

# VILLAINS OF VICTORIAN LONDON

## JACK OR JACKIE THE RIPPER?

So what would countless generations of writers, film, TV producers, historians and the like actually do without that gut stripping legend called Jack the Ripper? Where that slayer of harlots in the murky, dimly lit streets of London's Whitechapel plied his trade without ever having been caught by London's finest. Despite sending in letters and bits of extracted body parts to various receivers, Jack escaped the hangman's noose to weave his legendary web across the years and inspire even more deadly killers to follow in his bloody and violent footsteps.



1870s Photograph of Michael Ostrog



Aaron Kosminsk

Jack terrorised London between 1888 and 1891 and he was listed as being responsible for the killing of eleven ladies during that period, probably everything during that period was cited as a 'Ripper Crime' and the Police narrowed Jack down to four suspects. Michael Ostrog, Aaron Kosminski, Dr. Francis Tumblety and Montague John Druit.

No mention in the official police files of 'a member of the Royal Family' as many films have suggested. Ostrog



Dr. Francis Tumblety



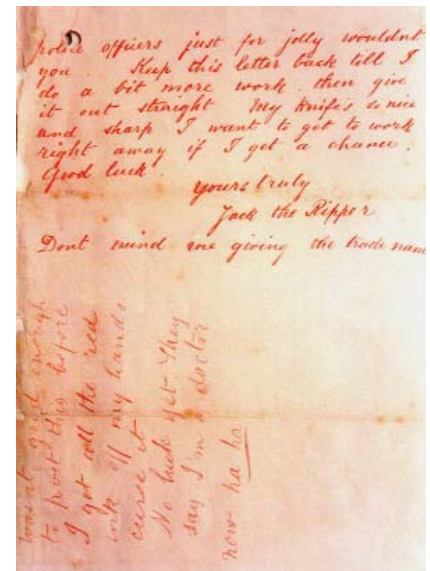
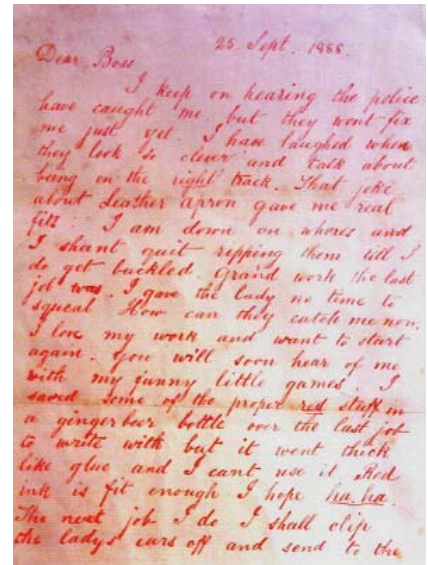
Montague John Druit

Dr. Robert Anderson who was in charge of the case, did favour Kominski. Tumblety, an American "Doctor" of dubious reputation was the last suspect on their official list. The fact remains, that there was insufficient evidence to convict anyone. He cut their throats, gutted them, took their internal organs and even the heart it is suggested in one case. So what was his modus operandi? Was he insane? Was he driven? Was he a religious fanatic? He obviously didn't like women, or to be precise, a certain kind of woman, was he gay? Was he a surgeon? A doctor? A Royal? The questions are endless and the evidence is zero. That's what makes

and Kominski were both Jews, the latter poor and the former was detained in asylums on several occasions. It was popular at the time to blame misfortunes on the Jews and Druit killed himself in 1888. These three suspects were muted by Sir Melville MacNaghten who was the Assistant Chief Constable of the Metropolitan Police CID department. There was very little evidence however to substantiate MacNaghten's claims but his superior,

Jack a legend. **Was Jack a Woman?** Has anyone asked that question or even investigated the possibility? Crimes of this nature were always ring fenced to men in Victorian times as women were the gentler sex who stayed at home and looked after the household. Maybe a lady who had extremely high morals took it upon herself to pay back the women that her husband visited in Whitechapel? 'Hell hath no fury' as the saying goes. Who knows, but it's possible. In fact, anything's possible in a case that has carried on over the years without resolve.

