almost immediately, and has stuck in minds ever since. In October 1888, the *Pall Mall Gazette* suggested that the murderer was an army doctor driven mad by sunstroke and heavily influenced by *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, with no proof for their assertions. They also gave him various other identities: a mad occultist, anarchists of varying nationalities and beliefs, a clergyman, a rogue policeman, and even a "scientific humanitarian" who was killing prostitutes under the misguided belief it would improve the world.<sup>109</sup> Yet little was ever mentioned about his victims beyond their ages, their alcoholism, their perceived occupations, and the violent ways in which they died. The press and the population did not seem interested in who the women were, just who their killer was and whether or not the police had caught him. There was and still is widespread speculation as to how many women really were victims of the Ripper, some "extreme" Ripperologists suggest as many as thirty women were murdered, while others say there were only three between December 1887 and April 1891.<sup>110</sup> The general consensus now is that there were, officially, five directly connected to this killing spree, yet even their names are not that well known and the media today, as it did then, still rarely focuses on them.<sup>111</sup> Emma Smith, Ada Wilson, Rose Mylett, Alice Mackenzie, and Frances Coles are just some of those women, but Martha Tabram is the only one usually elevated to the same level of infamy as the five canonical victims of Jack the Ripper.

At the beginning of August 1888 when Martha Tabram was murdered, her death aroused very little interest. This was a common fate for many women like her because they were frequently alcoholic and on the outer edges of poverty, with little to no one around to care about them.<sup>112</sup> Particularly vicious attacks on these women might rate a passing mention in newspapers – Emma Smith, who was murdered in April of that same year, having been robbed and raped with a blunt instrument, most likely by a High Rip gang who were known to extort prostitutes, received a sentence or two in newspapers due to the nature of her attack, but was still forgotten about very quickly.<sup>113</sup> Martha's murder was described as a "supposed murder in Whitechapel" by *The Daily News*, which given the

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<sup>109</sup> Flanders, Judith. *The Invention of Murder*. London: HarperPress, 2011, 424.

<sup>110</sup> O'Neill, Gilda. *The Good Old Days: Poverty, Crime and Terror in Victorian London*. London: Penguin Books, 2007, 157.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Flanders, 2011, 425.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

nearly forty stab wounds she received seems rather an understatement.<sup>114</sup> Also in this report was a brief description of the witnesses and their version of events, as well as information from the attending doctor, Timothy Robert Kelleene who was “called to the deceased, and found her dead”.<sup>115</sup> There was much confusion as to Martha’s identity because several people came forward with different names for her, the most common being Martha Turner, which was the surname of the man she had been living with just prior to her death; her married name was Tabram, and her estranged husband formally identified her.<sup>116</sup> Little concern was often shown by the newspapers for the victims, Martha was referred to as a “poor unfortunate”, as women of her kind commonly were, however the *East London Advertiser*, took a rather dramatic approach to the end of their article after the inquest into her death:

*No conclusion can be come to at present as to the ultimate success of the detective force in elucidating the truth about this terrible deed, but it is sincerely to be hoped that justice will be meted out to the inhuman villain who could so foully maltreat a fellow creature - let alone a woman - and we trust that this Whitechapel murder will not be placed upon the records of the police as one of those undiscovered crimes of which there have been far too many within the last decade.*<sup>117</sup>

It seems this journalist was affected by the murder, possibly because the newspaper itself comes from the East End of London, therefore it perhaps felt more like the murder took place near the writer’s doorstep in comparison to other newspapers from the north or west of London, who were viewing the crimes as outsiders. Whitechapel was not a place that people entered into willingly, and more than one report surrounding the Ripper case pointed out that the cry of “Murder!” was so frequent in the area, that it usually went entirely ignored.<sup>118</sup> Cries for help were mentioned often in the reports of the murders, yet they were nearly always ignored by those who heard them, not just because they were so common, but because many bystanders would not have wanted to get involved. This lack of

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<sup>114</sup> The Daily News. “The Supposed Murder in Whitechapel.” 10 August 1888.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Bradford Observer. “The Whitechapel Murder.” 24 August 1888.

<sup>117</sup> East London Advertiser. “The Mysterious Murder in Whitechapel. Is there a clue?” 18 August 1888.

<sup>118</sup> Frost, 2018, Loc142.

reaction today is more commonly referred to as the Bystander Effect. One of the most notable cases of this effect taking place was in New York City in 1964 when a young woman named Kitty Genovese was brutally murdered with no less than thirty-eight witnesses reported as hearing or seeing it take place and doing nothing about it, despite her screams for help (although this is widely regarded as being inaccurate now, the effect remains).<sup>119</sup>

One thing that caused such widespread interest in the Whitechapel Murders was the fact that the mutilation of corpses was virtually unheard of to the Victorians until 1888.<sup>120</sup> But death was always a big seller for the newspapers, because the coroner inquests were open to the public and reporters were always in attendance, it was an era of “new journalism” and they recorded everything they could.<sup>121</sup> However, without audio recording, the accuracy of these reports has always been in question, but without all the official police records for this case, newspapers are the best sources of information for what happened during this “Autumn of Terror”. A prime example of the press reports being the remaining information is for the murder of Emma Smith. Her police record went missing from the National Archives in Britain in the 1980s, so all that we know comes from short newspaper reports about the murder and the coroner’s inquest, until an author like Tom Wescott was able to dig out just a little bit more about her life for his book, *The Bank Holiday Murders*. Due to the timing of her death, it was believed that Martha had simply been killed by a client because she had been seen by witnesses, including her friend “Pearly Poll”, with a solidier earlier that evening, and there was little to suggest an unknown perpetrator being involved.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> “Column: The Urban Legend of Kitty Genovese and the 38 Witnesses Who Ignored Her Blood-Curdling Screams.” <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-09-10/urban-legend-kitty-genovese-38-people>

<sup>120</sup> Frost, 2018, Loc186

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., Loc181

<sup>122</sup> Flanders, 2011, 425.



Figure 3. Illustrated Police News. Death of Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols. 8 September 1888.

Although the death of Martha Tabram received little interest, when Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols was killed on August 31, it ignited a newfound fascination in the press, and it seemed they considered this story worth following after all. They did not know that it was going to be an ongoing story, but two women killed in such a similar way in the space of a month was certainly worth reporting on.<sup>123</sup> The first reports of Polly Nichols' murder, though she remained unidentified according to the *East London Advertiser*, were already excitedly reporting that this was a sensational crime and worth taking note of:

*Scarcely has the horror and sensation caused by the discovery of the murdered woman in Whitechapel some short time ago had time to abate when another discovery is made which, for the brutality exercised on the victim, is even more*

<sup>123</sup> Flanders, 2011, 425.

*shocking and will no doubt create as great a sensation in the vicinity as its predecessor.*<sup>124</sup>

More sensationally, and likely to have seduced a lot of the readership, is that the newspapers reported the gory details of the murders immediately. There was no attempt to censor the horrific nature of what happened, as there often is in today's crime reporting; some details are never released to the public via the media nowadays, particularly an unsolved crime, because the police keep these details close at hand as the killer is the only other person who would know exactly what was done to a victim. The newspapers did not always carry the same reports on the crimes; as previously stated the *East London Advertiser* on September 1 said that Polly had not yet been identified, however the *Echo* publishing on the same, wrote in their title about the murder, "The Body Identified", and went on to name the victim via witness reports as "Polly" during their report, and later as Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols.<sup>125</sup> In fact, the *Echo* report is much more comprehensive than many of the others on this murder. It discusses the post mortem undertaken by Dr. Ralph Llewellyn, the possibility that she was murdered by a High Rip gang, her time working briefly as a domestic servant before stealing from her employers, and the fact that she was identified by her father, Edward Walker.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, the *Evening News* had a comprehensive report on September 1, that included an in-depth look into "homicidal maniacs" that reads like rudimentary behavioural analysis, that which the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would come to pioneer a century later and would themselves use to create character profile for Jack the Ripper.<sup>127</sup>

Interestingly, despite the information obtained by the *Echo* and the *Evening News*, the *Eastern Argus & Borough of Hackney Times* publishing on the same day, gave barely a paragraph over to the murder, but made sure to refer to Polly as a "poor creature" and commented that her appearance was that of an "unfortunate".<sup>128</sup> Despite this, there was

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<sup>124</sup> East London Advertiser. "Another Whitechapel Mystery: Horrible Murder in Buck's Row, Whitechapel." 1 September 1888.

<sup>125</sup> Echo. "The Whitechapel Murder. The Body Identified. But the Crime Still a Mystery. Police, However, Obtain a Clue." 1 September 1888.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Evening News. "Fifth Edition. The Whitechapel Mystery. Horrible Murder in Buck's Row, Whitechapel. Identification of the Body. The Doctor's Statement." 1 September 1888.

<sup>128</sup> Eastern Argus & Borough of Hackney Times. "Brutal Murder of a Woman in Bethnal Green." 1 September 1888.

still relatively little interest in the victim herself outside of what happened to her and who might have done it, nor did this change in the coming weeks as her inquest continued and more murders took place. One newspaper that did give some backstory to Polly's case was the *Penny Illustrated Paper* which, on September 18 dedicated a portion of their article on the topic to Polly's father, Edward, in "A Father's Sad Story", reproducing a letter he had received from Polly while she was working in Wandsworth as a domestic servant:

*I just write to say you will be glad to know that I am settled in my new place, and going on all right up to now. My people went out yesterday, and have not returned, so I am left in charge. It is a grand place, with trees and gardens back and front. All has been newly done up. They are teetotallers and religious, so I ought to get on. They are very nice people, and I have not too much to do. I hope you are all right and the boy has work. So good-bye for the present. From yours truly, Polly. Answer soon, please, and let me know how you are.*<sup>129</sup>

Edward replied to this letter, but he never heard back from Polly and admitted that he had last seen her alive in June 1886, over two years before her death. Although she was "respectable" then, he did not speak to her, nor did he know what led to her stealing from her employers and fleeing what seemed to be a decent job and living situation, an action that would lead to her spending nights in Trafalgar Square, walking the East End, and eventually, her death.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. "The Whitechapel Mystery." 8 September 1888.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.



Figure 4. Illustrated Police News. Murder of Annie Chapman. 22 September 1888.

On September 29, the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, reported on the inquest into the Whitechapel Murders, headed by Coroner Wynne Baxter, which took place a week after the close of the inquest into Polly Nichols' murder. By this time, the second official Jack the Ripper victim, Annie Chapman, had been murdered, and so this particular inquest covered four murders from April to September – Emma Smith, Martha Tabram, Polly Nichols, and Annie Chapman. The report begins by quoting the coroner, expressing his dismay that the culprit, if the same person responsible for all four murders, had so far escaped detection due to the likelihood of their being blood on his person, but he acknowledges that due to the huge number of slaughterhouses in the neighbourhood it would not be an uncommon sight to see a man covered in blood.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. "Coroner Wynne Baxter on the Whitechapel Murders." 29 September 1888.

*All four victims were women of middle age, all were married, and had lived apart from their husbands in consequence of intemperate habits, and were at the time of their death leading an irregular life, and eking out a miserable and precarious existence in common lodging houses.*<sup>132</sup>

Although it was clear they were focusing on all four women, the report itself only features one sentence on Emma Smith, a long paragraph about Martha Tabram, and a two-sentence conclusion stating that the jury returned a verdict of “wilful murder against some person or persons unknown” in the case of Polly Nichols.<sup>133</sup> Two days after the murder of Annie Chapman, the press was beginning to refer to the murders of these women collectively as the “Whitechapel murders” and a “series”, suggesting that they already suspected one person was responsible for them all.<sup>134</sup> The *Daily News* began their report with several choice words to describe what happened to Annie, “murdered and mutilated”, “butchered”, saying that she was of the “same class” as Polly, but that if there was a difference in the way they were killed, then it went in “favour” of the earlier victim, meaning that Polly was not “butchered” quite so badly as Annie.<sup>135</sup> They do not, however, focus on the disturbing details of the crime in their first article on the case, stating that the “details, for those who are able to endure the recital of them, will be found elsewhere”, which is precisely the case several paragraphs into their second article, titled ‘Another Murder in Whitechapel’, which covered witness statements, the police investigation and theories, and the newspaper’s own assessment on the killer.

*There can be little reasonable doubt that the unfortunate woman went out into the streets to obtain the price of her bed; that she went in the ordinary way of her outcast sisterhood into this little backyard. . . and there in the grey dawn, under the back windows of houses crowded with people, she suddenly found herself in the clutches of a homicidal maniac.*<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Daily News. “The Fourth Whitechapel Murder.” 10 September 1888.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

This is the only mention *Daily Press* makes of Annie's life at all, until much later in the newspaper where it finally gives some attention to her background. They spend more time vividly reimagining the events that took place, infusing their words with atmosphere, the likes of which their readers would see in the popular gothic novels of the time.<sup>137</sup> The *Daily News* makes a point of discussing the murder tourism taking place, the public walking the area to gawk at the murder sites, much like people do today on Jack the Ripper tours of London, although at the time there may still have been evidence of the crimes that took place and plenty of witnesses willing to tell their stories. It was heavily capitalised upon right from the start, people wrote and sold booklets about the murders, sang verses, and even created waxworks depicting the victims in the most shocking way possible to gain interest and coin.

*The excitement had been intense. The house and the mortuary were besieged. . . people flocked in great numbers to see the blood stained spot in the yard, paying a penny each. In the Whitechapel road 'Lines on the Terrible Tragedy' were being sold, and men with verses round their hats were singing them to the tune of 'My Village Home'. A wretched waxwork show had some horrible picture out in front, and people were paying their pence to see representations of each murdered woman within.*<sup>138</sup>

These women were already being treated like a spectacle, as if they were worth nothing, within literal hours of their murders. Given the short time period in which this vicious crime spree took place, it was unlikely anything would change for the general public and the press. They were fascinated by what was taking place and how different it was to the run of the mill crimes that usually happened in the area, and so the reporting reflected that in all its sensational glory. The *Penny Illustrated Paper*, well known for its lurid illustrations much like the *Illustrated Police News*, made just as much of a spectacle with its words as it did with its images:

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<sup>137</sup> These include but are not limited to: *The Castle of Otranto*, by Horace Walpole, 1764; *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson, 1886; *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley, 1818; *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, by Washington Irving, 1819.

<sup>138</sup> Daily News. "The Fourth Whitechapel Murder." 10 September 1888.

*The public, the atrocious murder of Mary Ann Nichols still in its mind, with its preceding crimes of the same terrible nature, the abominable slaughter of another woman in Whitechapel. . . would have been sufficient to arouse our horror and indignation.*<sup>139</sup>

On October 2, two days after the Double Event murders of Catherine Eddowes and Elisabeth Stride, the *Daily News* had a report from their New York correspondent describing the fact that several months earlier a series of women were brutally murdered in Texas. They reported this because it was suggested the perpetrator of the Texas murders was the same as the Whitechapel murders, due to no other reason than a group of women at the lowest rungs of society being murdered in a similarly brutal manner.<sup>140</sup> This would continue over the next century. Ripperologists, reporters, and historians linking known killers or other crimes with what took place in Whitechapel in 1888, to see if they could finally put a real name to a mysterious figure who had just, on September 27 1888, finally received a name by way of a letter, written in red ink, sent to the Central News Agency describing what was about to happen to another woman in Whitechapel.<sup>141</sup> This was the “Dear Boss” letter, signed by Jack the Ripper, and a follow up postcard dated October 1, signed “Saucy Jacky”, would be sent after the Double Event to the same agency, this time lamenting that the killer could not complete the first murder (Elisabeth) and so had to find another victim (Catherine). Whether this letter and postcard were genuine, or hoaxes is still debated today, but whoever wrote them created a lasting identity. This brought a whole new level of excitement to the general public, because the killer finally had a name, yet his victims, despite the increasingly vicious injuries inflicted upon them, remained virtually unknown outside of their part in this grisly spectacle taking place in the East End. Their names were little used then as now, and it seems likely that the reporters were not interested in finding out about the victims, choosing instead to report on the aftermath and the worst details they could find. In fact, the press could often not even agree on the names to use for each victim, which caused general confusion for the readers – Martha Tabram was also Martha Turner; Mary Ann Nichols was sometimes referred to only as Polly Nichols; Annie Chapman

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<sup>139</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. “Hanbury Street Murder.” 15 September 1888.

