

Ripperologist

June 2020

No. 167

AMEER BEN ALI

NINA AND HOWARD BROWN
WITH THE FACE OF 'FRENCHY'

Murder in the second degree is murder without premeditation, and the intelligent jury would seem, therefore, to believe that Ameer Ben Ali left his room, took a knife, went to the woman's room, suffocated her with her clothing, carefully disembowelled her, and returned to his room all in a frenzy of passion.

SHEILLA JONES AND JIM BURNS

MICHAEL HAWLEY • ADAM WOOD • BRUCE COLLIE

SPOTLIGHT ON RIPPERCAST

VICTORIAN FICTION • PRESS TRAWL

THE LATEST BOOK REVIEWS

January 2011

Ripperologist 167

JUNE 2020

**EDITORIAL:
CONTEXT IS KING**

Adam Wood

**FRANCIS TUMBLETY AND
JOHN WILKES BOOTH'S ERRAND BOY**

Michael L. Hawley

**THE SWANSON MARGINALIA:
MORE SCRIBBLINGS**

Adam Wood

**MRS. BOOTH'S MOST UNUSUAL
ENQUIRY BUREAU**

Sheilla Jones and Jim Burns

CENTRAL NEWS

Bruce Collie

**Spotlight on Rippercast:
THE ROYAL CONSPIRACY A-GO-GO
Part One**

**AMEER BEN ALI
AND AN ACTOR'S TALE**

Nina and Howard Brown

**Press Trawl
THE SHORT REIGN OF
LEATHER APRON**

VICTORIAN FICTION

Eduardo Zinna

BOOK REVIEWS

Paul Begg and David Green

Ripperologist magazine is published by Mango Books (www.MangoBooks.co.uk). The views, conclusions and opinions expressed in signed articles, essays, letters and other items published in *Ripperologist* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views, conclusions and opinions of *Ripperologist*, its editors or the publisher. The views, conclusions and opinions expressed in unsigned articles, essays, news reports, reviews and other items published in *Ripperologist* are the responsibility of *Ripperologist* and its editorial team, but do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher.

We occasionally use material we believe has been placed in the public domain. It is not always possible to identify and contact the copyright holder; if you claim ownership of something we have published we will be pleased to make a proper acknowledgement.

The contents of *Ripperologist* No. 167, June 2020, including the compilation of all materials and the unsigned articles, essays, news reports, reviews and other items are copyright © 2020 *Ripperologist*/Mango Books. The authors of signed articles, essays, letters, news reports, reviews and other items retain the copyright of their respective contributions. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or otherwise circulated in any form or by any means, including digital, electronic, printed, mechanical, photocopying, recording or any other, without the prior permission in writing from Mango Books. The unauthorised reproduction or circulation of this publication or any part thereof, whether for monetary gain or not, is strictly prohibited and may constitute copyright infringement as defined in domestic laws and international agreements and give rise to civil liability and criminal prosecution.



Editorial: Context is King

ADAM WOOD

Poor old Bill Gates has a lot to answer to. His warning to the Technology, Entertainment and Design Conference in 2015 that while technology had helped to contain the Ebola outbreak, “next time we might not be so lucky”, has been taken by some wearing tinfoil hats as proof that the Microsoft chief heads an elite group seeking to control the world. Releasing COVID-19 into the world’s population, they argue, would be the perfect opportunity to introduce a global vaccination system using technology capable of capturing every last detail about every individual.

Similarly, it was Bill’s 1996 essay “Content is King” which foretold the coming of mass information portals offering everyone unlimited information through the touch of a button via mobile phones, tablets and other devices.

Content is indeed more accessible than ever before – some would say oversaturation – but what is it without context?

Context, of course, can add an awful lot of meaning to a single incident, or even a relatively short passage of time such as the so-called ‘Autumn of Terror’. Those who lived through it and became associated forever more with the Ripper’s crimes didn’t just materialise out of thin air into the alleyways of Spitalfields and then disappear just as rapidly after Mary Kelly’s murder, no matter what Captain Kirk and crew would have you believe in *Wolf In The Fold*.

