
THE HUNT FOR *Jack the Ripper*

William D. Rubinstein reviews the achievements of the 'Ripperologists' and lends weight to the argument surrounding the Ripper Diaries.

The brutal murders of five prostitutes in London's East End in the autumn of 1888 by an unknown killer who came to be called 'Jack the Ripper' are probably the most famous unsolved crimes in history. During the past forty years a plethora of theories has been offered as to the identity of the Ripper. In recent years, the Ripper industry has mushroomed: it is likely that more has been written on this case than on any other staple of amateur historiography (the true identity of Shakespeare and the Kennedy assassination possibly excepted). The number of books about Jack the Ripper published internationally shows this dramatically: 1888-1909—nine; 1910-49—five; 1950-69—four; 1970-79—ten; 1980-89—twelve; 1990-99—thirty-nine. Most of these offer original 'solutions' to the question of the Ripper's identity. There has also been a stream of films, television programmes and novels. Two high quality British journals, *The Ripperologist* and *Ripperana*, are devoted to the subject, as are two others in America. The 'Cloak and Dagger Club', with a membership of over 220, is devoted almost exclusively to presenting talks and seminars on Jack, almost always with the aim of identifying the killer.

The five prostitutes were stabbed to death in Whitechapel between August 31st and November 9th, 1888, always late at night. Then, for unknown reasons, the killings stopped. Each of the women—Mary Ann (Polly) Nichols (August 31st, 1888), Annie Chapman (September 8th), Elizabeth Stride and Catharine Eddowes (both September 30th, about half-a-mile apart), and Mary Jane Kelly (November 9th)—was not merely murdered, but horribly mutilated, with organs removed and a strong possibility of cannibalism. The last victim was mutilated almost beyond recognition. Even today, the photographs of the bodies are still deeply shocking.

Jack the Ripper is often said to have been the first 'serial killer' (apparently random, sequential murders of the same type of victim) in the modern sense. Nothing like this had ever been

known before in Britain. As the killings unfolded, fear gripped the East End, a near-riotous situation developed, and hundreds of extra police were drafted in to patrol the streets of Whitechapel. Although the Ripper was reportedly seen by several witnesses, he was never caught, and seemed time and again to slip through the dragnet like magic. While the police had many suspects, in the final analysis they remained baffled. Among those suspected were doctors, or slaughtermen (the removal of the victims' organs implied anatomical knowledge), Jews or other foreigners from the large local community of recent immigrants, Fenians, lunatics and eccentrics of all shades, local workingmen, and associates of the murdered women. No one was ever charged. Since 1888 dozens, perhaps hundreds, of candidates have been proposed as the Ripper, ranging from dukes to dustmen, from Oxford scholars and millionaires to lunatics.

Whitechapel, adjacent to the City of London, and only a mile from the Bank of England, was synonymous with urban poverty and squalor. It was often known to middle-class Londoners as the 'Abyss.' Nevertheless, it is important not to exaggerate conditions there. According to Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London*, (1891–1903), the 90,000 inhabitants of Whitechapel (out of 900,000 in the East End) did indeed have the highest percentage in poverty of any London district (47 per cent), but nearly 53 per cent were living in what Booth described as 'comfort', that is, enjoying a normal working-class standard of living or higher. The district had a normal infrastructure of local government, shops, businesses, transport, and services. Many of the recent Eastern European Jewish and other immigrants were upwardly mobile in a determined way, working hard towards starting their own businesses. Each religious and ethnic group maintained its own network of charitable and educational institutions. Above all the East End was not seriously violent. In 1887 not a single murder was recorded

in Whitechapel. (A total of eighty murders occurred in the whole of London in 1887, almost exactly the same, in *per capita* terms, as the number, 142, of murders in London in 1997.) It was the rarity of homicides in the East End, let alone grotesque multiple killings, which made the Ripper so infamous.

More is now known about the lives of the murdered women than any other group of working-class women in Victorian England.

What distinguished London's East End from most other large British cities was the absence of factory capitalism. Although there were large-scale employers of labour, such as the major breweries and railways, most firms were small-scale, with the largest form of employment, the docks, being notorious for hiring on a daily, casual basis. The East End was thus characterised by chronic under-employment which left tens of thousands constantly on the borderline of dire poverty. This was an even more drastic situation for women than men. In the north of England, most working-class girls were employed for a few years in a factory, enabling them to build up a small nest-egg before marriage. The East End was largely lacking in this possibility. There was a vast transitory population of sailors on shore leave, dock and building workers, recent unattached male immigrants, and slumming City men. As a result, prostitution was endemic, and even married women sold themselves to help make ends meet. In October 1888, at the height of the Ripper killings, the Metropolitan Police reported that there were believed to be 1,200 'low class' prostitutes in Whitechapel, in sixty-two brothels. (There may well have been thousands of other 'streetwalkers'.) Most were in poor health, many suffering from venereal disease and alcoholism. They walked the streets, often late at night. It was from this class that the Ripper chose his victims.