<sup>140</sup> Daily News. “The Texas & Whitechapel Murders.” 2 October 1888.

<sup>141</sup> Sugden, Philip. *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*. London: Robinson Publishing Ltd, 2006, 28.

was sometimes Annie Sivvey; Elisabeth Stride instead Long Liz; Mary Jane Kelly was also Marie Jeanette Kelly; the only one that remained fairly consistent throughout the press was Catherine Eddowes, but even she was occasionally known as Kate Conway. L. Perry Curtis in, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, had this to say about the way the journalists worked during the Whitechapel murders:

*Occasionally a reporter would venture into the Other world of Whitechapel in search of background material about the crime scene, the habits of the victim, and signs of mounting panic. A 'special correspondent' might seek out the victim's friends or neighbours, describe the tense mood of the crowds swarming around the murder site, and remind readers that the fiend was more than likely to strike again. Many reporters, however, seemed content to stay in their offices and glean material from second-hand sources, including the news agencies that served as conduits for information that Scotland Yard wanted to divulge.<sup>142</sup>*

During each lull in murders, although the press could not know there would be more, they highlighted the inquests taking place, alluding to all kinds of suspects, and adding their two-pence worth to the killer's motive and identity.<sup>143</sup> Occasionally they bothered to find out more information about the victims, but that seemed to be much further down in their list of priorities than rehashing the goriness of the crimes, recycling news of the funerals, and endlessly transcribing the inquests. They began to attack the police, suggesting they were not doing a good enough job of hunting down the killer, that they were not protecting the East End as well as they could have, the *East London Observer* featuring an editorial titled "Has East London Sufficient Police Protection?".<sup>144</sup> What potentially made matters worse for the police, but no doubt excited the press, was that the murder of Catherine Eddowes took place just inside the City of London boundary, which brought in a different police force in addition to the Metropolitan Police.

After the Double Event, a French newspaper gloated that, "the English have no decency left; they are ignoble exploiters of human flesh", a statement that would annoy the

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<sup>142</sup> Curtis, 2001, 116.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>144</sup> *East London Observer*. "Has East London Sufficient Police Protection?" 15 September 1888.

novelist George Gissing who, himself, was desperate to know the latest details of the crimes, tracking down a copy of the *Standard* while in Paris to learn about the murders of Elisabeth and Catherine.<sup>145</sup> There was understandable derision in the way the British press was seen through the eyes of other countries during this time, especially when the two murders of September 30 began being reported on within half an hour of Catherine's body being found in Mitre Square. It was *Lloyd's* which had the journalists' scoop, the editor stopping the press around four in the morning in order to insert an "Extra Special Edition" into the print, which would break the news of the latest murders, barely two hours after the second of them.<sup>146</sup> The following Sunday, *Lloyd's* produced 25,000 words on the subject; the *Telegraph*, well known as a crime-sheet, reported 400,000 words on the murders throughout the time they took place, covering seventy-two columns.<sup>147</sup> The reporting on these two deaths was prolonged compared to the previous three, which enabled the journalists' tendency to add a good deal more "sensation-horror" and mystery to their "newspaper novels".<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Curtis, 2001, 140.

<sup>146</sup> Curtis, 2001, 141.

<sup>147</sup> Flanders, 2011, 440.

<sup>148</sup> Curtis, 2001, 141.

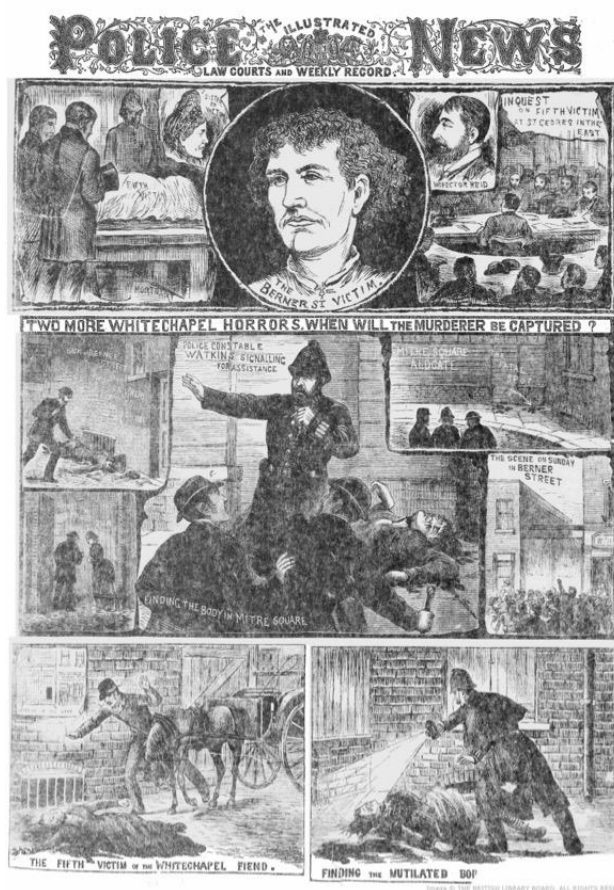


Figure 5. *Illustrated Police News*. Murders of Elisabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes. 6 October 1888.

The *Star* reported that Catherine had been “ripped up like a pig in the market”, such wording gave further importance to the idea that the murderer could be a butcher or a slaughterer rather than a more respectable doctor.<sup>149</sup> Yet still, the two women at the centre of this most recent set of crimes did not rate much of a mention in any of the media. The *Illustrated Police News* gave a paragraph of their October 20 report to Anne Philips, the daughter of Catherine Eddowes, who sat at the inquest as a witness, and gave a few details about her mother, whom she had not seen for at least two years prior to her death.<sup>150</sup> She did not have a good relationship with her mother, having decided to keep her new address from her so that Catherine would be thwarted in her attempts to ask for money, stating when asked why they had not seen each other in eighteen months that, “we did not part on very good terms. She used to drink”.<sup>151</sup> According to the police-sergeant John Mitchell, he

<sup>149</sup> Flanders, 2011, 440

<sup>150</sup> *Illustrated Police News*. “A Daughter of the Deceased.” 18 October 1888.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

was unable to track down Catherine's father and brothers, which seemed sadly common for all six victims in the end. Very few family members were available to interview or to remember them. In Elisabeth's case, any remaining family were in Sweden where she came from, and not a single person ever came forward as related to Mary Jane.<sup>152</sup>

Although the *Penny Illustrated Paper* gained a lot of their readership via the lurid illustrations they used on their frontpages, they did simultaneously try to show disdain for the entire situation with their words. One reporter, attempting to show that he was above it all, despite the publication he wrote for, had this to say:

*Once let London rouse itself in earnest. . .to deal with the murderous Cains in our midst, and to grapple with the dangerously grave question of terrible Poverty around us, and I have little doubt the systematic assassin who slew woman after woman in Whitechapel will be discovered. . .and one of the most troublous problems of the times will be solved. That no less than six poor women should have been slain with impunity in a corner of the East End within a few months is a social calamity of such gravity that one would have thought Her Majesty's ministers would have hastened back to town to deliberate how best to safeguard London in the future.*<sup>153</sup>

This is not to say that the journalist in question was being disingenuous, however few newspapers displayed writings with such a strong personal view in them. They tended to remain distant from the events without the use of the first-person narrative in their stories. This same report continued with several thousand words dedicated to the double event murders, but very few of them about the two women beyond the fact of their deaths. Their lives reduced to barely a couple of sentences each but including the misidentification of Catherine as Elizabeth Watts by that woman's sister, Mary Malcolm.<sup>154</sup>

Although there were hundreds of reports written about the Whitechapel murders, there were many similarities between them due to the widespread reliance on the news agencies, several of which Scotland Yard often sent releases to.<sup>155</sup> The evening papers

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. 6 October 1888.

<sup>154</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. "Identified By Her Sister as Elizabeth Watts." 6 October 1888.

<sup>155</sup> Curtis, 2001, 145.

borrowed heavily from the morning press, the Sunday papers borrowing from the dailies and rarely acknowledging their sources; the feature articles were usually almost word for word the same because they relied so heavily on the inquest interviews and post mortem reports.<sup>156</sup> Most reporters tended to focus first on the crime scene and then on the body lying on the pavement, describing in detail exactly what had befallen the woman and how fiendish the perpetrator was, yet not paying much mind to who the woman was.<sup>157</sup> There was no small amount of victim blaming taking place in the press, as still happens today although reporters tend to be more careful about putting their own feelings into their writing, while the same could not be said for the reporters of 1888. Not mincing its words, the illustrated weekly *Graphic* declared that the reward money being offered would be much better spent on streetlights in the “poorer parts of town”, and regularly chided the victims for choosing the “path of self-destruction”, saying:

*It is worth noting here – in refutation of the Socialist theories which are so rife now – that the miserable and degraded creatures who have lately been so ruthlessly butchered did not belong to oppressed ‘residuum’. . .they were all originally well brought-up. . .the wives of respectable men. . .their terrible downward course into vice and wretchedness seems chiefly chargeable to their own misdoing.*<sup>158</sup>

For a month, due to there being no new killings and inquests being thin on the ground, the press magnified any stories they could find. Covering suspects, random assaults on women, and the police’s inability to capture the killer, as well as vigilantes in Whitechapel and the occasional exposé on the origins of the victims; the *Daily Telegraph* addressed Catherine’s previous life in Wolverhampton and her “promiscuous ways” in Birmingham before moving on to London.<sup>159</sup> The locals began to believe that the murder spree might be over, but all was going to come to a head on November 9 when the most brutal of all the slayings took place in a tiny room in Miller’s Court.

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 158.

*Whitechapel has on horror's head horrors accumulated. Another woman has been murdered and mangled. . . This latest murder far surpasses in hideous brutality any of the crimes which went before it. The mutilations are more wild and wanton and ghastly. The murderer, whoever he may be, would seem to have taken a positive delight in cutting and carving at the body of his victim.*<sup>160</sup>

One of the earliest reports of the murder of Mary Jane Kelly suggested that it was not thought to be part of the Whitechapel murders, that this was “satisfactory to learn”, however the same report also admits that “first reports are always more or less conflicting”.<sup>161</sup> As Mary Jane was not discovered until late morning, only the afternoon and evening newspapers could make the first reports. The place of her murder also led to her being identified much faster than previous victims. As the tenant of a private room, she was already known to the people who lived in the area and to her landlord, John McCarthy, and so it was assumed that the eviscerated body was one and the same. In fact, the carnage left behind in that Miller’s Court room led the veteran newspaper editors to think twice about the run of sensation-horror, lest the “surfeit of gore” put readers off and possibly even lead to mob violence in Whitechapel, although who that would be targeted at was unclear.<sup>162</sup> Mary Jane was reported as being in her early twenties, a member of the “unfortunate class” who lived in a “miserably-furnished room”, reports further stating she was the “very lowest class” and that her room was “cheerless” and “dismal-looking”, and all of this was accompanied by an illustration of her that took centre stage in the November 17 edition of the *Illustrated Police News*.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Daily News. “Another Whitechapel Horror.” 10 November 1888.

<sup>161</sup> The Eastern Post & City Chronicle. “Another Horrible Murder in Whitechapel.” 10 November 1888.

<sup>162</sup> Curtis, 2001, 186.

<sup>163</sup> Illustrated Police News. “Another Whitechapel Horror. More Revolting Mutilation Than Ever.” 17 November 1888.



Figure 6. Illustrated Police News. Murder of Mary Jane Kelly. 17 November 1888.

The majority of the coverage on the death of Mary Jane featured the horrific injuries and mutilations she suffered, and they can all be seen in rather stark detail in the crime scene photograph taken the day she was found. Thought to be the first official photograph of a murder victim ever taken, because she was killed indoors and so the police had a lot more time to investigate the crime scene properly, without the hordes of horror-seekers crowding the area and destroying any evidence. The police were able to safeguard Miller's Court, with men stationed to keep out all persons who did not need to be there, though that did not stop the throngs hanging around.<sup>164</sup> This was a crime scene that Chief Inspector Walter Dew would discuss at length in his book, *I Caught Crippen*, claiming that he was one of the first police officers on the scene, although this has been refuted and his memory of the incident questioned in more recent years.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. "How The Murder Was Discovered." 17 November 1888.

<sup>165</sup> More on that in Chapter 3.

Several descriptors of Mary Jane focused rather more on her looks than they did previously with the other victims, due in part to her being two decades younger than the other five, she may have been “unfortunate”, but she was also a “comely, fair young woman”.<sup>166</sup> It was speculated that her youth and beauty played a large part in the reasoning behind why her face was mutilated beyond all recognition.<sup>167</sup> However, Mary Jane was and still is an enigma, who was invariably described as being either blonde or red haired, as well as Irish or Welsh, and she might have been married to a collier worker at the age of sixteen and widowed or separated depending on who was reporting and where they received their information from. What did remain consistent, was the way she was killed and how horrifying it was to all who had witnessed her in situ at Miller’s Court.<sup>168</sup> The media could not agree on just how many murders there had actually been, with Mary Jane being referred to as the seventh, eighth or ninth victim of the Whitechapel murders depending on the newspaper and how far back they began counting victims, either from Emma Smith in April 1888 or “Fairy Fay” in December 1887.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, it was and still is not entirely agreed upon when the murders finally came to an end, with Mary Jane in November 1888 or as late as Carrie Brown in April 1891. According to the popular *Lloyd’s*, the killer had seven victims, from Emma to Mary Jane, and spent just as many words on the failings of the police as it did on the final murder, but with little interest in Mary Jane as a person instead of a horrific spectacle.<sup>170</sup>

In the week following Mary Jane’s murder, the press focused on all the rumours they could get their hands on, including the possibility of missing organs, the funeral arrangements (Catholic), the “bumbling” of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the resignation of Sir Charles Warren, and the one-day long inquest. Even Queen Victoria became involved after learning about the death of Mary Jane. She was appalled by “this new most ghastly horror” and called for immediate decisive action, and wanted to see the detective force overhauled as had been promised after the death of Polly Nichols.<sup>171</sup> Despite the horrific nature of this last murder, the inquest was actually the shortest since Martha

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<sup>166</sup> Penny Illustrated Paper. “How The Murder Was Discovered.” 17 November 1888.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> East London Observer. “The Whitechapel Horrors.” 17 November 1888.

<sup>169</sup> Daily News. “The Spitalfields Murder.” 20 November 1888.

<sup>170</sup> Curtis, 2001, 192.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 192.