No, these people had lives before the events of 1888, and the experiences they had in that time shaped them in one way or another.

This is exactly what I tried to capture in my biography of Chief Inspector Donald Swanson; why was it he that Commissioner Charles Warren appointed to head up the case? How likely was it that Swanson would scribble the fate of the Whitechapel murderer in a book, even going to the extent of signing his annotations? As I explain in my article in this issue of *Ripperologist*, the Swanson marginalia on page 138 of Robert Anderson’s memoir was far from unusual for the retired detective.

And context comes to the fore again in Michael Hawley’s article on Francis Tumblety’s involvement with President Lincoln’s assassin John Wilkes Booth, giving historical context to Tumblety’s early ‘Indian herb doctor’ career.

And in the first of a new series we welcome Bruce Collie, who brings context to Dr George Bagster Phillips’ work on the Whitechapel case by describing his involvement in other H Division cases before and after the Ripper.

This issue’s instalment of Spotlight on Rippercast sheds a light on the Royal Conspiracy theory and Joseph Sickert; everyone knows the theory to some degree, whether Ripper student or man-on-the-street, but where did it come from? Jonathan Menges, Simon Wood, Chris Scott and others piece together the origins of the story.

Elsewhere Sheilla Jones and Jim Burns reveal the extraordinary work of Florence Booth and her Enquiry Bureau, possibly the largest detective agency in Victorian London, which in the first five years since its inception in 1888 had been involved in more than 8,000 missing persons investigations.

And following a long list of newly-discovered photographic portraits published in the pages of *Ripperologist*, we’re delighted to feature the image of ‘Frenchy’ – Ameer Ben Ali – discovered by Nina and Howard Brown on our cover. Their column in this issue explains the discovery.

Enjoy the issue.

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Adam Wood

EDITORS

Gareth Williams

Eduardo Zinna

EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Jonathan Menges

REVIEWS EDITOR

Paul Begg

COLUMNISTS

Nina and Howard Brown

Bruce Collie

David Green

ARTWORK

Adam Wood

Ripperologist magazine is published six times a year and supplied in digital format. It is free of charge to subscribers.

Back issues from 62-165 are available in PDF format on our website.

An index to *Ripperologist* magazine can also be downloaded.

To be added to the mailing list, to submit a book for review or to place an advertisement, get in touch at contact@ripperologist.co.uk

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

www.ripperologist.co.uk

Francis Tumblety and John Wilkes Booth's Errand Boy

By MICHAEL L. HAWLEY

President Abraham Lincoln's funeral ended in Springfield, Illinois, on May 4th, 1865. In attendance was the eccentric Dr. Francis Tumblety, arriving from St. Louis, Missouri, where he was operating a booming Indian herb doctor practice, and who also had been recently arrested for strutting the streets in a gaudy semi-military uniform.

In 1865 Tumblety was at the peak of his lucrative advertising Indian herb doctor business; never missing an opportunity to gain free publicity by staying in the public's eye and attending such a famous event as the President's funeral. Tumblety likely continued to wear loud attire in Springfield, mounted on a gorgeous steed, and assuming an aristocratic air.

The rich and powerful were also in attendance, such as the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, who likely witnessed this charade.

Just four years earlier, Tumblety rode his horse immediately behind President-elect Lincoln's horse and carriage along the entire route of the Inaugural parade in New York City, then followed General McClellan around Washington DC in the semi-military uniform claiming to have offered his services as a military staff physician. Tumblety pronounced he knew the Lincolns, and even relayed a story of treating President's son.

An article in the *Rochester Advertiser*, as reprinted in the *Newark Advocate* of November 29, 1861, stated that Tumblety made favor with President Lincoln through his son Robert, attending to his sprained ankle at a watering place in the summer of 1860. One particular Rochester witness stated that Tumblety introduced him to the Lincolns at the White House. But, Tumblety was arrested by federal authorities immediately after Lincoln's funeral.