The notoriety of the Whitechapel killer was augmented by other factors. The name 'Jack the Ripper' derives from a postcard sent to 'Dear Boss,' the head of the Central News Agency, on September 25th, 1888, signed 'Yours truly, Jack the Ripper.' Many believe that this postcard was actually written by a journalist, though there is no clear evidence for this. The only clue apparently left by the Ripper was the so-called 'Goulston Street Graffito [graffiti].' The words 'The Juwes are the men that Will not be Blamed for nothing', were chalked, seemingly by the murderer, on a doorway immediately above a portion of the bloodstained apron of victim Catharine Eddowes. What these words might mean—if, indeed, they were written by the Ripper—has been hotly debated. Some believe that 'Juwes' was a code-word for the Freemasons, who allegedly employ similar terminology in their ceremonies. If the commonsense meaning is the intended one, it is unclear whether the graffiti was supposed to blame the Jews or point to their innocence. Fearful of

the message leading to antisemitic rioting, the London police quickly erased the graffiti.

It is probably the elusiveness of a true solution to the Ripper mystery that remains its central attraction to researchers. Most believe that some rearrangement of the evidence combined with a lucky new find will enable them to crack the secret. Perhaps it will. The association of the Ripper with the London of Sherlock Holmes, with fogs, riverside opium dens, the haunts of prostitutes and criminals, virtually adjacent to great wealth and the aristocracy, is enticing to many. Added to this, many amateur Ripper historians are Londoners, often with ancestral roots in the East End. For them, Jack the Ripper is a part of their heritage. Meanwhile, the prolific output of research on the Ripper has had many benefits for social historians. The five murdered women have been investigated in minute detail to see if any association can be found with any Ripper suspect or with each other (none has been discovered). As a result, probably more is known about the lives of these five than of any other group of working-class women in Victorian England. Detailed research on the Ripper crimes has also shed considerable light on a range of late Victorian institutions, from the police to the press.

There are about fifteen leading candidates for the true identity of the Ripper. None is wholly satisfactory, although one suspect in particular is highly convincing. Modern research on the Ripper is often dated from 1959, with the publication that year of the 'MacNaghten Memorandum', a document apparently written in the 1890s, naming three prominent Scotland Yard suspects. Sir Melville MacNaghten (1853–1921) had joined Scotland Yard in June 1889, eight months after the last Ripper murder, and served as Assistant Chief Constable and Chief Constable of Scotland Yard. The three chief suspects named in his document were Montague Druitt; 'Kosminski', a Polish Jew; and 'Michael Ostrog, a Russian doctor.' Druitt and Kosminski remain viable candidates who have been examined in detail by researchers. Ostrog, it appears, was a harmless conman and lunatic who was probably in Paris at the time of the killings.

For twenty years or more, Montague Druitt (1857–88) was probably the number one suspect. There appeared to be a good deal of evidence linking him with the Ripper. In 1913, MacNaghten told the *Daily Mail* that he had 'a very clear idea' who the Ripper was, but had 'destroyed all the documents and there is now no record of the secret information which came into my possession at one time or another.' A journalist with good police contacts, G.R. Sims, stated in 1903 that 'the body of the man suspected by the chiefs of Scotland Yard, and by his own friends, who were in communication with the Yard, was found in the Thames.' Druitt indeed committed suicide in the Thames around November 30th, 1888, shortly after being dismissed as a schoolteacher in Blackheath, and three weeks after the last Ripper murder. Druitt, who was also a barrister, had chambers at King's Bench Walk, within walking distance of the East End, and apparently had a cousin who was a doctor with offices in the Minories, on the border of the East End.

Given the general air of mystery surrounding his life, it is not surprising that Druitt was the preferred candidate of many Ripperologists. During the past two decades, however, his star has

I shant quit ripping them till I do get buckled. Grand work the las job was, I gave the lady no time to squeal. How can they catch me n I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me.