Tabram's, and took place outside of the jurisdiction of Coroner Baxter due to the removal of the body because, "the jurisdiction lies where the body lies, and not where it is found".<sup>172</sup> A little more information about Mary Jane was gleaned from this inquest. The *Globe* reporting that while she was a native of Limerick, Ireland, she had migrated to Wales and there married a collier, but no mention was ever made of her having any sort of accent that would be noticeable to East Enders.<sup>173</sup> Mary Jane was also described as being an "excellent scholar", an "artist of no mean degree", and that she had left Cardiff for London where she had fallen into the clutches of a French woman in Knightsbridge. She had briefly lived a "gay" lifestyle which eventually led to her ending up in the East End, where some suggest she went for anonymity after burning her more well-to-do bridges in London's west.<sup>174</sup> Perhaps shockingly to a modern audience, the jurors of the inquest and the reporters in attendance were allowed to view the body of the victim lying in the mortuary, and that no doubt gave the press a fresh approach to the way they reported on the case, finally having seen the horror for themselves. The *Star* reporter saying that the face on display was, "ghastly and sickening enough, in all conscience".<sup>175</sup> What little else was known about Mary Jane came from her partner Joseph Barnett, who had been living with her at Miller's Court until shortly before her death, having moved out because she kept bringing prostitutes back to their room to keep them safe for a night, this showing her compassion.<sup>176</sup> It is because of Barnett that we know anything at all about the life of Mary Jane, but even that must be taken with a grain of salt, because there are so few official records of her.

News about the Whitechapel murders dropped off sharply after the inquest into Mary Jane's murder, and Fleet Street struggled to keep the story alive beyond November 15. Even though this was not the first time the killer had gone silent, it seemed almost like the press had lost their appetite for it, helped by the police creating an information blackout on the subject, perhaps due to their own embarrassment at being unable to capture the killer.<sup>177</sup> From paragraphs and thousands of words, come November 17 the *Evening News* printed only eight lines about the murders and the resignation of Warren. Similarly the

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>173</sup> The *Globe*. "The Horrible Work of 'Jack the Ripper.'" 12 November 1888.

<sup>174</sup> Curtis, 2001, 193.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>176</sup> The *Star*. "Fifth Edition. Whitechapel. Important Evidence at the Inquest To-day. A Description of the Murderer." 12 November 1888.

<sup>177</sup> Curtis, 2001, 199.

*Morning Post* compiled half a column on Ripper news, and the only event of any significance to take place was the funeral of Mary Jane Kelly. The *East London Advertiser* writing a poignant article some seven days after the procession to Leytonstone.<sup>178</sup>

*The remains of the unfortunate woman, Marie Jeanette Kelly, who was murdered on November 9<sup>th</sup>, in Miller's-Court, Dorset-street, Spitalfields, were carried on Monday from Shoreditch mortuary to the Roman Catholic Cemetery at Leytonstone, for interment, amidst a scene of turbulent excitement.*<sup>179</sup>

The sheer volume of reporting that took place during this Autumn of Terror was astonishing. The website *Casebook* has compiled hundreds of newspaper articles per victim, and even they have not covered all the same publications that Curtis does in his book on the London press. For four to five days after each murder and inquest the newspapers gave over huge headlines and multiple columns to the stories, covering everything from the time and place, the horrific details, the identity of the suspect, why these women were targeted and if anyone had witnessed it. Yet what still remained lowest on the pecking order of news was who these women were, because it never seemed to be that important compared to the spectacle of their murders. Despite the dwindling interest in the story, for some years after, every time there was a knife attack on a woman, Fleet Street would revive the Ripper story, trying to link the newest crime, no matter how little it resembled the original murders, to those months of horror, prolonging the Ripper saga as much as possible.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> East London Advertiser. "The Whitechapel Atrocities." 24 November 1888.

### Chapter 3

#### Media Representation of the Victims – Police Memoirs

*The victims, without exception, belonged to the lowest dregs of female humanity, who avoid the police and exercise every ingenuity in order to remain in the darkest corners of the most deserted alleys.*

- Sir Melville Macnaghten, *Days of my Years*.<sup>180</sup>

Ripper media has spanned more than a century of publishing, and it is fair to say that there is a wide variety publications to investigate, however the majority of the research for many years has been patriarchal. In fact, author Rebecca Frost in her book, *The Ripper Victims in Print*, discusses this fact, that the very first non-fiction book about Jack the Ripper published in 1937 was written by a man and that it was not until the 1990s that women started contributing. Because of this, it coloured the way the victims were written about, little changing since the time of their deaths, which was with superficial sympathy and often victim blaming due to the fact that these women were outside late at night in the first place. The authors pointing to their reputations, perceived or otherwise, as prostitutes and unfortunates as reasons they were killed. However, historians and early Ripperologists were not the only ones writing on the case in the first half of the twentieth century. Policemen involved in the case were writing their memoirs too, reporting as they remembered events, what happened during the investigation, what they thought about the victims, the crimes, and who they thought the prime suspect was. Among these men were Sir Henry Smith, the Acting Commissioner of the London Police during the investigation into the murder of Catherine Eddowes; Sir Melville Macnaghten who did not actually join Scotland Yard until 1889, but his views are perhaps the most widely publicised of any police official; and Chief Inspector Walter Dew, who delivers the most comprehensive view of the case from a first-hand (although sometimes inaccurate) perspective, dedicating a third of his book, *I Caught Crippen*, to the murders, in which he discusses crimes as early as Emma Smith in April 1888

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<sup>180</sup> Macnaghten, Sir Melville Leslie. *Days of My Years*. E. Arnold, 1914, 56.

to as late as Frances Coles in February 1891. The writings of these men have been reproduced on the *Casebook* website, often used for ease of access by many Ripperologists, particularly as the original publications have long been out of print.

### **The Police**

Major Sir Henry Smith (1835-1921) was one of the most popular officials at the time of the murders for the press, stepping into the top job briefly while Commissioner Fraser was on leave during the murder of Catherine Eddowes, which was under the jurisdiction of the City of London police. However, he did not win over everyone, and the Secretary to the Metropolitan Police pencilled a notation into their copy of Smith's book, *From Constable to Commissioner*, between 1925-1927:

*A good raconteur and a good fellow, but not strictly veracious: most of the book consists of after dinner stories outside his personal experience. In dealing with matters within his own knowledge he is often far from accurate as my own knowledge of the facts assures me.*<sup>181</sup>

Although this may have been the case when it came to his own publication in 1910, he was particularly good with public relations, especially when compared with Scotland Yard (this was perhaps why he received an unfavourable review from them). The press found the City Police frank and helpful under his direction during the investigation into Catherine's murder, while the Metropolitan Police were viewed as obstructive and secretive.<sup>182</sup> While Smith's book received good reviews, it did garner criticism due to his critique of the Metropolitan Police, the *Manchester Guardian* observing that his tone became "a little incoherent" when he wrote of the "blunders of the heads of the Metropolitan Police, especially Sir Robert Anderson".<sup>183</sup> However, it seemed no one was more enamoured with Smith's prowess on the case than Smith himself, stating in his book that, "there is no man

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<sup>181</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – From Constable to Commissioner: Chapter 16."

[https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_media/rps.constable.html](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_media/rps.constable.html)

<sup>182</sup> Begg, Paul, Martin Fido, and Keith Skinner. *The Complete Jack the Ripper A-Z*. Kindle. London: John Blake Publishing, 2015, Loc9873.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, Loc9891.

living who knows as much of those murders as I do”.<sup>184</sup> This is a hefty statement considering he goes on to detail that he was “within five minutes of the perpetrator one night, and with a fair description of him besides”, despite this being categorically untrue according to his documented movements on the night of the Mitre Square murder, and he then goes on to attribute those same movements a few pages later to the Miller’s Court murder.<sup>185</sup> Though not named, it is assumed that Sir Melville Macnaghten was referring to Smith’s book a few years later when he wrote:

*Only two or three years ago I saw a book of police reminiscences (not by a Metropolitan officer) in which the author stated that he knew more of the ‘Ripper murders’ than any man living, and then went on to say that during the whole of August 1888, he was on the tiptoe of expectation. That writer had indeed a prophetic soul, looking to the fact that the first murder of the Whitechapel miscreant was on 31<sup>st</sup> August of that year of grace.*<sup>186</sup>

There was clearly animosity between the two men, however for Macnaghten’s version of events to be true, we must then accept that Martha Tabram was not the first victim of Jack the Ripper. With Smith’s clearly unreliable version of events, it could easily be explained that he simply got the dates wrong in his eagerness to write about how much he knew on the subject and that he was the clear authority. It seems clear that these men were much more concerned with how they looked during the investigation and the part they played in it. Did they pay any attention to the victims themselves?

Smith wrote only one chapter of his memoir about the Whitechapel murders, titled ‘Of the Ripper and His Deeds-And of the Criminal Investigator, Sir Robert Anderson’, in which he details his time on the investigation and his oft wrong assumptions about the killer’s identity. We read that he was always very close to catching him, and there is a whole paragraph on the orders he puts his officers under throughout the month of August, which we already know Macnaghten has pointed out were completely wrong due entirely to the

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<sup>184</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – From Constable to Commissioner: Chapter 16.”

[https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_media/rps.constable.html](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_media/rps.constable.html)

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., Loc9910.

circumstances of when the official body count began. The entirety of the piece on the one victim, Catherine Eddowes, that Smith deals with, boils down to the following:

*The 'beat' of Catherine Eddowes was a small one. She was known to a good many of the constables, but, known or not known, she was in the streets late at night, and must have been seen making for Mitre Square. With what object? In pursuance, it is needless to say, of her miserable calling. Had she been followed, and men called to guard the approaches, the murderer would to a certainty have been taken red-handed.*<sup>187</sup>

There is little doubt that Smith was not concerned with the one victim he dealt with. Was it possible he may have taken more care to think about them had he been in charge of the whole investigation in Whitechapel? While Walter Dew does spend much of his book discussing the role of the police, he does spend an equal part of the time talking about the victims, however he may simply have been a more compassionate man than Smith was, and he was on the ground at the time, while Smith was not, instead working in the City of London away from the majority of the crimes taking place in Whitechapel.

Sir Melville Macnaghten (1853-1921) was an interesting case, because he was not actually present at Scotland Yard during 1888, serving from 1889-1913 and was, surprisingly, considered a Ripper suspect as recently as 2007 in *Jack l'Eventreur Démasqué*.<sup>188</sup> Prior to joining the police force in his mid-thirties, Macnaghten managed his father's estates in Bengal, India, before moving back to Britain and becoming assistant chief constable of the CID in Scotland Yard in 1889-1890; was promoted to chief constable of CID, 1890-1903; then assistant commissioner of CID 1902-1913.<sup>189</sup> Upon retiring from the police force, he served on Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith's Committee to inquire into the identification of criminals, which resulted in the adoption of Sir Edward Henry's fingerprint system.<sup>190</sup> Macnaghten was a popular figure and the press welcomed his appointment, most publishing reminiscences describing his charm and affability, calling him a "very great

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<sup>187</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – From Constable to Commissioner: Chapter 16."

[https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_media/rps.constable.html](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_media/rps.constable.html)

<sup>188</sup> Begg et al, 2015, Loc6602.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

gentleman”; he was also described as being delighted to attend crime scenes, *Vanity Fair* noting him as being the first assistant commissioner to personally arrest a burglar.<sup>191</sup> H. L. Adam recalled in, *CID: Behind the Scenes at Scotland Yard*, published in 1908, that his “knowledge of crime and criminals, was quite as extensive as that of his predecessor, Sir Robert Anderson”, and that he was a “familiar figure at the scene of any murder case, which had a special interest to the mind of a police official”.<sup>192</sup> It was no surprise that he took a special interest in the Ripper investigation despite missing it by several months. He wrote two works on the subject – the previously lost *Macnaghten Memoranda*, written in 1894, and a chapter in his memoir, *Days of My Years* published in 1914.<sup>193</sup>

The *Macnaghten Memoranda* is considered one of the most important Ripper documents to have survived, although it was previously lost until 1959 when Macnaghten’s daughter, Lady Aberconway, brought to light the original draft notes of the memoranda. It revealed his three key suspects, and the official Scotland Yard copy was found in 1966 by author Robin Odell for his book, *Jack the Ripper Fact or Fiction*.<sup>194</sup> It was written in refutation of the *Sun*’s incendiary reports that a man named Thomas Cutbush, arrested for stabbing young women in the rear, was Jack the Ripper, and Macnaghten referred to it as a “sensational story”. He gave brief detail on the charges against Cutbush and the man’s background, including that he was said to have studied medical books by day and then rambled by night, frequently returning covered in mud, however his whereabouts on the nights of each Whitechapel murder were never ascertained.<sup>195</sup> Macnaghten then detailed his thoughts on the Whitechapel murders, firstly the victims of which he lists only five officially, “and five victims only” – Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elisabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly, and the dates, places and the manner they were killed. This is all he says on the victims in this piece of writing, and perhaps there was no need to say anymore as it was clearly meant only for the police, being that its upper left corner is marked as “confidential” and it remained unseen by the public until the 1960s.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., Loc6621.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., Loc6640.

<sup>194</sup> Morgan, Jason. “‘Yours Truly Jack the Ripper’-of New College, Oxford? Montague John Druiitt and the Whitechapel Murders of 1888.” New College, Oxford. 2016, 6.

<sup>195</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – The Macnaghten Memoranda.”

[https://www.casebook.org/official\\_documents/memo.html](https://www.casebook.org/official_documents/memo.html)

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

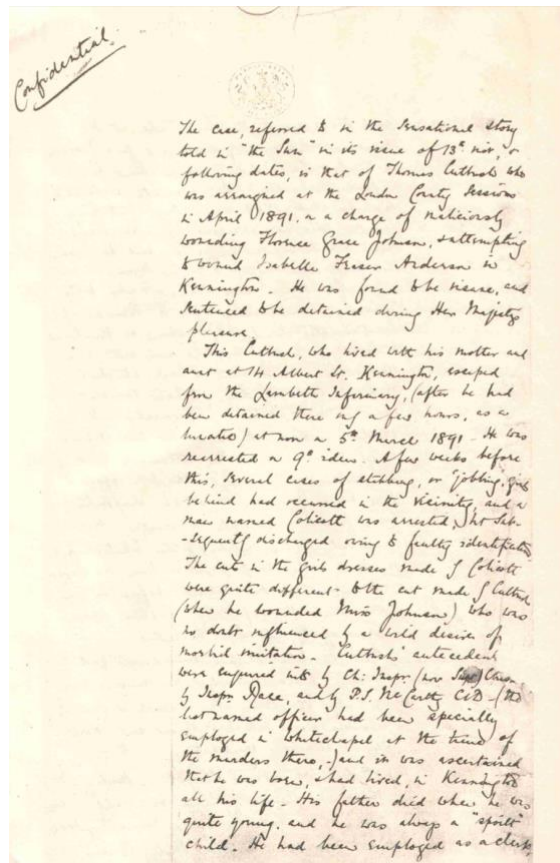


Figure 7. Macnaghten Memoranda, page 1 (Courtesy of Thomas Schachner and Casebook.org)

He mentions Cutbush again, stating that it seems unlikely the murderer would have ceased killing altogether in November 1888 and then been content to “recommence operations by merely prodding a girl’s behind some two years and four months afterwards”, making clear he thought the article by the *Sun* was nothing short of ridiculous.<sup>197</sup> Due to Macnaghten’s discussion on his and Scotland Yard’s three key suspects – Montague John Druiitt, Aaron Kosminski, and Michael Ostrog – the memoranda is no doubt an incredibly important piece of Ripperology, particularly for the Ripper’s identity and who those high up in the police at the time thought he was, but as a piece of information about the victims, it sheds no light on what Macnaghten may have thought about them or anything regarding the investigation. He did write marginally more in his memoir, *Days of our Years*, but even that is a short chapter, titling it, ‘Laying the Ghost of Jack the Ripper’.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

The quote at the beginning of this thesis chapter gives a stark impression of what Macnaghten thought of the women who became victims to Jack the Ripper and it bears repeating. He referred to them as the “dregs of female humanity” who lived in the “darkest corners of the most deserted alleys”, and he was unlikely to be alone in thinking that way, but he was one of the few who recorded his thoughts.<sup>198</sup> He further gives an idea of what he thought most of these victims may have been like based on a woman he came across in a doss house in September 1889, a year after the Whitechapel murders, while he was investigating the Pinchin Street murder, stating that:

*A woman was content to live with a man so long as he was in work. . .if he lost his job, she would support him by the only means open to her.*<sup>199</sup>

He then detailed that there was a man in the kitchen waiting on his partner to return from her streetwalking and when she did, he asked if she had any luck, and she had replied “in the negative”.<sup>200</sup> She went on to say that “she had thought her lucky star was in the ascendant when she had inveigled a ‘bloke’ down a dark alley”, but that they had been sprung by a detective hiding further down who leapt out from behind a wagon, scaring the man off.<sup>201</sup>

*With additional adjectives the lady expressed her determination to go out again after supper, and when the man reminded her of the dangers of the streets if ‘he’ (meaning the murderer) was out and about, the poor women replied. . . ‘well, let him come-the sooner the better for such as I.’ A sordid picture, my masters, but what infinite pathos is therein portrayed!*<sup>202</sup>

After this scene, which is clearly used to give some insight into life in the doss house and particularly for women for his readers some twenty years later, Macnaghten briefly details the flurry of Whitechapel murders that took place in 1888. Beginning with Emma

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<sup>198</sup> Macnaghten, Sir Melville, *Days of My Years*, E. Arnold, 1914, 56.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid,

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 57.