Thanks to subsequent inaccurate newspaper reporting and crafty revisionist writing in his autobiography, the waters of truth were muddied and Tumblety successfully hid a dangerous fact; he did indeed know John Wilkes

Booth. Unraveling this affair may come from investigating a key player in Tumblety's arrest, an unnamed young man from Brooklyn who the papers claimed was John Wilkes Booth's errand boy.

After attending Lincoln's funeral Tumblety returned to his office in St. Louis on May 5th, 1865 and was immediately arrested by federal authorities¹ He was detained in St. Louis for two days then taken to Washington DC to the Old Capitol Prison.² He was imprisoned for three weeks without ever being officially charged. It was reported in the newspapers there were two reasons for his arrest: involvement in the murder of President Lincoln, and a pro-Confederate plot to spread yellow fever in Northern territory.



Lincoln's funeral in Springfield, Illinois

Being arrested for these conspiracies suggests that Tumblety was a pro-Confederate Northerner, or Southern sympathizer. Throwing a monkey wrench into this

¹ *St. Louis Press*, May 6, 1865.

² Tumblety, F., *A Few Passages in the Life of Dr. Francis Tumblety, The Indian Herb Doctor*, Cincinnati, 1866.

idea, though, has always been the fact that Tumblety claimed in his autobiography to be close with President Lincoln and his family, and close to the Secretary of State William Seward. Further, Tumblety even reprinted a warm response letter from Union General William T. Sherman in his 1872 autobiography.³ He certainly did open up offices in cities that were known to be hotbeds of Southern sympathy, such as Montreal, Canada and St. Louis, Missouri.

At the time of the Civil War there were four conflicting political ideologies in the United States: the secessionist slave-holding states, or Confederacy, the pro-slavery Union Democrats, the moderate Union Republicans under President Lincoln, and the Radical Republicans in the Union, of which Edwin Stanton was a vocal supporter.⁴

Lastly, and as will be discussed, new evidence indicates Tumblety was not planning on establishing himself in St. Louis, Missouri, but in a different city.

His series of autobiographies actually reveals where his political loyalties lay during the Civil War. They were not FOR a particular political belief, rather AGAINST a party – the Radical Republicans. The reason, though, was personal and not political, because of his hatred for the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton.



Edwin M. Stanton

For example, Tumblety reprinted in his autobiography an entire article out of the *Washington National Intelligencer*, titled ‘The Expulsion of Stanton’:

The people of the country will rejoice to hear that the War Department and the Administration have at last been rid of the incubus that has so long weighed them down... On the morrow he [Edwin Stanton] was made Secretary of War. His first act was to kick down the ladder by which he had mounted to the position. He persecuted McClellan and his staff and drove them all out of the army. He lent himself to the uses of the Radical Committee on the Conduct of the War, and conducted the war not for victory but for the benefit of the Radical Republican faction... We have nothing to say of his recent course. That he has been antagonistic to the Administration is known. That he has been a spy in behalf of the Radical revolutionists is acknowledged. That he is particeps criminis in the new conspiracy may perhaps be proved.⁵

Tumblety attacked Stanton throughout his autobiography, mentioning his name with regular disdain 26 times. His contempt for Stanton was for one non-patriotic reason; Stanton authorized his arrest on May 5th, 1865, which included the confiscation of his money and the subsequent three-week imprisonment in Washington DC:

I have heretofore presented the reader with a tolerably graphic description of my arrest, incarceration, cruel treatment, and the great pecuniary damage I sustained, during the American Reign of Terror – for no more appropriate term can I find to stigmatize the regime of the then Secretary of War, the infamous Stanton...