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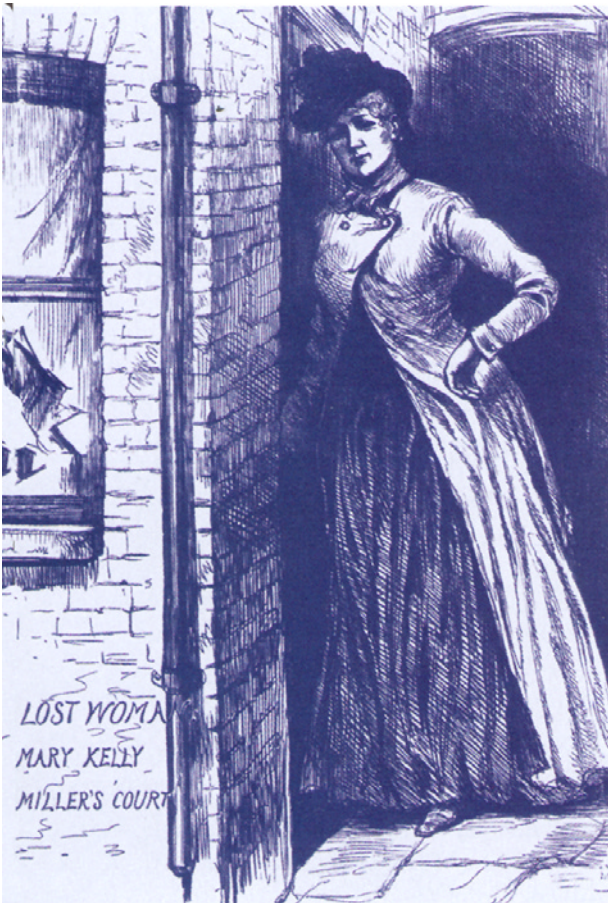
The letter of September 25th, 1888, signed 'Jack the Ripper', was believed to be genuine by the police at the time, but this is disputed by some modern researchers. Ripper victims Chapman and Stride and (right) Alice Mackenzie, murdered in July 1889 and once claimed as a Ripper victim, although the police did not think so at the time.

waned. Extensive research has failed to find evidence clearly linking him to the Ripper crimes. In 1959, for instance, the Ripper researcher Daniel Farson was told of a pamphlet entitled *The East End Murderer—I Knew Him*, allegedly written by a Dr Lionel Druitt, Montague's cousin, and published in Victoria, Australia in 1890. It is now apparent that tales of the work are no more than a garbled account of several other works published around the same time, none of which relate to Druitt. MacNaghten's information about Druitt was also highly inaccurate: in the Memorandum he described him as a doctor rather than a barrister and overstated his age by ten years. It is curious and regrettable that MacNaghten destroyed evidence which may have been crucial. The suspect's suicide seems to have been occasioned either by a scandal at his school or by severe depression, perhaps inherited (his mother was in an asylum). Recently it has been discovered that Druitt was playing cricket at Camford, Dorset, six hours after the Polly Nichols murder. Further attempts to link him with the Royal/ Freemason theory of the murders are often made, but are fanciful. Because of MacNaghten, Druitt will always remain a serious candidate, but one so far lacking in any direct supportive evidence.

The 'MacNaghten Memorandum' mentioned 'Kosminski, a Polish Jew' of Whitechapel, who 'indulg[ed] in solitary vices' and had 'a great hatred of women and strong homicidal tenden-

cies', as the second most likely suspect. According to MacNaghten, this young Eastern European Jewish immigrant was 'removed to a lunatic asylum about March 1889.' MacNaghten's suspicion was echoed by other senior Scotland Yard men: both Dr Robert Anderson and Donald Swanson believed that Aaron Kosminski's identity was known to other East End Jews, who refused to give evidence against him for fear of hanging a fellow Jew. The researcher Martin Fido believes that the Ripper might well have been not Aaron Kosminski but Aaron Davis Cohen, another East End Jew, who was sent to Colney Hatch lunatic asylum in December 1888, where he died less than a year later. Others believe that the East End Jew in question might have been Nathan Kaminsky, who was being treated for syphilis in a local infirmary.

There are, however, problems with these theories. Neither Kosminski nor Kaminsky was dangerous or violent: despite MacNaghten, there is no evidence that Kosminski was ever 'homicidal.' As to Cohen, it is difficult to believe that a senior Scotland Yard man, even one biased against Jewish immigrants, would confuse his name with 'Kosminski.' Although Cohen was violent when placed in the asylum, there is no evidence that he was ever violent before this. More importantly, there are considerable difficulties with the notion of an East End Jew being the Ripper. Whitechapel's MP at this time, Samuel Montagu



BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY/PRIVATE COLLECTION

25-year-old Irish-born Mary Kelly, the ripper's last victim, was killed in her room in Miller's Court.