Smith in April, which he deems as having been committed by “some young hooligans who escaped arrest”.<sup>203</sup> Next, is Martha Tabram on August 7, who he was certain was the victim of a pair of soldiers, stating that, “I think I am right in saying that the soldiers were detained, but that the available witnesses failed to identify them”, this most likely referring to Pearly Poll, who was widely known as an unreliable witness to police. Martha’s lack of mutilations, although she was stabbed more than thirty times, are why he decided she was not the first Ripper victim.<sup>204</sup> Macnaghten briefly described the five following murders, as well as giving his distasteful opinion about the infamous “Dear Boss” letter and the fact that he was certain that not only was it written by a journalist, but that he had “shrewd suspicions as to the actual author”.<sup>205</sup> Beyond this, there is little else about the case at all, and the only kind word he has to say about any of the victims is for Mary Jane Kelly, and that she was a “comparatively young woman. . .said to have been possessed of considerable personal attractions”, before detailing how savage and fiendish her mutilations were, likening the crime scene to “nothing seen by Dante in his visit to the infernal regions could have surpassed”.<sup>206</sup> Finally, he briefly reviewed *The Lodger* briefly, a fictional account of the Whitechapel murders written by Marie Adelaide Belloc Lowndes in 1911, and his views of the way she had depicted the killer. He appreciated her as a “talented authoress”, but ultimately disagreed with the portrayal of a crazed religious enthusiast being the murderer, presumably based on his long-held belief that the suspect was one of the three he mentioned in his memoranda, most likely Dr. Jekyll, who committed suicide in 1888 shortly after the final murder.<sup>207</sup> The chapter in *Days of My Years* totalled ten very short pages, and the *Macnaghten Memoranda* being six and a half, and yet these two writings have become the most important in all Ripperology, though they shed little to no light on the victims themselves, giving them barely a passing mention, making them barely bit players in their own stories.

Chief Inspector Walter Dew (1863-1847) is the only one of these three police officials who took part in the Whitechapel investigation, working out of the Whitechapel H Division

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 62.

from 1887, after joining the Metropolitan Police in 1882.<sup>208</sup> He was one of many players in the Whitechapel murders, but made his name in his final case, capturing Doctor Hawley Harvey Crippen, via a trans-Atlantic chase in 1910, after the murder of the man's wife in North London.<sup>209</sup> When he retired from the police, he set up a private detective agency and ran it for eighteen years before retiring fully, and taking up writing instead, which would eventually lead to the publication of his book. Dew's writings on his cases were the lengthiest ever written by a police officer involved in their investigations and he dedicated his book, *I Caught Crippen*, published in 1938, to two big cases – Crippen and Jack the Ripper – plus several smaller cases that took place between 1888 and 1910 in three parts. Interestingly, despite the title of the book, his retelling of the Crippen story is only six chapters long, despite his key role in the investigation, whereas the Ripper section is nine chapters long and much longer than anything written by both Smith and Macnaghten combined. There are issues with Dew's book – his memory. He was writing fifty years after the events of the Whitechapel murders and seemed to be drawing entirely from his own memory and not from any official records; acknowledging this, stating that, "in writing of the 'Jack the Ripper crimes', it must be remembered that they took place fifty years ago, and it may be that small errors as to dates and days may have crept in".<sup>210</sup> He does also remember many trivial facts, but equally surprising is the recitation of some of the Ripper letters without seemingly citing any sources.<sup>211</sup> One final point about Dew's book is that it has long been out of print, and the only easily accessible version is now a heavily annotated copy by Nicholas Connell, who makes sure to point out everywhere Dew's memory differs from the known facts of the cases he writes about.

*All of his victims were women of the unfortunate class. Some of them had known better days. There were no lower depths to which these hapless women could sink. . . Few of them were pretty or young. Indeed, with one exception, all the women lured by the killer to their deaths were approaching or past middle age.*<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Dew, Walter. *The Annotated I Caught Crippen: Memoirs of Ex-Chief Inspected Walter Dew, C.I.D.* Edited by Nicholas Connell. London: Mango Books, 2018. Loc125.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., Loc2195.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., Loc2195-2217.

Dew follows this general negative description of the victims up with a more personal view of Mary Jane Kelly, whom he refers to as Marie Kelly, saying that she was “quite attractive”, and that he “knew her by sight”, having often seen her “parading along” Commercial Street, and along Whitechapel Road.<sup>213</sup> Whether this is true can never be known, particularly as Mary Jane was so mutilated beyond recognition that no one would have been able to know who she was by her face alone, especially a police officer who had seen her in passing in the months prior. But Dew seemed very sure of this memory and Connell does not query this recollection.

A good deal of Dew’s discussion on the Whitechapel murders details his feelings on the police and how they did during the investigation, and whether or not he felt it was unfair how they were treated for not catching the killer. This is entirely understandable because the police would have wanted to put an end to the string of crimes, whether or not they put a huge amount of importance on the lives the women involved.

*I feel I must say a few words in defence of the police. . .who were severely criticised for their failure to hunt down the wholesale murderer. There are still those who look upon the Whitechapel murders as one of the most ignominious police failures of all time. Failure it certainly was, but I have never regarded it other than an honourable failure.*<sup>214</sup>

He writes about various officers involved in the case, such as Inspector Frederick Abberline (made famous over a century later by the Hollywood film *From Hell*), Inspector Andrews, and Sir Robert Anderson. He then gave a picture of Whitechapel, acknowledging that it would be remiss to discuss the crimes at all without giving the reader an idea of what it would have been like in the area at the time, as it was very different by the time of his writing fifty years later.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., Loc2217.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., Loc2241.

*Whitechapel in those days was full of slums in which vice of all kinds was rampant. Sordid narrow streets, still narrower courts, filthy and practically unlighted. Woe betide any innocent wayfarer venturing alone down any of those dark and sinister passages.*<sup>216</sup>

These were exactly the sort of places that all six victims were found in, except for Mary Jane. He begins discussing the Whitechapel murders with Emma Smith, who was murdered on the Easter Monday in 1888, but immediately gets the information wrong by stating that she was found unconscious outside a cocoa warehouse, when in fact she had struggled back to her lodging house and was taken to the hospital by two friends where she later died of her injuries.<sup>217</sup> He was one of the few who seemed to connect Emma with the other victims, stating that her fellow lodgers never guessed “what had happened the previous night was the beginning for them of unmitigated terror”, and that “they never suspected that the hand which had struck Emma Smith down was to strike again and again”.<sup>218</sup>

*The public did not suspect it. Nor did the police. How could they do so? The crime itself, save for the unusual nature of the injuries, was no novelty in Whitechapel. Some even now doubt that the murder of Mrs. Smith was the handiwork of the Ripper. In some respects the crime differed from those which followed.*<sup>219</sup>

This is the simple reason Emma has not been included in this thesis, because her manner of death and the fact that she was able to identify that a group of men attacked her, did not fit the same facts as the following six murders that took place between August and November. Dew thought differently, but he was one of the few who linked Emma to the Ripper crimes years later, even if it seemed likely at the time. He continued to express his surprise and a little admiration of the women in Whitechapel who were slowly becoming victims of the Ripper, stating:

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., Loc2267.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., Loc2319.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., Loc2344.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

*One might have expected concern among the women of Emma Smith's class. . . There was none. . . Indeed the conduct of these women throughout the period of the crimes was to me one of the most remarkable features of the whole drama. It is true they became panic-stricken following each of the later murders. . . But soon their courage returned. . . Some of them tried to make a joke of the business. They would call across the street to me, "I'm next for Jack." Though much of this was bravado cloaking a secret fear, I had to admire their attitude.<sup>220</sup>*

One gets the sense that Dew did like the women he came in to contact with on the beat before and during the murder spree, and that perhaps is why he spent so much time writing about the crimes years later compared to his peers. He was also on the ground when it happened and bore witness to some of the atrocities himself, rather than hearing or reading about it second-hand and touting himself as the number one authority despite having nothing to do with the case prior.

The next victim Dew discusses is Martha Tabram, who was also killed on a bank holiday, and he wondered initially if there was a reason these two murders took place specifically on bank holidays. But as the following five did not, then it was presumably ignored as being part of a bigger pattern for the murderer. Here he admits there could be no doubt that Martha was a victim of the "dread Ripper", although various others, in fact the majority, including Macnaghten and Smith, deny her this.<sup>221</sup> In the twenty first century we err on the side of caution when assigning blame for crimes, it is always the fault of the perpetrator, not the victim, no matter what the victim did as a job, or what they were wearing, it was not their fault they were hurt or killed. However, in the nineteenth century and well in to the twentieth that was not the case. Dew, despite being more compassionate than most of his contemporaries, does assign blame to the victim.

*Fiendish violence had been used by her murderer, whose task had been made easy by the woman's own caution. . . Many of the Ripper's victims simplified his task in this*

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., Loc2385.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., Loc2426.

*way. An unlighted alley; the back of premises which could be reached by a passage from the street; an unfrequented court; a dark archway.*<sup>222</sup>

Dew then spends several sentences opining the fact that it was unusual for two murders to be attributed to one person, which it was at the time, because the term “serial killer” would not be invented for several more decades. He then points out how unhelpful the woman known as Pearly Poll was, as was said by countless others at the time, before stating the likenesses between several of the victims, particularly the fact that they were, with the exception of Mary Jane, all previously married, and “how often has tragedy resulted from such separations”.<sup>223</sup> He then makes a salient point about the murderer: often, when someone is murdered, they are usually known to their murderer, however, that was not the case for the Ripper victims, and seemed evident even at the time for Dew and the police on the case.

*In most cases in which women are murdered, some man, by reason probably of his association with her, immediately stands suspect. But the Whitechapel victims were all strangers to their slayer, and died within a few minutes of their first meeting with him.*<sup>224</sup>

We know today that serial killers do exist and tend to target complete strangers, but in 1888 it was unheard of and completely foreign to the police to have to think of such a thing, that someone would do this and target seemingly at random and for no reason other than apparent bloodlust. This becomes clear in Dew’s continuing discussion of the police investigation and what they thought as they went through the motions during those horrifying few months.

*It would be impossible to recount here all that was done, the hundreds of inquiries made, the scores of statements taken and the long, long hours put in by us all. No clue was turned down as too trivial for investigation. We all had heartbreaking*

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., Loc2449-2469.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., Loc2511.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., Loc2535.

*experiences, several times I got on to something which looked like a clue, followed it up day and night, only to find it led nowhere.*<sup>225</sup>

Although Polly Nichols is officially considered the first victim of the canonical five, Dew lists her as the third, and gives brief details of who she was. A woman of thirty-eight (she was forty-three), who shared a tiny, well-kept room in a lodging house at 18 Thrawl Street, Spitalfields, and paid fourpence a night for her bed. He stated that had she “possessed the sum of fourpence at midnight on the night of her death she might have escaped death”, which may well be the case, but then it leaves open the possibility that another woman could have become the first of the canonical five victims instead.<sup>226</sup> Although Dew seems more caring and compassionate of these women and suggests that had they asked for police protection at the time they would have received it, we can never be sure if this would be the case. He was not in charge, others like Smith, Warren and Anderson were, and they perhaps felt differently to the women and may not have spared officers to keep an eye on their safety.

*The panic which seized women of Mary Nicholls’ class was understandable. They were in a sense defenceless. The very nature of their livelihood precluded them from appealing for protection to the police, though this would have been given readily enough in the case of a known danger. . .I felt sorry for these women, exposed as they were to a danger all the more terrorising because none knew how, where or when it came.*<sup>227</sup>

He also makes a case for the different treatment of these women compared to their well-off and better-bred contemporaries, mentioning that jurors in the inquests questioned why the police had not offered rewards for help in the capture of the killer.

*One juryman at the inquest on Mrs. Nicholls made just such an outburst. ‘Why don’t the police offer a reward?’ he cried. ‘If Mrs. Nicholls had been a rich woman living in*

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., Loc2603.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., Loc2626.

*the West End of London they have offered a £1000. But she is a poor unfortunate and so they take no notice. These women have souls just like other women, and I myself will offer £25 to anyone who can tell me anything which will help.*<sup>228</sup>

It bears saying that it was highly unlikely that a wealthy woman of the West End would ever have been in such a position to end up the victim of someone like Jack the Ripper in the first place, but the juror made a good point. Would the police have appeared to be doing more to hunt for the killer had the women been of better standing in society? Dew states that this was “ridiculous”, that it was “not a question of money at all” and that “right-minded people don’t want blood money”.<sup>229</sup> He also stated that there “would have been money in plenty for the person responsible for bringing this monster to book”, but we can never know if this would have happened, because the case remains unsolved.<sup>230</sup> This may simply have been another glimpse into Dew’s wistful reminiscence of the police force, where he was trying to convince his readers that they really did all they possibly could to stop Jack the Ripper, knowing full well, fifty years later, that they never did and the case went cold.

Dew’s fourth victim, officially the second, was Annie Chapman, and here he gives another brief insight into her life, saying she had once been the wife of a coachman, living a “reasonably happy life” until four years previous. He stated that she left her husband for her lover, although it was more likely she left her marital home due to her alcoholism and the risk it put on her husband’s career in the eyes of his employer.<sup>231</sup>

*And so another woman who had once known respectability and a happy home life met the qualifications which Jack the Ripper required in his victims, and had the bad luck to cross his path early on this September morning.*<sup>232</sup>

Dew shared his opinion that he thought the Ripper was not alone in his secret, not that he had an accomplice, but that someone knew he was committing the murders

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., Loc2689.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., Loc2750.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., Loc2773.

because he would have returned to his home with blood splattered clothing; whether that was a wife or not was another matter.