On September 27th 1888, a letter was received



Illustrated Circular, January 1884, from the Metropolitan Police Convict Supervision Office. The CID issued circulars containing photos of criminals. Photo 10 is of Michael Ostrog, who later became a prime suspect for the Ripper murders.

by The Central News Agency by a person signing as Jack the Ripper. So that's how the name

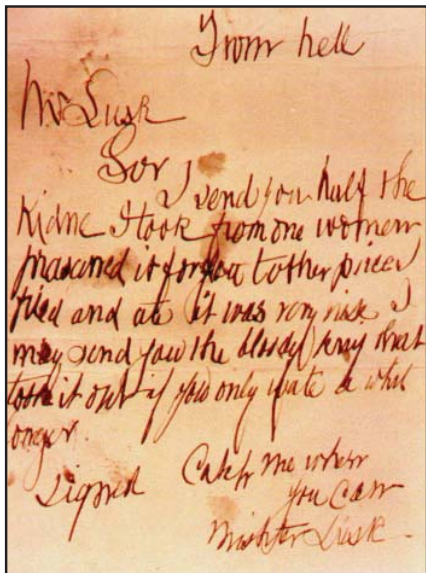


originated, by the letter writer who was obviously a good self-publicist. The contents or part thereof said "I am down on whores and I shall keep on ripping them till I do get buckled". Mmmm, down on whores (could be a woman!) Another note written later on a postcard in red ink shows that the writer had legible handwriting and possessed a certain amount of intelligence. It certainly wasn't unreadable scrawl. Again signed Jack the Ripper, the writer refers to a 'double event' yet no clarification of what the double event was. After the murder of Catherine Eddows took place in Mitre Square, Aldgate, a blood stained apron was found in a doorway and chalked on the wall above was written 'The Juwes are The men that Will not be Blamed for nothing.' Did Jack leave this to throw the blame on Jews or did someone else try to stir up anti-Semitic hatred? Another question, no answer.

Take the money or open the box the old quiz show went. Well on October 16th 1888, builder



**George Lusk** who was also Chairman of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee did in fact receive a box in the post. Upon opening, fearless George discovered a raw piece of fresh



meat. Indeed, it was half of a human kidney with a note inside claiming that the writer had fried and eaten the other half which he said was "very nice". It was addressed 'From Hell' with a message "Catch me if you can Mishter Lusk". Poor old George, what a challenge, but the Police put it down to a hoax by a medical student, but there was another opinion that thought it was part of Catherine Eddows missing organ. There are spelling issues in this note which are not

apparent on the earlier postcard either. So, was everyone and their cook getting in on the act? Was this the birth of the tabloid press? Topless torsos in Victorian London...Wow! How much of the Ripper affair was hype and how much was fact? Did the Police ever have a clue who the Ripper actually was? What is fact, is the mt bodies and various notes. The rest seems to be conjecture, supposition and downright fantasy. It started to abate after the murder of Mary Kelly in November 1888. The Police had probably arrested everyone in Whitechapel and the surrounding areas by then and still hadn't a clue as to Jack's true identity. Ms Kelly's demise was a particularly gruesome affair and was the most frenzied attack to date.



Punch cartoon by John Tenniel (22 September 1888) criticising the police's alleged incompetence.

Jack (if it was him) was obviously out to celebrate the Lord Mayor's Show and wanted to mark the good gentleman's investiture and celebrations with his own brand of partying. This murder led to the resignation of Met Commissioner Sir Charles Warren who was quickly replaced by James Munro. In 1896, the Inspector then charged with han-



dling the Ripper case was Henry Moore. It was Moore who received the final Ripper letter and the last suspect to be arrested, a man called Sadler, was released as he was at sea during the murders. It would appear that the investigations were also at sea during the period. Ok, so we are in the lap of luxury these days with fingerprinting, DNA and a multitude of other diabolical forensic goodies in the law protector's arsenal. Back then, it was pure legwork and guesswork, backed up by public information received. Is it any wonder that this unseen killer remained anonymous, hidden within the foggy depths of Whitechapel?

There have been recent suggestions that it was actually Dr. Tumblety, that dubious American 'qack' who was the Ripper. Again, speculation, no proof, no evidence. Sell more books for another writer and another publisher, that about the nearest to Jack anyone gets. And so it goes on, another year in which it is an absolute certainty that Jack the Ripper's ghost will still be haunting the World....or could it be Jackie the Ripper?



The theories continue, as do the films, books and plays.