(later Lord Swaythling), was extremely close to the East End Jewish community. Although a millionaire City banker, he was one of the founders and patrons of the Federation of Synagogues, whose Orthodox religious practice was similar to that known in Eastern Europe and popular with the recent immigrants as a result—in contrast to the more acculturated, mainstream United Synagogue headed by the Chief Rabbi. Montagu was also a notable philanthropist to Jewish causes in the East End. If the Ripper had been a local Jewish lunatic, it is difficult to believe that Montagu and other Anglo-Jewish leaders would not have heard rumours about his identity, and moved to have him placed in an asylum as quickly as possible. Yet in September 1888 (after the second killing), Montagu offered a 100 [pounds sterling] reward for the Ripper's capture, and five weeks later (after the fourth killing) he sent Scotland Yard a local petition for police protection.

Equally plausible, at first glance, are the theories that the Ripper was an ordinary East End workingman, someone who knew the district well and could come and go without attracting undue attention. A number of such persons, including known associates of Mary Kelly, the last victim, have been proposed. However, the police did not believe that any such man was the Ripper. Had any evidence existed, it would have been relatively easy to secure the conviction of an impoverished workingman, but none did.

The Royal and Masonic Ripper theory appears to be nonsense from beginning to end.

The alleged Royal/Ripper connection is probably the most popular of all the theories. This dates from a work published in French in 1962 by Dr Thomas Stowell, and given wide publicity before his death in 1970. Stowell was the son-in-law of the son-in-law of Sir William Gull, the Royal Physician frequently alleged to have had a direct hand in the Ripper murders. According to Stowell, the Ripper was Prince Albert Edward, Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. Clarence was only twenty-eight when he died in 1892; his younger brother, the Duke of York, married Clarence's fiancée, Princess Mary of Teck, and succeeded to the throne in 1910 as King George V. Clarence, a sexual sadist, was in the last stages of syphilis in 1889 and allegedly killed the five prostitutes, with the assistance of Gull. The Royal theory was taken a step further in 1973 in a television documentary in which a man named Joseph Sickert, claiming to be the illegitimate son of the artist Walter Sickert, alleged that Clarence had contracted an illegal marriage with his grandmother, Annie Crook, and that one of the witnesses was Mary Kelly, the last victim. In 1976, in *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*, the researcher Stephen Knight went further still, arguing that Gull and a conspiracy of Freemasons, acting on the orders of prime minister Lord Salisbury, killed Mary Kelly and the other prostitutes who were collectively trying to blackmail the British government through their knowledge of the secret Royal marriage. According to this view, much in the five murders was redolent of the language and customs of the Freemasons, and was, in fact, a Masonic 'ritual murder.' Most recently Sue and Andy Parlour have suggested that the instigator of the murders—carried out by Sir William Gull, possibly with the assistance of Montague Druitt and also James Kenneth Stephen (1859–92), Virginia Woolf's cousin, who was a Cambridge graduate who was committed to an asylum in 1891 and is frequently mentioned as a possible Ripper associate—was the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), who was being blackmailed by Kelly. The Parlours have also discovered some curious features of Gull's burial in 1890.

The Royal/Masonic Ripper theory appears to be palpable nonsense from beginning to end, without a shred of evidence to support it. The whereabouts of senior royals is known with considerable precision: Clarence was in Scotland or Yorkshire at the time of all of the murders. There is no evidence that any member of the Royal family ever set eyes on any Ripper victim, or that Mary Kelly was blackmailing a Royal or anyone else. There is no evidence that Clarence entered into an illegal marriage with anyone. Sir William Gull was seventy-one in 1888 and had suffered two serious strokes the year before. The five Ripper victims were not associates: there is no evidence that they had even met. If Gull and his collaborators murdered Mary Kelly, they would surely have lured her into a carriage, chloro-

One whose no good,
decided Sir Jim strike another.
I showed no fright and indeed no light
damn it, the tin box was empty

BRIDGEMAN ART GALLERY/ROGER-VIOLETT/PRIVATE COLLECTION

The 'Ripper Diaries' apparently contain information that would have been virtually impossible for a forger to know: here he mentions an empty tin box found at the scene of Catherine Eddowes's murder, and he calls himself 'Sir Jim'.

formed her, hit her on the head, and thrown her into the Thames: the apparent drowning of a drunken East End prostitute would not have received five lines in any newspaper.