*Suspicion, I have no doubt, was aroused, but that statement to the police was never made. Why should anyone seek to shield such a monster?*<sup>233</sup>

Dew lists sentiment and fear as two motivators for not coming forward to the police. Sentiment could come from a wife or a mother, knowing that in doing so they would be handing a husband or son over to the gallows, while fear was something felt by many in the East End at the time and people with the knowledge may simply have been too afraid to come forward.<sup>234</sup> While Dew gives a great deal more information than Smith or Macnaghten, as well as more of his own thoughts on the subject, there is still scant information on the victims, although he does appear to try more than others when writing about their part in the case. These five, six or seven women, depending on whose list is used, really did seem to be the least important aspect of these crimes for all involved, despite being the reason for the horrors unfolding in the first place. Were it not for their deaths, then none of this would have happened, Jack the Ripper would not have become the legend that he had. Clearly Dew had bigger reasons for writing his memoir than to just merely report on this crime; he desperately wanted to absolve the police of the criticism they received during the investigation, particularly from the press. This is why so much of this part of his book is dedicated to his thoughts on what was happening inside the investigation and not just what the press could report, which is what much of the Ripper investigation was based on until Dew's book was published. Police officers like Dew were horrified by the events, and getting more anxious with each new murder, especially when one considers the effort they put into trying to apprehend the murderer.

*Never in the history of the East End of London had such elaborate precautions been taken to prevent the very thing which had not only been done, but repeated. . . Knowing all of these precautions and knowing how determined were the police, I*

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., Loc2885.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

*would have staked my life. . .that the Ripper, or any other human being, could not have penetrated that area and got away again.*<sup>235</sup>

Continuing his foray into the Ripper murders, Dew queries exactly what it was that could have drawn these women to the murderer in the first place.

*It will never be known just what were the powers of fascination Jack the Ripper held over women. There must have been something about him which inspired immediate confidence in those he selected as his victims. These poor women knew better than anyone else the grave risks they ran in associating at this time with strange men. This danger to themselves must ever have been uppermost in their minds. Yet they accepted the man's advances seemingly without question.*<sup>236</sup>

Because of this he suggests that the murderer may have been someone different to the popular conception. It was feasible that he appeared as someone “above suspicion”, so why would these women believe this particular man was the killer when so many were shouting about “Leather Apron” or pointing the finger at the Jewish contingent living in the East End.<sup>237</sup> He states that he could not conceive of any woman at that time accompanying any man of “whom she entertained the slightest suspicion” into the dark and dismal court where Elisabeth Stride was found.<sup>238</sup> But then we must accept that these women were desperate and willing to throw all caution to the wind because they needed a few pence to afford a bed or a meal that night, regardless of the danger that abounded at the time, so even if they were suspicious, might they not still have gone with the man? Or was it possible that they were coerced in some other way once they had come close enough to come under threat from him and were not able to fight back? By the time of Elisabeth Stride, it was clear the murderer was no stranger to attacking women on their own.

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., Loc2975-2997.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., Loc3039.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, Loc3062.

*The police were quickly on the spot. They had, in fact, never been far away. . . Poor, pathetic thing! Just another unfortunate of the streets whose pinched face and shabby clothing spoke plainly enough of struggling poverty. . . Traces of prettiness remained in her face, and there must have been a time when she had been exceedingly proud of her curly black hair.*<sup>239</sup>

That same night, as Dew and his men were marshalling a force to hunt the Ripper, the killer struck again less than an hour later at Mitre Square, just inside the City of London boundary, which took the murder of Catherine Eddowes out of their hands and into Smith's. This was thought to be the most shocking of the murders thus far, Catherine's face being "terribly disfigured", but once again, the police were unable to apprehend the villain, even with the City of London police now on the case.<sup>240</sup> In fact, this led to further criticism from the press, which offended Dew, that the City and Metropolitan forces did not co-operate with each other. He said it was, "sheer nonsense" and that the "two forces worked amicably together in this as in thousands of other cases".<sup>241</sup> He then gives a brief background on Catherine, but only to say that she had barely an hour earlier that evening been safely locked away in a jail cell at Bishopsgate Police Station for drunk and disorderly behaviour. Unfortunately, had she remained there she may never have ended up a Ripper victim, but some other poor woman probably would have. Dew also mentions that Elisabeth was a woman with a "tragic history", she was a Swede who had been married to an English carpenter, she was thirty-seven (actually forty-four), and that she claimed to be a widow of the Thames *Princess Alice* disaster "so it was said", suggesting he did not believe this story, which we now know has never been corroborated in any official documents.<sup>242</sup>

In chapter seven of this section, Dew once again brings up his impeccable memory stating that it is one of his chief assets; although he did occasionally get the odd detail wrong, namely ages, if we take much of the rest of his writing as accurate then minor mistakes like that can be forgiven.<sup>243</sup> Finally, Dew arrives at the most horrific of the murders, and he states that even then, fifty years later, he would like to have it "expunged" from his

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., Loc3082.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., Loc3124.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., Loc3124-3148.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., Loc3148-3170.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., Loc3194.

memory.<sup>244</sup> He wrote that as his thoughts go back to Miller's Court, the "old nausea, indignation and horror overwhelm me still", and that his mental image of the scene remained as "shockingly clear as though it were but yesterday".<sup>245</sup> First it must be stated that while Dew claims to be one of the first two detectives on the crime scene of Mary Jane Kelly, there is no independent corroboration of this fact, so we can take only what he says at face value and must assume that he is telling it as he remembers it.<sup>246</sup> From descriptions of the crime scene he witnessed, Dew was clearly traumatised and it is entirely understandable if one looks at the surviving crime scene photographs taken of Mary Jane Kelly. He stated that there was "not much more than a skeleton" and it is difficult to discern anything of the woman in that photograph, even today after it has been digitised and colourised by professionals.<sup>247</sup> Dew again mentions that he had known Mary Jane beforehand.

While the other murders had been sickening, they could not have prepared him for the sight he found at Miller's Court, because they had not approached the "bestial brutality the treatment of the body of poor Marie Kelly, whom I had known well by sight as a pretty, buxom girl".<sup>248</sup> Clearly the sight itself affected him, but perhaps he was so moved by this final crime simply because he had known her prior to her death, whereas he did not appear to have come across any of the previous six women before their murders. It could also have been because she was so much younger than the others, twenty-five to their mid-forties. On Mary Jane, or Marie as he called her, Dew said that, "there was no woman in the whole of Whitechapel more frightened of Jack the Ripper than Marie Kelly".<sup>249</sup> He gives her an almost childlike persona when mentioning the Lord Mayor's Show which was due to take place the day of her death, saying, "she had planned to see it and was looking forward to the spectacle with all the enthusiasm of a girl born and bred in the country".<sup>250</sup> He continues to say that very little else was known about Mary Jane, other than her being Irish born (widely accepted as the truth), and that she had been renting her room from John McCarthy with her partner, Joseph Barnett, with whom she had a "tiff" a few weeks prior to her murder.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., Loc3236.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., Loc3327 – Connell, footnote 532.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., Loc3281.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., Loc3303.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., Loc3370.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., Loc3391.

Little else was said in Dew's book of Mary Jane or any of the other victims, mostly he focused on the investigation and what the witnesses had to say on the case. The final part of his Ripper section begins with the statement, "although many people may not agree with me, I believe that the Miller's Court outrage was the last murder ever committed by Jack the Ripper", and on this he seems to agree with Smith, Macnaghten and Ripperologists alike. All of them think Mary Jane Kelly was the murderer's swan song and that no other death beyond hers was ever linked to that spree in the autumn of 1888.

*There were, I know, other baffling East End murder mysteries which remained unsolved, but I have never been satisfied that they were the handiwork of the demon Jack. People in those days had what may be described as the Jack the Ripper complex. Immediately a murder and mutilation was reported, whether in Whitechapel or in any other part of the country, they jumped to the conclusion that he was the culprit.<sup>252</sup>*

There is no doubt that Chief Inspector Walter Dew found great importance in his work and seemingly felt more personally about the Ripper case than some of his peers did. While the *Macnaghten Memoranda* is considered of highest importance from a Ripperology perspective, *I Caught Crippen* might actually be of more importance when we think of how the victims were viewed at the time and portrayed by men who were deeply involved with and heavily invested in the case. Otherwise, we still know very little about what the police really thought about the events of 1888. We have only an idea thanks to Walter Dew who, despite his desire to show the police in as best a light as possible, did his due diligence in showing the victims empathy and compassion, which was more than could be said for the press of 1888 and some of his colleagues.

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., Loc3455.

*There is little doubt now that Jack the Ripper is dead. I often wonder what sort of an end he met-whether it was peaceful or whether he did develop into the stark, raving maniac he must have appeared at the moment of striking his victims down.*

*Somehow I cannot picture such a man on a peaceful death bed.*

*One word more.*

*I took pleasure in nearly all my work as a police officer. Sometimes it was possible to find even a touch of humour.*

*There was neither pleasure nor humour in the part I played in the greatest crime drama of all time-the mystery of Jack the Ripper.*

- Chief Inspector Walter Dew, *I Caught Crippen*.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid., Loc3579

## Chapter 4

### Jack and Beyond

Since the first non-fiction book about Jack the Ripper was published in 1929, countless others have been released on the subject, particularly during and after the centenary in 1988, adding to the enduring legacy of this killer. However, not quite so much was added to the legacy of his victims until recent years, because so many of the authors have focused almost entirely on the vicious murders and the potential suspects. Rebecca Frost, in her 2018 book, *The Ripper's Victims in Print*, said that, "every time an author writes about a serial killer, there are more victims than killers in the narrative", which holds true not just in the case of Jack the Ripper, but those of Gary Ridgway, Ted Bundy, and John Wayne Gacy, to name a few.<sup>254</sup> What also holds true is that while these men all had multiple victims, the bulk of these books are always about the killer and not the people who suffered at their hands. It is perhaps understandable in the case of Jack the Ripper because his identity is still a mystery. We do not know if it was just one person; of course discussing theories on the identity will take up a large portion of the works on the subject, but it also seems wholly unfair on the victims to neglect them in favour of only ever discussing the person who murdered and mutilated them. We know who they were, we do not know who he was. The Canonical Five have been getting more attention in recent years, however victims like Martha Tabram, who are not generally considered Ripper victims often end up being an afterthought or footnote because they are not considered as important as the five women murdered between late August and November 1888.<sup>255</sup>

Many books about Jack the Ripper have been published claiming to be "definitive", "case closed", or the "full story", all of which are written by Ripperologists, armchair detectives, crime fiction writers, and occasionally professional historians. As with any true crime publication, some are viewed as more plausible than others, and that often depends on the background of the authors and their standing in the wider Ripperology community.

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<sup>254</sup> Frost, Rebecca. *The Ripper Victims in Print*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2018, Loc37.

<sup>255</sup> An argument is often made for the case of Martha Tabram being the first, as her injuries are very similar to those inflicted on the other victims, as well as her death coming in early August, shortly before Polly Nichols. See Appendix 1 for more information.

Donald Rumbelow, Paul Begg, and Martin Fido are considered some of the foremost Ripperologists, having dedicated decades of their lives to researching the case, and their books could accurately be described as a definitive history. Whereas a professional historian like Hallie Rubenhold, who specialises in sex workers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was considered an outsider to the Ripperology community. Ripperologists tend to focus on who the killer was, rather than who the victims were, acknowledging their names and professions, as well as describing in detail their final nights alive and the horrific acts performed upon their bodies, but otherwise ignoring who they were as women. Many of these Ripperologists and authors are men and that perhaps explains why the victims have been side-lined for so long, although this is not to say male authors do not have compassion or empathy, rather they are just not as interested in the ins and outs of working-class women's lives prior to the significant events that ended them.

The lives of these women have often been overlooked and it is time that changed, however the key works in Ripperology may not focus entirely on the victims, but they are still very important to the overall lore of Jack the Ripper and the women he killed.

## Literature

When books published about Jack the Ripper have subtitles such as, "Person or Person Unknown", "One Hundred Years of Mystery", "The Mystery Solved", "The Identity of Jack the Ripper", and "Case Closed", it is easy to see just what draws so many people to the topic in the first place. The mystery and the puzzle of the whodunnit. Cold cases are intriguing to anyone with an interest in crime. Entire websites like *Casebook* and forums on *Reddit* are dedicated to discussing mysteries and trying to figure out who the perpetrator was or why the crime was committed in the first place, which is why the mystery of Jack the Ripper has done such a rip-roaring trade in publishing over the years.

One of the preeminent authors on the topic is Donald Rumbelow, a former City of London police officer and Ripperologist, who is widely regarded as having introduced the Great Victorian Mystery to the modern audience since his publication of *The Complete Jack the Ripper* in 1975. After several decades and requests from other Ripperologists, the book was finally updated in 2004 and then again in 2013 with new information that had been discovered and theories that had been developed. Rumbelow also removed his own preferred suspect from the pool and added his "controversial" suggestion that Elisabeth

Stride was not actually a Ripper victim.<sup>256</sup> This book lays out all of the evidence that has been gathered over the decades in a comprehensive summary. It is considered one of the best, and Rumbelow subjects every theory he has come across to exacting scrutiny in order to determine how many of them, if any, have any merit in truly solving the case. At 134 years distant to the crime spree, it is unlikely to ever be solved, but this is just one of the things that has helped to create such a legacy. In the introduction to the revised edition of the book, Rumbelow gives three reasons why this crime spree is still so intriguing today and why it still invokes fear:

- The killings were brutal – they featured throat-slitting and mutilations
- There is intriguing mystery surrounding the identity of the murderer that stumped the police at the time and still causes much discussion today
- The atmospheric setting of Victorian London, with its fog-shrouded back streets, gas lights and hansom cabs<sup>257</sup>

The story so steeped in mythology it is difficult to write a book without it, as such, Rumbelow further examines this side of the Ripper discourse, giving insight into the portrayal of the Ripper on both stage and screen, as well as the page. Towards the end of the book, he expands on the gruesome legacy to encompass more recent serial killers such as the Yorkshire Ripper and the Düsseldorf Ripper.

Like Rumbelow's book, *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive History*, by Paul Begg, and *The Complete and Essential Jack the Ripper*, by Paul Begg and John Bennett, follow a similar trajectory, laying out the social history of the time, theories and mythology of the murderer, as well as biographies of each victim, including Martha Tabram who does not often receive quite as much page room as the Canonical Five.<sup>258</sup> Begg and Bennett are researchers who are widely regarded as authorities on the subject, and have both have authored and co-authored several books on the subject, as well as advising and appearing in documentaries on the case. This meticulously researched book is broken in three parts. The first focuses on all victims that may have been involved in the case, and not just the Canonical Five, as well as the witnesses who discovered them and the neighbourhoods in which they happened;

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<sup>256</sup> Rumbelow, Donald. *The Complete Jack the Ripper*. London: Virgin Books, 2013, 1.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Begg, Paul, and Bennett, John. *The Complete and Essential Jack the Ripper*. London: Penguin Books, 2013, 11.

the second features the common theories about the identity of the murderer, taking a mostly unbiased view of them and discussing the pros and cons of each theory; and the third deals with the myth and legacy of Jack the Ripper, and the sometimes distasteful way in which the wider public has latched onto the idea via themed pubs, sensationalised walking tours, and wax work museums.

Similarly, Begg's solo outing, *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive History*, has been described by William D. Rubenstein, a professor of Modern History at the University of Wales as, "the clearest, most accurate, and most up-to-date on the Ripper murders, by one of Britain's greatest and most respected experts on the 'autumn of terror' in Victorian London".<sup>259</sup> It is clear that the aforementioned books are the best to read for anyone interested in the crimes of Jack the Ripper, because they deliver such a broad, but precise view of the whole situation with far less opinion and conspiracy than many others fall into the trap of delivering. Begg's book is specifically listed as one that is not trying to identify the culprit, but instead putting the murders within their historical context both in the Victorian period and within London's East End, and how this eventually led to the crimes that took place in 1888. What these three books have in common is that they are not trying to identify the suspect, instead attempting to deliver, and succeeding in doing so, a clear and accurate portrayal of the events that took place between August and November of 1888, without dwelling on why this or that particular suspect is the correct one. Instead they provide fodder for those interested in further research.

One final authority on the Ripper case is Philip Sugden who published *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* in 1994, which as evidenced by the title takes a similar approach to the previously mentioned books. It was Sugden's intention to write a book that presents the facts as clearly as possible, that have been taken from police files and press reports of the time, and he succeeds in doing this. Unlike many authors, he does not set out to convince the reader of his pet suspect theory, instead focusing on what is known about the case, the social history of the time, and much later in the book bringing up the possible suspects rather than starting with the one he thinks is correct, nor does he claim, like so many, that the case is solved. This is why Sugden, Begg, Rumbelow, and Bennett are

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<sup>259</sup> "Jack the Ripper: The Definitive History."

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315834924/jack-ripper-paul-begg>

amongst the most admired and trustworthy of the Ripperologists who have published on the subject; they may have their favourite theories, but they attempt to be objective by presenting their suspect so they fit the facts in ways that can be corroborated. Sugden also determinedly refutes several myths that have sprung up about the case over time, the most popular being the Royal conspiracy and the supposed pregnancy of Mary Jane Kelly that ultimately led to her death. Instead he explains how these myths came about and why they are inaccurate. One final point about his work is that he treats the victims with dignity they do not often receive in other works, detailing their living conditions, and gives them a voice that is picked up later on by others.

On a different note, Tom Wescott's book, *The Bank Holiday Murders*, published in 2014, focuses on only two victims of violent crime in 1888; the first being the April murder of Emma Smith, the second the August murder of Martha Tabram, both of which took place on bank holidays. It makes a point that the death of Polly Nichols on August 31 was not the first unsolved murder of a woman that year, but that she was the next victim in a prolonged crime spree that had actually begun in April, rather than the usually posited August. Polly is usually described as the first of the five canonical victims, while Wescott tries to put the previous two murders within the context of the time and to delve into whether or not Jack the Ripper actually began his grisly work several months earlier than previously thought. He is not the first author to suggest that these two women are linked to the case (even in 1888 this was part of the investigation) however, very few have written in depth or at length on the two women, who are normally given only a paragraph or two in more complete Ripper books. The book features what Wescott describes as new research that may link the murders of Emma and Martha together, although the modus operandi of the crimes is very different, with one being stabbed multiple times and left for dead, while the other was violently sexually assaulted and able to make it to a hospital and recount what happened to her before succumbing to her injuries. Wescott also discusses whether or not all the victims were linked and if this might point to the identity of their killer, which is verging on conspiracy territory, particularly when he suggests that a police officer was actively sabotaging the investigation and possibly even working with the murderer. Wescott states, in a response on the *Casebook* forum, that his intention with this book was to prove that the Whitechapel murders began with, "no less than four women who were attacked – three of them fatally – and all lived in one of two neighbouring houses", and that this is never

discussed in other Ripper books, which suggests that, if known by other Ripperologists, it may not be viewed as significantly by the wider community as he views it.<sup>260</sup> He is, understandably, annoyed that others call it a “conspiracy”, however, if we ignore the oddities in his book, Wescott delivers a meaningful biography of each woman and an interesting account of the information he has discovered or rediscovered in his research for another book, *Ripper Confidential: New Research on the Whitechapel Murders*, published in 2017.

In a different, but no less important, vein than the previous titles, is Judith Walkowitz’s 1992 book, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, which is described as serving as the benchmark for the historiography of women’s studies, particularly in the research of late Victorian women.<sup>261</sup> Women being able to walk on the street and window shop, as well as the anonymity of East London all changed drastically after the Ripper murders, and Walkowitz suggests that it also changed the way in which women were viewed. It increased the tensions between gender and class throughout London, and possibly beyond. Walkowitz’s book has been used as an example of poststructuralist history that is “feasible and productive”, and that it is not just promoting a theory for the sake of it as others before her may have done.<sup>262</sup> As it is not a Jack the Ripper book, it makes sense that the key male figure of the work is someone else, in this case it is W. T. Stead and his works on the “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a portrayal of juvenile prostitution during the 1880s.<sup>263</sup> In a *Feminist Studies* article prior to publication of the book, Walkowitz discussed the myth of Jack the Ripper, the myth of male violence, and the murder of five prostitutes, the book itself focuses on women and culture prior to the Ripper murders, and how the social context of the time made it possible for the Ripper to commit the crimes that eventually took place. The section about Jack the Ripper features a detailed analysis of the media coverage that took place during the crimes and after, and how theories evolved from the antisemitic idea of a Jewish killer (because

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<sup>260</sup> “Bank holiday murders.” <https://forum.casebook.org/forum/ripper-discussions/victims/non-canonical-victims/emma-smith/10040-bank-holiday-murders>

<sup>261</sup> Tunc, Tanfer Emin. “Book Review: Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.” *NWSA Journal* 20, no. 1 (March 2008): 214.

<sup>262</sup> Mumford, Kevin J. “Review: *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* by Judith Walkowitz.” *History and Theory*, vol.32, no.3 (Oct 1993): 357.

<sup>263</sup> Baylen, J. O. “Review: *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Nineteenth Century Britain* by Judith R. Walkowitz.” *Victorian Review*, vol.20, no.1 (Summer 1994): 95.

surely no Englishman would do such a thing) towards the idea of the “sexual psychopath”.<sup>264</sup> She does not claim a direct cause and effect relationship here though, the Ripper murders did not necessarily cause an increase in violence against women.<sup>265</sup> Walkowitz further discusses the contribution of the medical experts during the Whitechapel murders and their contribution to the debate about sex crimes and the “mad doctor” killer, as well as the victim blaming from Fleet Street and their ability to fan the flames of antisemitism.<sup>266</sup> Despite the claim that these murders did not cause an increase in violence, sexual or otherwise, against women, Walkowitz also states that there were men who did begin to impersonate Jack the Ripper and threaten women with the same level of violence, which they may not specifically have committed prior to the spate of murders in 1888.<sup>267</sup> The work ends with a discussion of the Yorkshire Ripper and the feminist responses to this more recent spate of crimes against women, and the way in which women organised patrols and protests, while the media still continued to blame the victims.<sup>268</sup>

Hallie Rubenhold, a female historian, takes a popular history route with her works on women and sexuality, writing the “accessible” history of *Harris’s List of Covent Garden Ladies (1757-1795)* with the 2005 publication *The Covent Garden Ladies: Pimp General Jack and the Extraordinary Story of Harris’s List*, followed by *The Harlot’s Handbook: Harris’s List* of 2008, before penning her book about the five oft-named women murdered by Jack the Ripper, *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper* in 2019. Interestingly, the name of their murderer is only ever mentioned in the title and the introduction, but never again throughout the book, making it clear that her intention is to only devote page room only to these women and not to their killer or any of the theories. The book has been referred to as “important” for its focus on the lives of the women, while challenging long-held assumptions about them. Frances Wilson stating in her review for *The Guardian*, that “few women have had the moment of their deaths returned to more often, and with as much relish” as Polly, Annie, Elisabeth, Catherine, and Mary Jane have, yet so

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<sup>264</sup> Mumford, Kevin J. “Review: City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London by Judith Walkowitz.” *History and Theory*, vol.32, no.3 (Oct 1993): 362

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Curtis, L. Perry. “Review: City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London by Judith R. Walkowitz.” *The American Historical Review*, vol.98, no.4 (Oct 1993): 1200.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

little is still known about their lives.<sup>269</sup> In *The Washington Post*, Wendy Smith describes it as a “blistering counter-narrative to the male, authoritarian, and middle class legend of a demonic superman preying on prostitutes”, further agreeing with Rubenhold and giving criticism to the multitude of Ripper books that speculate endlessly on the identity of the killer while giving little attention to the women who lost their lives to him.<sup>270</sup> Rubenhold instead delivers a “compassionate” look and a “stinging” social history of the time and gives these women back their voices.<sup>271</sup> These women were not just names in newspapers and coroner inquests, they were not merely bodies on the streets, who were not treated with the respect they deserved in patriarchal Victorian England.

Rubenhold is by no means the first historian to delve into the Ripper case, however she is widely regarded as being the first to focus solely on the victims and has become a source of inspiration both for this thesis and others who are interested in the lives of the women during the Whitechapel murders of 1888. However, the fuller picture of the lives of these women is told narratively, taking not only the scant details of their lives found through records, but enmeshing it within the wider context of the time, like Polly Nichols camping in Trafalgar Square with hundreds of others in 1887, and Catherine Eddowes being a pedlar of chapbooks, which were popular at the time. It is not just a picture of each woman, but of working-class women in general and how these five fit into the world prior to the events that linked them in infamy.

### **The Enduring Legacy of Jack**

The name and the idea of this mysterious murderer has persisted for more than a century, with all the sensationalism, the horror, the mystery, and the interest that came with the case as early as the first murder in 1888. The simple fact that the culprit was never caught is perhaps the biggest reason why Jack has left the legacy that he has, which has

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<sup>269</sup> Wilson, Frances. “The Five by Hallie Rubenhold Review – the Untold Lives of Jack the Ripper’s Victims.” *The Guardian*, February 13, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/feb/13/the-five-by-hallie-rubenhold-review-the-untold-lives-of-the-rippers-victims>

<sup>270</sup> Washington post. “Review | Jack the Ripper’s Identity Has Been Endlessly Scrutinized. His Victims Were Largely Forgotten.” April 8, 2019. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/jack-the-rippers-identity-has-been-endlessly-scrutinized-his-victims-were-largely-forgotten/2019/04/05/cc77f4fa-57bb-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/jack-the-rippers-identity-has-been-endlessly-scrutinized-his-victims-were-largely-forgotten/2019/04/05/cc77f4fa-57bb-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e_story.html)

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

permeated western culture ever since, from the names of modern serial killers to films and television, both fiction and non-fiction books, and internet discussions.

When a string of women were brutally murdered in England in the 1970s, the press dubbed the then unknown killer the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’, a moniker which is unlikely to have been coined had Jack the Ripper not preceded this slate of serial killings nearly a century earlier. The Yorkshire Ripper murders ended differently, however, and the victims gained some justice by their killer being apprehended and convicted, his identity becoming known; Peter Sutcliffe would die in prison.<sup>272</sup> Similarly, World War Two saw several women murdered amidst London’s rolling blackouts during the Blitz and this killer was dubbed, ‘The Blackout Ripper’, fifty-four years after Jack, still within living memory of the atrocities of 1888. The killer, Gordon Frederick Cummins, was caught and eventually executed for his crimes.<sup>273</sup> The name of Jack the Ripper did not come about organically, not the way so many serial killers’ nicknames have done in the following decades; instead, it came from the infamous ‘Dear Boss’ letter received by the Central News Agency on September 27 1888, after the murder of Annie Chapman and just preceding the Double Event.<sup>274</sup> Whether the letter really was written by the Whitechapel murderer or if it was a hoax will never be known, historians and Ripperologists come down on both sides of the argument – one point that does go in its favour is the mention of cutting off an ear of a future victim, which did in fact happen to Catherine Eddowes three days later. However, what is known for certain is that it was the first use of the now widely used name that helped to spawn a legend, signed off “yours truly, Jack the Ripper”.<sup>275</sup> It is thought that the name becoming so popular is the reason why so many serial killers since have been given nicknames in the press, popularising them even further and making sure their names lived on in infamy – the Green River Killer, Son of Sam, the Night Stalker, the Original Night Stalker, the Zodiac Killer, and so on; they were memorialised and fictionalised by these names.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Radio Times. “Who Was the Yorkshire Ripper? Horrifying True Story of Peter Sutcliffe.”

<https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/documentaries/true-crime/yorkshire-ripper-peter-sutcliffe-true-story/>

<sup>273</sup> Crime+Investigation UK. “The Blackout Ripper: A Serial Killer in Wartime London.”

<https://www.crimeandinvestigation.co.uk/article/the-blackout-ripper-a-serial-killer-in-wartime-london>

<sup>274</sup> “Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Ripper Letters.” [https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_letters/](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_letters/)

<sup>275</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>276</sup> Thompson, Erin. “Deconstructing “Jack”: How Jack the Ripper Became More Fiction than Fact”. *Augsburg Honors Review*, vol.11, no.4 (2018): 61.

In the case of Jack the Ripper, the legacy began almost straight away, fresh off the back of the Double Event on September 30 1888, when J. F. Brewer wrote *The Curse Upon Mitre Square* using the death of Catherine Eddowes and the location as its central theme.<sup>277</sup> There were countless other stories written at the time, as well as collections of murder broadsides and pamphlets, a handful of which are still held by the British Library, with titles such as *The Whitechapel Blood Book* and *A Complete History of the Whitechapel Horrors*. The news media kept the idea of Jack alive; every time a woman was killed with a knife, especially a poor, working-class woman, the newspapers would create anxiety in its readers by wondering if Jack the Ripper had struck again. This even extended to knife murders of women elsewhere in the world, the media questioning whether Jack could have gone abroad to continue his dastardly deeds.<sup>278</sup> There was little evidence any further murders were related to the murder spree of 1888, but that did not stop the media from bringing it up time and again.

Perhaps the most noticeable example of the legacy of Jack the Ripper is the walking tours of the murder sites that still take place in London most nights. Tours of Whitechapel to stare at the places where these horrific deaths took place is not a new concept, it began as soon as the murders happened. Hundreds would trek to the murder sites to see the police in action, hear the stories from the neighbours, the latest news and gossip, and perhaps even to see if there was evidence of the crimes still available, like blood splashed cobblestones.<sup>279</sup> Even the residents of 29 Hanbury Street, the site of Annie Chapman's murder, would rent out their windows for people to gawk at the yard below. According to Begg and Bennett, no other murder case has so much emphasis on "place" as the Ripper crimes do. Although the streets and yards these murders took place in no longer share the same names or even exist at all, that has not stopped Ripper tours from springing up in London, taking fans of true crime on a sensationalised walkabout, often focusing on the most horrific aspects of the crimes and the mystery surrounding the murderer. These tours gained huge popularity and not a little criticism as the centenary of the murders approached in 1988. The centenary also spawned countless new books on the subject as well as tabloid journalism, which was enamoured with the concept of Ripper experts and excitable tourists

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<sup>277</sup> Flanders, 2011, 452

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 464

<sup>279</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, 264

being shown the murder sites of Whitechapel, not unlike the newspapers of 1888.<sup>280</sup> Not every resident in the area held much fondness for the walking tours, one stating in the *East London Advertiser* in 1996:

*The idea that the area will be regenerated by Jack the Ripper walking tours is pure rubbish. The people who go on these tours spend an hour walking the street being told in grisly detail about the murder of prostitutes, buy a pint in the sponsoring pub, then leave with the image of the East End as a seedy, dangerous red-light district firmly enforced in their minds.*<sup>281</sup>

This is an understandable stance to take; while the tours certainly hold their fascination, there is a certain amount of seediness to them, making entertainment for the paying customer out of the vicious murders of five women whose names are often forgotten by the casual tour-goer by the time it has finished.