The discovery of a 'Diary of Jack the Ripper' 104 years after the crimes gave rise to deep suspicion.

As for the Freemason link, over the past 250 years tens of thousands of Englishmen have been Freemasons in hundreds of lodges, without any Masonic 'ritual murders' being reported. The 'Masonic link' is of like ilk to the 'Popish Plot' and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and belongs in the same dustbin.

Most notable among the other serious candidates are the Polish-born barber George Chapman (ne Severin Klosowski), the American doctor Dr Francis Tumblety, and Robert Donston Stephenson, a freelance journalist, drug addict and student of the occult, who was taking a voluntary rest-cure in a Whitechapel hospital at the time of the killings. None of them can be totally overlooked. Dozens of others proposed as the true Ripper can be dismissed outright. Among those named as the Ripper are Lewis Carroll, Lord Randolph Churchill, Dr Barnardo, three insane medical students at London Hospital, and four Portuguese sailors on shore leave. The notion that 'Jack' was actually 'Jill' surfaced early during the spate of killings themselves, and had an advocate of sorts in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who argued that the male killer was able to pass through Whitechapel disguised as a bloodstained midwife. Several theorists have suggested that 'Jill' was actually an abortionist (who plainly botched the job!). None of the Ripper victims, however, appears to have been pregnant.

James Maybrick (1838-89) was a Liverpool cotton broker who in May 1889 died of apparent arsenic poisoning. His wife Florence Maybrick (1862-1941) was tried for his murder, convicted, sentenced to death. She was reprieved, spent fifteen years in prison, and passed the rest of her life in America (where

she was born), dying in dire poverty in a shack in rural Connecticut. Prior to 1992, there was nothing to connect James Maybrick with Jack the Ripper, and he was never named as a possible suspect, or indeed in connection with the case. Then, out of the blue, a handwritten, sixty-three page diary turned up in the possession of an ordinary couple in Liverpool, Michael and Anne Barrett (known, since her divorce as Anne Graham). Signed 'Jack the Ripper' and dated May 3rd, 1889, eight days before Maybrick's death, it gives apparently accurate information on Maybrick's life as a well-to-do cotton broker living in 'Battlecrease', a large house in Aigburth, Liverpool, and gruesome details of the Ripper killings, including Maybrick's penchant for cannibalism. According to the diary Maybrick embarked on his killing spree for motives of vicarious revenge at the behaviour of his wife, who was having an affair, probably with Alfred Brierley, another Liverpool merchant. Maybrick was a long-term arsenic addict. Arsenic, in small doses, produces a 'high' similar to other addictive substances, and Maybrick committed the Ripper crimes as, in effect, a drug addict. The diary suggest that Maybrick selected Whitechapel as a joke to parallel the Whitechapel district of Liverpool, and he rented a flat on Middlesex Street (Petticoat Lane), a very close to where four of the five killings occurred. Maybrick knew the East End of London well, and had business interests in the City. By the time of the diary's conclusion, Maybrick had repented the Ripper crimes, and he was actively contemplating suicide. Since its discovery in 1992 the 'Diary of Jack the Ripper' has become the most controversial and hotly-debated item in the world of Ripperology.

The discovery of an unknown 'Diary of Jack the Ripper', quickly marketed by mainstream publishers 104 years after the crimes, rightly gave rise to the deepest suspicions. It was denounced as a crude forgery, dating from a year or two before it was made public. Even to those inclined to view it as genuine, its provenance remains unclear. As a work it is in many respects highly unsatisfactory. It is not a diary in the normal sense, containing no dates prior to that given in the last line. It is incoherently written in a stream-of-consciousness style, but for the most part contains boasting, near-hysterical passages by Maybrick of anticipation at killing prostitutes, fooling the police,

and avenging his wife's adultery. It also contains semi-coherent descriptions of the five Ripper murders. (Maybrick also claimed to have killed a prostitute in Manchester before beginning his spree in London.) The diary provides no information on many of the aspects of the Ripper killings which would most interest historians—why he chose the five victims; how, precisely, he killed them; the exact circumstances of the 'Jack the Ripper' letters; why he stopped—and, even assuming it is genuine, it adds little to our knowledge of the crimes beyond the identity of the killer and his motives. The diary is puzzling in other respects, too. Its handwriting appears to resemble some but not all of Maybrick's own writings, and it is written in an old scrapbook, not a real diary.

Numerous scientific tests have concluded that the diary appears to date from the late-nineteenth century or soon after. The facts of its provenance are as follows: it was allegedly seen by Anne Graham's father, William Graham, in 1943 while he was on leave from the army, in a black tin box in his mother's house in Liverpool. It was allegedly seen by Anne Graham herself, in a trunk in a cupboard in her house in Liverpool in the late 1960s. Anne Graham took possession of it in the mid-1980s when her father moved house. In marital difficulties, she gave the diary to a friend of her husband Michael Barrett (who was unemployed) to give to her husband to keep him intellectually occupied. For reasons related to her marital breakdown, she did not admit its actual provenance, leading to the spread of (untrue) stories that it was dug up from the floor-boards of Battlecrease House. The diary became public knowledge in 1992, receiving widespread publicity thanks to the literary agent Robert Smith and the researcher Shirley Harrison. In 1993 Michael Barrett (apparently also for reasons related to his marriage breakdown) claimed to have forged the diary. This claim is not now accepted, even by those who are sceptical of its authenticity.

The key question is the diary's whereabouts between Maybrick's death in 1889 and William Graham's sighting in 1943. The most popular theory is that the diary was taken from Battlecrease in the confusion following Maybrick's sudden death by a servant, Alice Yapp (who certainly stole items from the household). It is believed that Yapp (who died in 1938) eventually passed the diary to William Graham's stepmother, Edith Formby, who was probably a family friend. (William Graham was a professional soldier in the 1930s who was overseas at this time.) Another theory is that William Graham was the son of the illegitimate son of Florence Maybrick and a shipowner named Henry Flinn. (Florence Maybrick used the pseudonym 'Mrs Graham' after her release from prison.) According to this view, Alice Yapp left the diary to the Graham family because she knew they were Florence's descendants. After leaving the army, Graham, who worked for many workers in a Dunlop tyre factory, had no interest in the diary. He later told Shirley Harrison, 'If I'd known what it was worth, I'd have cashed it years ago. Blimey, I wouldn't have been slaving away in Dunlops....'

There are other reasons for believing that the diary is not a recent forgery. A 'Diary of Jack the Ripper' forged c.1990 might be expected to contain pornographic descriptions of Maybrick's sexual arousal during his encounters with the prostitutes

(and with other women). However, while it does contain horrifying descriptions of mutilation and cannibalism, the diary has no explicit sexual content of any kind. This is consistent with the likelihood that the Ripper did not have sexual relations with the prostitutes he killed (although arsenic was frequently used in Victorian England as an aphrodisiac, and Maybrick, aged 50 in 1888, might well have experienced failing sexual powers).

More importantly, all attempts to show that the diary is a forgery and who its creator may be have failed. In the eight years since its appearance, no one has come forward to smirk at the gullibility of so many 'experts'. Moreover, if the diary were a modern forgery, its author was taking an enormous risk. There could well be evidence unknown to the forger that proves irrefutably that Maybrick could not have been in London at the time of a Ripper killing—a report in an obscure trade journal, say, that mentioned he was speaking at a meeting of cotton brokers in Liverpool at a certain time of day. No forger could ever be confident that he had studied every such possible source. But no evidence discounting the possibility that Maybrick could be the Ripper has ever come to light.

Furthermore, the diary appears to contain information that is virtually impossible for any recent forger to have known. In particular, Maybrick often refers to himself in the diary as 'Sir Jim' or 'Sir Jack.' In 1993, the researcher Paul Feldman, who has done more than anyone else to investigate the diary, found that in the summer of 1888 the Maybricks had as their guest an eight-year-old American girl, Florence Aunspaugh, the daughter of a business friend of James. In 1941–42, following Florence Maybrick's death, Trevor Christie, a New York journalist, conducted a correspondence with Aunspaugh, then aged sixty-two and living in Dallas, as background material for the book he was writing on the Florence Maybrick poisoning case. Neither Christie nor Aunspaugh had any idea that Maybrick might have been the Ripper. In 1970 Christie's widow deposited the Aunspaugh correspondence in the American Heritage Center in the University of Wyoming at Cheyenne. Feldman sent Keith Skinner, an eminent authority on the Ripper case, to photostat the whole Aunspaugh files. Buried in a long, handwritten, unpublished letter there, Florence Aunspaugh recalled that Alice Yapp had said 'she certainly would be glad when that damned little American left Battlecrease... she did not see why Sir James (Mr Maybrick) ever brought me there any way.' (Aunspaugh also recalled in 1941–42 that 'a current of mystery seemed to circulate all around' at Battlecrease, and that Maybrick, though charming, had a 'morose, gloomy disposition and extremely high temper' and was an 'arsenic addict [who] craved it like a narcotic fiend.') There is no evidence that anyone read these papers prior to Skinner and Feldman. There are three possible explanations: the forger made use of an unpublished source in an obscure archive; that by sheer chance the forger hit upon the unusual nickname actually used by Maybrick in his own household; or that the diary is authentic, or at least written by someone completely familiar with the secrets of the Maybrick family.