Over 130 years later, books are still being published on the subject, when yet another Ripperologist, historian or crime writer has decided they have cracked the case and know who the killer was, often making the facts fit their suspect, cherry-picking what they like and completely ignoring the victims in the process. One of the most notable examples of this was author Patricia Cornwell, popular for crime fiction, who claims to have spent six million dollars of her own fortune in researching her book *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper – Case Closed* in 2002, in which she points the finger of blame at artist Walter Sickert. Overall, Cornwell's book did not go down well with Ripperologists, partly due to the fact that she links a lot of her evidence to debunked theories of mitochondrial DNA found on Ripper letters, particularly letters that have been proven as hoaxes.<sup>282</sup> Not only this, but she seemingly ignored clear evidence that contradicted her theories and later defended the fact that she even wrote the book in the first place. She wrote another short book about the first one, titled *Chasing the Ripper*, published in 2014, which was a rebuttal to the criticism received for her previous book and why she sticks by her theories pertaining to Sickert.

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 270

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 272

<sup>282</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Patricia Cornwell and Walter Sickert: A Primer."  
<https://www.casebook.org/dissertations/dst-pamandsickert.html>

Other books on suspects have been published, this being one of the main angles new Ripper publishing takes, all of which claim to have closed the case despite there being many different theories discussed; one of the most recent being *The Escape of Jack the Ripper: The Full Truth about the Cover-Up and His Flight from Justice*, by Jonathan Hainsworth and Christine Ward-Angus, published in 2021.

Judith Flanders, in *The Invention of Murder*, said that the “crimes of the unknown person dubbed ‘Jack the Ripper’ have probably had more written about them than any since Cain killed Abel”, and this is never more evident than it is in the countless books published, as well as the variety of media that have come out over the past 134 years.<sup>283</sup> There is a seemingly never-ending desire to publish any type of media about Jack the Ripper. This is evident in the video game, *Assassin’s Creed Syndicate*, in which Victorian twin assassins Jacob and Evie Fry have to attempt to solve clues and track down the murderer, allowing the gamer to be “on the ground” in solving the crime rather than just reading about it or watching other people doing it.<sup>284</sup> More well-known is the Hollywood film *From Hell* (2001), based on the Alan Moore graphic novel of the same name and starring Johnny Depp, bringing one of the many theories about the suspect to life, while also changing the dynamic and lives of the victims. Instead of portraying them as they were – alcoholics mostly in their forties, separated from their families with little to their names – they were portrayed as bright young things, with the world at their feet, carrying on affairs with the chief detective in charge of the case, leading to Mary Jane Kelly’s survival in the end.<sup>285</sup> More recently, *Ripper Untold* (2021) was released, following a morgue attendant and an inspector in 1888 as they attempt to solve the Ripper murders. Like Inspector Frederick Abberline in *From Hell*, this film also features a characterisation of a real detective, in this case, Inspector Edmund Reid of H Division, who did also work on the Ripper case.

In 2009, the BBC released a drama series called *Whitechapel*, starring Rupert Penry-Jones and Phil Davis, as modern detectives in Whitechapel solving crimes based on historical incidents; not surprisingly, the first series featured a Jack the Ripper copycat, but it differed from the original crimes because the killer was discovered. Its following series included the modern retellings of other historical crimes – the Kray Twins (1950s and 1960s), the Ratcliffe

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<sup>283</sup> Flanders, 2011, 424

<sup>284</sup> “Syndicate: Jack the Ripper.” PlayStation 4. *Assassin’s Creed*. Ubisoft, 2015.

<sup>285</sup> O’Neill, Gilda. *The Good Old Days*. London: Penguin Books, 2007, 159-160.

Highway Murders (1811), and the Thames Torso Murders (1887-1889), the latter crime spree has also been attributed to Jack the Ripper on occasion, although with a vastly different modus operandi. Similarly, another BBC drama *Ripper Street* (2012), starring Matthew Macfadyen (as Inspector Edmund Reid), was set in 1889, six months after the Ripper killings, and set in Whitechapel, featuring similar cases and the fear of the killer having returned for a new crime spree. Although all of these films and television shows feature historical crime, it is highly unlikely any of them would have been made had it not been for the mystery and legend of Jack the Ripper.

The documentaries that have been made, the majority since the 1988 centenary, are endless, and to this day they are still being made. Many of these documentaries take a simplistic view of the case, essentially telling the viewer, “this is what happened, and we have no idea who did it”, often detailing the grisly nature of the crimes and sparing very little thought for the women affected by it. This is beginning to change in much the same way as it is for the publishing industry. For instance, the docu-drama series *Murder Maps* did an episode titled, *Jack the Ripper: Understanding the Victims to Understand the Murderer*, which featured Ripperologist Donald Rumbelow, amongst other talking heads, giving their opinions on the victims, the crimes, and the suspect. Rumbelow even makes the point that the Ripper murders still fascinate us to this day because we “glamourise them”, even though they are actually horrific murders. Also featured is Hallie Rubenhold, fresh off *The Five*, who adds that “in 130 years we haven’t paid much attention to who the victims were”.<sup>286</sup> As such, this episode does delve into the lives of the victims and those of working-class women in general, more than it dwells on the identity of their murderer. The Jack the Ripper Tour Youtube Channel, created and hosted by Richard Jones, has produced several short form documentaries about various aspects of the crimes, some specifically about the victims, including Martha Tabram and Emma Smith. More recently, there was a 2019 documentary titled *Jack the Ripper: The Case Reopened*, narrated by actress Emilia Fox of *Silent Witness* fame, and *Jack the Ripper: 5 Victims* (2022), which follows the same path as Rubenhold’s book does, featuring a range of experts discussing the victims and the case. These documentaries are strictly about the Canonical Five, however in Fox’s documentary,

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<sup>286</sup> Jack the Ripper: Understanding the Victims to Understand the Murderer | Murder Maps | Real Crime. 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ7FFhEipXk>

they make a point of entering all the details of the Martha Tabram murder into the British Police database HOLMES, to allow it to determine whether there were links between her and the other five victims or not, and the results came back positively. Yet none of this would ever have been possible had one person not caused so much terror in London's East End in 1888.

### **The Popularity of Jack**

How did Jack the Ripper ever become so popular? This was certainly not the first string of murders ever to happen in Britain or the world, nor was he likely even the first serial killer. In fact, in London, the Whitechapel murders were preceded by the brutal Ratcliffe Highway murders of the Marr and Williamson families in December 1811, and further north, the serial killings by William Burke and William Hare in Edinburgh in 1828. Yet while these crimes are known, particularly by those with an interest in nineteenth century crime, they have still not sparked the same phenomenon that Jack the Ripper has. The Ratcliffe Highway murders were never truly solved, as the main suspect never made it to trial, committing suicide in his cell before standing trial. The Burke and Hare murders led directly to the ratification and passing of the Anatomy Act 1832, putting a stop to the illegal retrieval of bodies for anatomising at medical schools. However, these well-known crimes have not led to half as much material over two centuries as the Ripper murders have in just the last thirty years. *Casebook*, the leading website for all things Jack the Ripper, has this to say on the popularity of the crimes:

*He was not the first serial killer, but he was probably the first to appear in a large metropolis at a time when the general populace had become literate and the press was a force for social change. The Ripper also appeared when there was tremendous political turmoil and both the liberals and social reformers, as well as the Irish Home rule partisans, tried to use the crimes for their own ends. Every day the activities of the Ripper were chronicled in the newspapers as were the results of the inquiries and the actions taken by the police.<sup>287</sup>*

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<sup>287</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – Introduction." <https://www.casebook.org/intro.html>

*Casebook* and many other sources pinpoint the press as the reason for why the popularity escalating as much as it did at the time; it was the new mass produced press that made this series of murders a “popular sensation”. Never had so much emphasis, day after day, been placed on something so gruesome, creating a myth out of a deranged killer, which led to him becoming romanticised as time wore on. The press was so involved that they began to mock the police for their inability to catch the killer in a full-page illustration in *Punch*, featuring two criminals poking fun at the policeman standing in the background.<sup>288</sup>

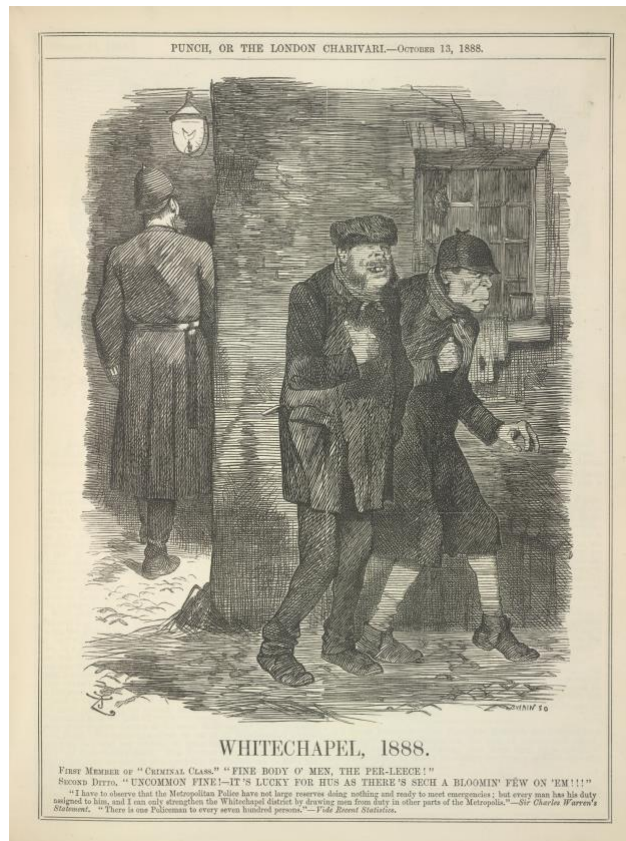


Figure 8. *Punch, or The London Charivari*. "Whitechapel, 1888." October 13, 1888.

Perhaps it was the brazen way in which the killer murdered women, with the exception of Mary Jane, on the streets where anyone could happen along at any moment and catch him in the act. It very nearly happened if we accept that Elisabeth definitely was a victim of the Ripper and not of another violent man out to hurt women the night she and Catherine were killed.

<sup>288</sup> *Punch, or The London Charivari*. "Whitechapel, 1888," October 13, 1888.

Serial killers have become part of popular culture and it is perhaps due to Jack the Ripper that this has happened. The name “Jack the Ripper” appears in more than a hundred books, films, and television shows, despite the fact that his identity remains unknown. As far as more recent serial killers go, his victim count was considerably smaller, yet historians and Ripperologists alike continue to write about him to the point that the simple idea of the killer has become a legend. In the article, “Deconstructing Jack: How Jack the Ripper Became More Fiction than Fact”, Erin Thompson suggests that there is a disconnect between the person and the “legend” that the name of a serial killer becomes a whole other entity to the person as time moves on.<sup>289</sup> According to Thompson there are two Jacks, the Jack the Ripper of the real world and the Jack the Ripper of legend, and the latter is the one that is unlikely to have existed or been remembered at all were it not for the idea of the killer being crafted through different forms of media, such as literature and film.<sup>290</sup> There is the possibility that the popularity of Jack at the time of the Whitechapel murders was due to the legacy of the gothic genre that began in 1764, over a century earlier. People were already reading books such as *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole and *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley to escape from the very real, dreadful state of Victorian Britain, that the media capitalised on the murders, and they became very profitable entertainment.<sup>291</sup>

True crime writer Kirk Gill suggests that two of the things that made Jack the Ripper such a sensation was the large presence of press in London and the fact that the murderer sent letters to the press, although they are often refuted as being hoaxes, despite the infamy of the “Dear Boss” letter. However, the letters being sent led to the idea that the killer was interacting with the press, thereby leading the press to excitedly publish more and more articles on the case, even when little seemed to be happening.<sup>292</sup> Murder was a lucrative industry and nearly every newspaper, penny dreadful, and novelist wanted a share of it and so they made sure to either write about the Ripper, even creating new stories like *Sweeney Todd* to capitalise.

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<sup>289</sup> Thompson, Erin. “Deconstructing “Jack”: How Jack the Ripper Became More Fiction than Fact”. *Augsburg Honors Review*, vol.11, no.4 (2018): 56.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 57

*The Whitechapel murders proved a journalistic windfall... What transpired in London...was not just a series of five sadistic murders but a serial story combining mystery and sensation-horror... cobbled together by a metropolitan press eager to boost sales.*<sup>293</sup>

The newspapers published on the murders on a daily basis until they suddenly came to a halt shortly after the death of Mary Jane Kelly. But during those three months the penny dreadfuls began with *The Curse Upon Mitre Square*, by J. F. Brewer, which was the first time Jack was turned into a fictional villain despite his crimes still taking place; it was called a “shameless bit of exploitation fiction”.<sup>294</sup> Books were written immediately that took inspiration from the Ripper murders and then the first one specifically about the Ripper was published in 1913, *The Lodger*, by Marie Belloc Lowndes, which was then turned into a film by the “Master of Suspense” Alfred Hitchcock in 1936, further elevating the story to a wider audience, and then being remade eight years later.<sup>295</sup>

Despite the mark Jack the Ripper has left on history in Scotland Yard’s police files and in popular culture, remaining one of the most prominent figures historically and in literature, we still know nothing about him as a person. In fact, we know nothing beyond him murdering these women, including the possibility that he killed as few as three or as many as nine or ten. Because of this, many people have filled in the gaps either to try giving a broader picture of what the killer was like or to fit their own narrative of who they think he was, which has led to far more theories than there ever were victims. Jack the Ripper became a real life “gothic monster”, his legend spreading through history to all forms of media, that seem in no hurry to slow down, and it has led to the story of a killer that is unlikely to ever end due entirely to the fact that he was never caught, which has left open ended possibilities for the name to live on.

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<sup>293</sup> Curtis, L. Perry. *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*. New York: Yale University Press, 2001, 115.

<sup>294</sup> Collins Smith, Cindy, introduction to *The Curse Upon Mitre Square* by J. F. Brewer, 1888, p vii-viii.

<sup>295</sup> Thompson, 2018, 60-61.

## Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate two main research questions. First, how were the victims of the murderer known as Jack the Ripper portrayed in the media at the time and in the memoirs of police who worked on the case. Second, it sought to assess the literary legacy of Jack the Ripper, often referred to as ‘Ripperology’ and how it has evolved over time.

The thesis commenced with a discussion of the social context within which the murders took place. It argued that the nineteenth century was a harsh time for working-class women, especially in London’s East End, and this was true for the women who became victims of the Whitechapel Murders in 1888. None of them wanted to end up on the streets, but it was a necessity, “when desperation took over, these destitute women would have little alternative but to trade on their raw wits and their bodies”, which was often the only thing that would keep them out of the workhouse.<sup>296</sup> If they chose street prostitution, then there was the chance that things could get better for them, unfortunately for Martha, Polly, Annie, Elisabeth, Catherine, and Mary Jane, this would never happen, because their lack of choices led them directly into the path of the murderer known as Jack the Ripper.<sup>297</sup> If women became prostitutes, then they were of little consequence to anyone; they were suffering long before they met their ends

Whether or not they were prostitutes is still open to interpretation and is generally the widely accepted belief. It was most likely economic need that took them to the streets on the nights that they died.<sup>298</sup> Sexual violence towards women in the nineteenth century was incredibly common as it sadly still is today, and it is a very real problem, not helped by the easily accessible and widespread pornography on the internet, which contributes to the violence against women that is deeply rooted in our society.<sup>299</sup> Despite this, violent crimes and especially those against women are still capitalised on and treated as entertainment in the likes of Madame Tussaud’s ‘Chamber of Horrors’:

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<sup>296</sup> O’Neill, Gilda. *The Good Old Days: Poverty, Crime and Terror in Victorian London*. London: Penguin Books, 2007, 103.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> DeKerseredy, Walter S. “Pornography and Violence Against Women.” In *The Wiley Handbook on the Psychology*, edited by C. A. Cuevas and C. M. Rennison, 501-16. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2016, 506.