For all of these reasons, many of the Ripperologists who continue to doubt the authenticity of the diary now believe that it is

an old forgery, probably contrived in the Edwardian period. An obvious candidate is James's brother Michael, a talented composer who used the pseudonym 'Stephen Adams.' Michael Maybrick, who died in 1913, almost certainly knew far more about the events of 1888–89 than he stated in public.

There are, however, objections to the proposition that the diary is an old forgery. The forger must have had precise knowledge of both the Maybrick household in Liverpool and the Whitechapel murders. In Edwardian times, most of the police involved in the hunt for the Ripper were still alive, as were dozens of people in Liverpool who knew Maybrick well. Had the diary become known at the time, the slightest mistake about either Liverpool or Whitechapel would have exposed the diary as a fraud. Even more important, it apparently contains information that could not have been known by an earlier forger. The diary refers to a 'tin box' which was 'empty' and which was found and left by Maybrick at the murder of Catharine Edowes, the fourth victim. There was indeed '1 tin match box, empty' in a list of her effects drawn up by the police, but this list did not appear in print until 1987, and the existence of the empty tin box was unknown until then.

One theory favoured by some (although it has, apparently, never appeared in print) is that the diary was indeed written by James Maybrick, but as a Walter Mittyish fantasy, his attempt, perhaps, to gain 'revenge' at his wife's adultery by 'murdering' prostitutes on the written page. This ingenious theory has several flaws. As we have seen, the diary contains information that no one except the Ripper could have known in 1888–89. Also, if Maybrick was the author of the diary it must have been written before he died in May 1889. At the end of the diary the author has sincerely repented of his crimes and it is clear that there will be no more Ripper killings. But if Maybrick was not the Ripper, he could not have known that there would be no more killings: so far as he knew the Ripper was still at large and might strike again at any time. It thus seems almost impossible for the diary to be a recent forgery, an old forgery, or a fantasy created by Maybrick himself.

The case that Maybrick was the Ripper is strong even without the diary. Perhaps the most striking evidence for this is to be found in a number of unknown letters discovered by Paul Feldman from Liverpool sources. On October 9th, 1888, the *Liverpool Echo* printed a story (based on a letter it had received) that Jack the Ripper was about to strike in Dublin. The following day the same newspaper published the following, written on a postcard:

I beg to state that the letters published in yours of yesterday are lies. It is somebody gulling the public. I am the Whitechapel purger. On 13th, at 3pm, will be on Stage, as am going to New York. But will have some business before I go.

Yours Truly,
Jack the Ripper DIEGO LAURENZ
(Genuine)

Feldman asks 'What does Diego Laurenz mean? I have no idea. Is it a clue?' In my opinion, indeed it is—arguably the most im-

portant clue that we have. 'Diego' is Spanish for James, while 'Laurenz' is meant to rhyme with 'Florence.' If this is what it means, then this constitutes virtual proof that James Maybrick was Jack the Ripper. (Anyone familiar with the diary will know Maybrick's penchant for puns and word-games. And why was a letter written with such assurance sent to a Liverpool newspaper?) Another previously unpublished letter, sent by 'Jack the Ripper' to the Metropolitan Police from New York in October 1888, also said that the Ripper was temporarily there, but would be back. There was, indeed an inexplicable gap of five weeks between the two murders on September 30th, 1888, and the fifth killing on November 9th, which has always puzzled researchers. Maybrick himself was known to have made regular business trips to New York throughout his career.

The diarist states that he confessed to his wife that he was Jack the Ripper.

Why the Ripper stopped killing after November 9th, 1888, has always been one of the central mysteries of the Ripper question. With Maybrick there is a good explanation. On November 19th, Maybrick changed doctors, consulting Dr. J. Drysdale, who treated him with homeopathic remedies. Drysdale treated Maybrick five more times before his death, apparently with a gradual improvement. (Drysdale gave testimony under oath at Mrs. Maybrick's trial.) It is clear from the diary that Maybrick slowly but surely lost interest in further killings, feeling considerable remorse just before his death.

The diary also states that, just before he died, Maybrick confessed to his wife that he was Jack the Ripper. A letter written just before Maybrick's death from his wife to her lover Alfred Brierley figured prominently at her trial. In this Florence noted that her husband was 'delirious' and that 'he is perfectly ignorant of everything.' She later mysteriously remarks that 'The tale he told me was a pure fabrication and only intended to frighten the truth out of me.' This statement occurs abruptly and is not elaborated upon. It is possible a clever forger might have noted this sentence buried in a long letter in a published account of the trial and worked backwards from it. But it still does not answer the question of what the tale designed to frighten her might have been.

In another episode suggesting a link between Maybrick, Liverpool and the Ripper, William Graham told Feldman that as a boy (he was born in 1913) he lived near Battlecrease House and that he and his friends would run past it 'pretending we were Fred Archer, the jockey, smack our backsides and shout "Look out, look out, Jack the Ripper's about"....' Archer, the most famous jockey of the nineteenth century, committed suicide at the age of twenty-nine in 1886, only two years before the Ripper killings. If authentic, this story seems incomprehensible unless there was something to connect Battlecrease with the Ripper, presumably whispering from the servants to their friends.

Furthermore, the name 'Jack the Ripper' may itself have had a Liverpool origin. Between 1884 and 1886 Liverpool's local

newspapers made great play over the alleged existence of a murderous 'High Rip Gang' which, it was claimed, terrorised passers-by in the Scotland Road slums. There was considerable debate about whether such a gang actually existed, and mention of the 'High Rip' seems to have ceased in early 1887. However, the 'High Rip' and its association with street violence would have been well-known to any Liverpoolian in 1888.

On top of all this, in 1992 a watch (made in 1846) was found in Liverpool by a local man named Albert Johnson. Scratched on the inner case Johnson found the signature 'J. Maybrick', the words 'I am Jack', and the initials of the five Ripper Victims. Examination with a scanning electron microscope revealed that the scratchings are almost certainly not recently made, but are compatible with a date of 1888–89. Johnson contacted the *Liverpool Post* after the story of the diary came to light.

Beyond this there is a good deal of indirect evidence that points to Maybrick as opposed to other suspects. All five murders were committed on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. (This obviously noteworthy fact is, rather curiously, almost never mentioned in the Ripper literature.) The idea of weekend slaughter is itself strange: prostitutes walked the streets of Whitechapel every night, but there were more potential witnesses around on weekends. There could be any number of reasons for this, of course. One suggestion is that workingmen were traditionally paid on Thursdays. This would seem pertinent but for the fact that the Ripper did not pay the women he killed. (Indeed, he appears to have robbed them.) The weekend pattern also appears at variance with the Ripper being an upper- or middle-class Londoner. Well-to-do men might have spent the weekdays in town, staying at their club or a flat, but were more likely to be with their families in a suburban villa or the country at weekends. This pattern, however, is consistent with the lifestyle of a Liverpool cotton broker who spent the weekdays at the Liverpool Cotton Exchange but was free to travel on weekends (as Maybrick was).

All the murders took place late at night or early in the morning. Few men can be about at that hour without attracting

attention from their family, neighbours, servants, landladies, or fellow tenants, let alone covered in blood and carrying a knife and the organs of their victims. Anyone out only on the nights when the Ripper crimes occurred would arouse suspicion. But Maybrick went to London alone and lived alone in the centre of the Ripper district, coming and going as he pleased.

I am personally more than 90 per cent convinced that James Maybrick was Jack the Ripper. Both evidence and inference appear overwhelmingly to point to him. However, if it can be proved that he was definitely not the Ripper—if, for instance, irrefutable proof were found that he was in Liverpool on the night a Ripper murder was committed—the identity of Jack the Ripper remains a mystery; none of the other suspects is remotely convincing.

FOR FURTHER READING

Paul Begg, Martin Fido, and Keith Skinner, *The Jack the Ripper A–Z* (London, 1996); Donald Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (London, 1988) and Philip Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (London, 1995); Maxim Jakubowski and Nathan Braund, eds., *The Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper* (London, 1999); M.J. Trow, *The Many Faces of Jack the Ripper* (Chichester, 1997); Shirley Harrison, *The Diary of Jack the Ripper* (London, 1998); Paul H. Feldman, *Jack the Ripper: The Final Chapter* (London, 1998); Anne Graham and Carol Emmas, *The Last Victim* (London, 1999); William Beadle, *Jack the Ripper: Anatomy of a Myth* (Brighton, 1995); Andy and Sue Parlour, *The Jack the Ripper Whitechapel Murders* (London, 1997); Rob Sindall, *Street Violence in the Nineteenth Century: Media Panic or Real Danger?* (Leicester, 1990).

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