*The power of the 'male gaze' does not go unchallenged, however; it is met by the blunt, frontal stare of prostitute Mary Kelly, standing at her door; audacious, unflinching looks, like these, or so cultural critics tell us, are a sure sign of the unchaste public woman whose sinful wages must lead to death.<sup>300</sup>*

Looking at the circumstances and the behaviour of the media and the police through a twenty-first century lens is not helpful, and some understanding must be shown for why they treated the victims the way that they did in the nineteenth century.

Accordingly, the second chapter examined the media coverage of the murders in the wider context of newspaper reporting at the time. The media began reporting on the murders immediately. Murder sold papers, and while the public were “scared and angry” about the events unfolding, they were also “morbidly fascinated by the most intimate details of the vile events”.<sup>301</sup> British newspapers filled columns with gory details about the murders and the hunt for the suspect, but spared little thought for the victims, which would become a long running theme in Ripper publications for the next century. Although their deaths were the reason for all the publicity at the time, little care was given to them by the media. The portrayal of these women by the media was entirely unfair, though understandable given the time in which it took place.

Chapter Three analysed the ways in which police officers wrote about the case. It argued that in the writings of Police officers like Smith, Macnaghten, and Dew, the women were still viewed as objects of grisly fascination rather than real people. Although the *Macnaghten Memoranda* has become one of the most important pieces of material for Ripperology due to his certainty about suspects, he spares little thought for the victims. He confidently referred to these women as the “lowest dregs of female humanity” in his book, *Days of My Years*, published less than thirty years after the crimes took place, which was sadly all too common.<sup>302</sup> But of the three police officials studied here, one did take a different view of the victims, and dedicated far more page room in his book to them than

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<sup>300</sup> Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 1.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>302</sup> Macnaghten, Sir Melville Leslie. *Days of My Years*. E. Arnold, 1914, 56.

others: Walter Dew. Although his descriptions of the women are equally negative, referring to them as the “unfortunate class” and saying that “few of them were pretty or young”, he still details far more about them than anyone else, and shows a particular fondness for Mary Jane.<sup>303</sup>

These women are amongst the most talked about in history, their deaths have been discussed in minute detail, yet little was widely known about their lives until the work of historians like Rebecca Frost and Hallie Rubenhold. The findings of this thesis are in alignment with their research; however others do not appear to have focused on the portrayal of the victims as written by the police before as has been done here. As such, the findings here add on to what Frost has already contributed to the study of the victims through her focus on their portrayal in non-fiction since the 1930s. For a long time the media about these women has been unbalanced, they have been referred to only as prostitutes, often blamed for their own deaths, with little respect or page room given to them. They were always mentioned in publications, and many Ripperologists write potted biographies of the Canonical Five, but none with as much detail as the aforementioned authors gave. Rubenhold’s focus in *The Five* placed the women within their wider social context, giving them a voice they had long since lacked, and utterly ignoring the man who killed them. Frost’s focus comes from the same direction as this thesis, regarding the media and its portrayal of the women, stating that of all the true crime books she read, they “overwhelmingly devoted space on the page to the killer”.<sup>304</sup> As such, Frost’s study discusses the descriptions of the women by other authors, usually male, and how they were represented and whether it has changed over time. What Frost found was overt victim-blaming and lack of interest in their lives, and as the years wore on, the books veered further away from the victims and leaned heavily on suspect theories.

Chapter Four discussed the ways in which the literature on Jack the Ripper has evolved. Throughout my research, it became clear that the majority of writers on the subject of Jack the Ripper were not interested in the victims; most went into the topic solely to write about the horrific murders and all the possibilities for the identity of the murderer, shedding very little light on the women he killed. Many different facets of this case have

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<sup>303</sup> Dew, Walter. *The Annotated I Caught Crippen: Memoirs of Ex-Chief Inspector Walter Dew, C.I.D.* Edited by Nicholas Connell. London: Mango Books, 2018, Loc2195-2217.

<sup>304</sup> Frost, 2018, Loc32.

been researched and written about, yet the one that has determinedly escaped attention over the years is the stories of the victims, with very few publications dedicated to them. More women are now taking part in Ripperology, putting their names to books and articles on the subject, as well as creating other content that heavily focuses on the victims of crime instead of the perpetrators of it. The field of scholarship surrounding the victims has been changing slowly. A lot of this comes from digital media, such as podcasts, as well as online content with people discussing the victims on top of the many hundreds of theories about the suspect. People with an interest in history turn to the internet, with the likes of *Facebook* and *Reddit* having many groups and subreddits dedicated to the overarching subject of history and just as many with a much narrower brief – there are more than thirty *Facebook* groups about Jack the Ripper. Official records and historical newspapers are now available online, which allows for research to be done by anyone anywhere in the world. This has made history much more accessible to the masses, allowing anyone with a cursory interest to learn and interact with the topic, sometimes asking questions that make the experts reconsider their views. Non-historians approaching the topic often shed a different, more emotional light on the case, rather than viewing it academically, and can be heard in podcasts on not just Jack the Ripper, but other murder cases, that have hosts identifying with the victims and their circumstances rather than telling the bare facts of the case in an educational but unfeeling way. There is much greater sympathy for them as both women and as victims than there used to be.

The true crime phenomenon has brought historical crimes to the masses in much the same way. Much of the media, particularly podcasts, take care to put the focus on the victims because they are aware of just how much publicity murderers receive at the expense their victims. In historian Dan Snow's *History Hit* podcast, in the episode 'Jack the Ripper Retold' with Rubenhold, the point is made that by "by looking at the victims you look at the case in a whole other way", turning it on its head, giving it a fresh angle that has not necessarily been covered before.<sup>305</sup> That is what this thesis has aimed to do, shed a new light on the study of Jack the Ripper, focusing on the media portrayal of the victims, and the unfairness of how they were treated for so long by their contemporaries and later modern

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<sup>305</sup> Snow, Dan. "Jack the Ripper Retold." Dan Snow's History Hit, n.d. <https://podcasts.apple.com/nz/podcast/dan-snows-history-hit/id1042631089?i=1000538153520>.

authors. Although I initially entered into this research under the impression that few were paying attention to the victims, it became apparent that more are doing so outside of the field of publishing and are working tirelessly to give these women a voice. The state of debate on the victims of Jack the Ripper has been thoroughly analysed here and there has been significant change in emphasis towards the victims since the arrival of digital media and archives. There is still an opening for further research into the lives and portrayal of these women because there is so much information available both in newspapers and records at the British Archives. I would qualify this topic by taking it forward and extending it beyond the parameters of Jack the Ripper. This would involve researching the topic of Victorian women and crime, whether they be the victims or perpetrators, in the urban environments of Great Britain and Europe; what was it about society that led them deliberately or inadvertently into the path of crime and has it really changed more than a century later?<sup>306</sup>

Looking to the future, the Whitechapel Society 1888 have been planning a memorial to all victims of the Whitechapel Murders, whether that be five women or more, giving these women a bigger profile than their killer and a permanent reminder to anyone who walks past that this horrific event happened.<sup>307</sup>

*Heartfelt signs of respect are often posted on internet message boards and on Facebook by people who have nothing to do with the murdered women, beyond an abiding interest in the events that led to and surrounded their deaths. Those women have a strange power to touch people's lives. Is it a genuine sympathy, or is it a by-product of a sense of guilt – an apology for being so fascinated by a subject that only exists because of their awful demises?<sup>308</sup>*

Similarly, new plaques have been placed in the cemeteries where the Canonical Five were laid to rest, although these are slowly disappearing due to redevelopments, hence the

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<sup>306</sup> Although studies have been done on such topics before, a fresh approach is often welcome. Some recent publications on women and crime include: Davis, Mick, & David Lassman. *The Adventures of a Victorian Con Woman*. Great Britain: Pen and Sword History, 2020; Eddleston, John J. *Criminal Women: Famous London Cases*. Great Britain: Wharnccliffe Books, 2010; Clifford, Naomi. *Women and the Gallows 1797-1837*. Great Britain: Pen and Sword History, 2017.

<sup>307</sup> Begg, et al., 2013, p263.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

need for a permanent memorial to these women and to take some attention away from Jack the Ripper.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Martha Tabram as a Ripper Victim

Martha Tabram is not often included in the official tally of canonical Ripper victims of which there is generally five, however, she was included in this thesis because I believe that she was one. There are a few things that are in her favour for being the first major victim of Jack the Ripper, not just the time of her death, three weeks before Polly Nichols, and the manner in which she died as well, but also the fact that she was considered a victim right up until the rediscovery and publication of the *Macnaghten Memoranda* in 1959.<sup>309</sup>

It is impossible to say whether or not Martha or any of these women were all victims of the same perpetrator, however Martha is the one most often discounted by Ripperologists. This is usually because they claim her injuries do not match those of later victims, although she was stabbed thirty-nine times and the wounds were targeted at her neck and abdomen. There was also a clear escalation with each later victim, with the exception of Elisabeth Stride (the killer is oft thought to have been interrupted here). We can never know for sure about any of them, but there were similarities between Martha's case and that of the Canonical Five:

- She was most likely a prostitute
- She previously led a life similar to the others, falling on hardship due to her own alcoholism
- She was murdered in a dark back street, probably by a man she perceived to be a client
- Her body was found in a pose identical to three of the Canonical Five
- Several police officers at the time, including Inspector Abberline, Chief Inspector Donald Swanson, and Dr Robert Anderson, thought she was a victim of the same murderer.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Begg, Paul, Martin Fido, and Keith Skinner. *The Complete Jack the Ripper A-Z*. Kindle. London: John Blake Publishing Limited, 2015, Loc6769.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, Loc10491.

- Although she was thought to have been killed by a soldier according to her friend Pearly Poll, who was last to see her alive, this was never corroborated, and no one was ever caught despite police attempts to do so based on Poll's account
- She was only removed from the official tally after the *Macnaghten Memoranda* became publicly available and highly influential, despite police officers who actually worked on the case holding different beliefs.<sup>311</sup>

There seems little reason not to include Martha in the official tally of Jack the Ripper, especially if we are to continue including Elisabeth, who was not killed in the same manner as the others, and whom renowned Ripperologist, Donald Rumbelow, has discounted.<sup>312</sup>

## Appendix 2

### Dear Boss Letter

Hundreds of letters were sent to the police and local press agencies during the Whitechapel Murders, all of them purporting to have been written by the murderer himself. The majority of these were deemed to be hoaxes, many of which were attributed to journalists trying to further the story or fame hungry fools trying to incite more terror. Many Ripperologists believe that all of these letters were hoaxes, that Jack never contacted the police or the media, however, some do believe that a handful were genuine, specifically the 'Dear Boss' letter, the 'From Hell' letter, and the 'Saucy Jacky' postcard.<sup>313</sup>

The 'Dear Boss' letter was received by the Central News Agency on 27 September 1888, and it was originally believed to be another hoax, however, three days later, the Double Event took place, which made all who had read it reconsider their assessment after it was learnt that part of one of the victims' ears had been cut off just as promised in the letter.<sup>314</sup> The police deemed the letter important enough to reproduce in newspapers, hoping that someone would recognise the handwriting, but no one ever did, or if they did, no one ever came forward. If it was still a hoax, and a luckily guessed one at that, then the

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<sup>311</sup> Begg, Paul, and John Bennett. *Jack the Ripper: The Forgotten Victims*. Great Britain: TJ International, 2013, 21.

<sup>312</sup> Rumbelow, Donald. *The Complete Jack the Ripper*. London: Penguin Books, 2013. Forward.

<sup>313</sup> Begg, et al., 2015, Loc6077.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

journalist or member of the public involved certainly would not say so. Several police officers, including Anderson and Swanson, were convinced it was the work of a journalist, but this was not written until after 1910 and no corroboration ever took place.<sup>315</sup> A few days later, on 1 October, a postcard was received, again by the Central News Agency, which made direct reference to the Double Event, and the 'Dear Boss' letter, and was believed to have been written by the same hand.<sup>316</sup>

The letter itself would perhaps have disappeared into obscurity as so many others did, were it not for the name it was signed with. What made this letter go down in infamy was that it was signed, "yours truly, Jack the Ripper", the first use of this name, and the reason that moniker became known and grew in popularity right from the time the letter was published in the newspapers. From that moment on, all letters, hoaxes or not, included the name Jack in some form, with the exception of the 'From Hell' letter, which itself would spawn the name of a graphic novel and a Hollywood film.

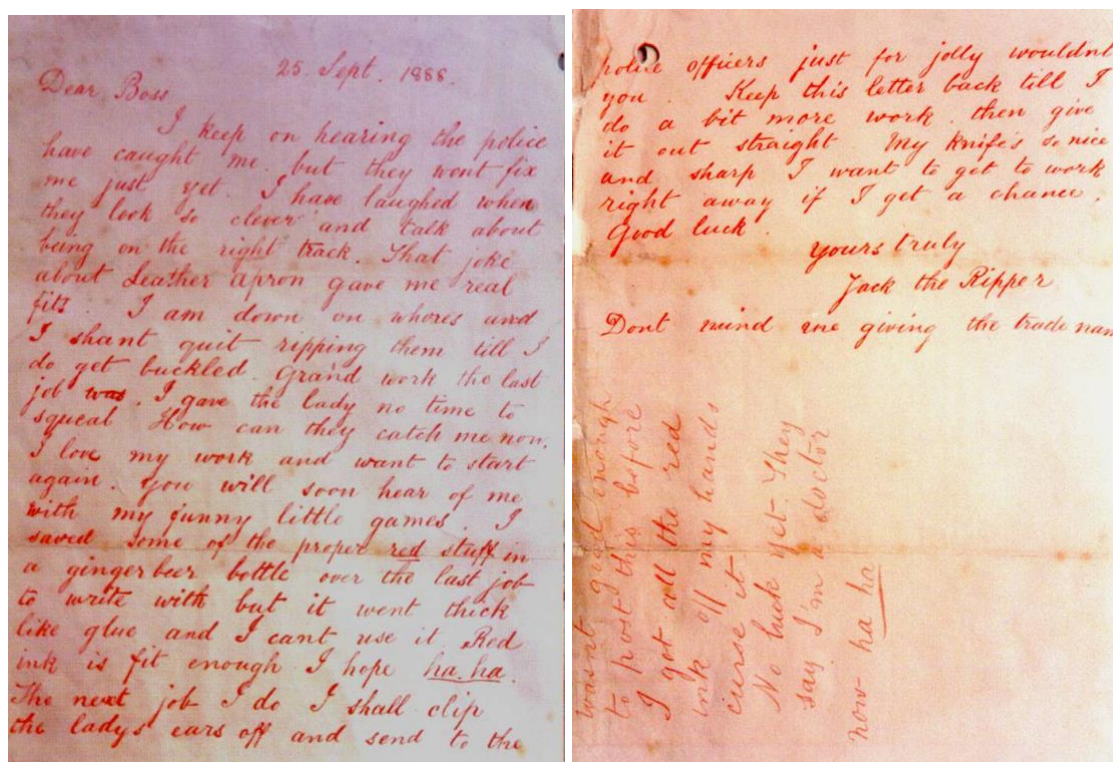


Figure 9. Dear Boss letter. Courtesy of S. P. Evans/M.E.P.O./Casebook.org<sup>317</sup>

<sup>315</sup> Ibid. Loc6095.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> "Casebook: Jack the Ripper – The Letters." [https://www.casebook.org/ripper\\_letters/](https://www.casebook.org/ripper_letters/)

**Transcription:**

*Dear Boss*

*I keep on hearing the police caught me but they wont 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 shant 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 red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I cant 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 Wasnt 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*

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