The ‘American Reign of Terror’ comment was not a pro-Confederate remark, but a dictum referring to the short time period just after President Lincoln’s assassination when Secretary of War Edwin Stanton took charge of the government with an iron fist until the unprepared, newly sworn-in President Andrew Johnson settled into the position.⁶ At the time, Stanton had control of the Army and the congress was not in session, so he believed he was in the best position to circumvent any form of chaos. Stanton quickly gave a number of overarching orders, such as, the lockdown of Washington DC and the protection of homes of the Lincoln’s cabinet members and Andrew Johnson. Stanton also took immediate charge of the hunt for the escaped assassins, knowing it was only a matter of

3 Tumblety, F., *Narrative of Dr. Tumblety*, Russells’ American Steam Printing House, New York City, 1872.

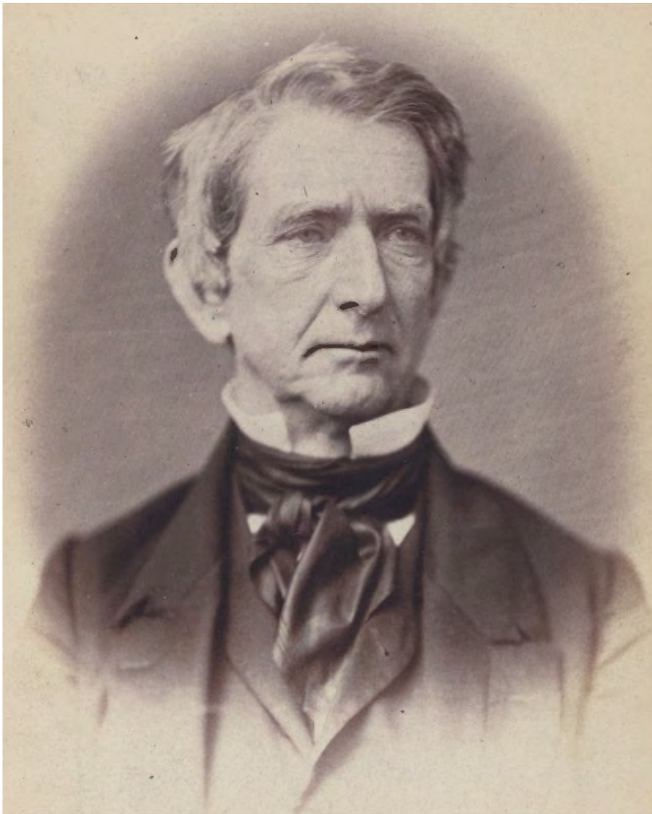
4 Kolchin, P., ‘Review: The Myth of Radical Reconstruction’, *Reviews in American History*, V. 3, No. 2, June 1975, pp. 228-236. Johns Hopkins University Press.

5 Tumblety, F., 1872. op. cit.

6 Thomas, B. & Hyman H., *Stanton: Life and Times of Lincoln’s Secretary of War*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1962.

time before John Wilkes Booth and David Herold would be safely hidden in the deep South. He also initiated a massive investigation to root out any and all conspirators. It was under this order that Tumblety was arrested and lost both his freedom and a large sum of money.

Before his arrest Tumblety had expressed no issues with Radical Republicans, even claiming to be a close friend to pre-war Radical Republican William H. Seward. When the 13th New York Regiment was at Fort Corcoran in Washington DC between July 21st and July 30th, 1861, Tumblety visited them on an Arabian horse. According to an article in the *Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser* of April 5, 1881, one of the soldiers asked where he got the horse and Tumblety replied, "My friend Billy Seward gave it to me." A Buffalo resident stated in the *Buffalo Courier* of November 30th, 1888 that Tumblety presented a beautiful greyhound to William H. Seward.



William H. Seward

Regardless of whether these stories are true or not, it demonstrates that Tumblety had no issues being associated with a staunch Radical Republican.

At the time of his St. Louis arrest, though, it was not common knowledge what the notorious Indian Herb Doctor's political views were, and federal authorities were merely following leads. Although Tumblety claimed this arrest was inappropriate and unfounded, it certainly was legal IF it involved alleged offenses specific to the Civil War. The writ of habeas corpus, as written in the Suspension Clause of the U.S. Constitution, guarantees

against illegal detention, but it was officially suspended in 1863 involving alleged offenses dealing with the Civil War.⁷

Even though he was legally detained then released, Tumblety felt compelled to respond. In the *Washington Star* of June 9th, 1865 Tumblety published a response titled "A Card from Dr. Tumblety" and even reprinted it in his 1866 autobiography, stating the primary reason for his arrest was a case of mistaken identity:

My arrest appears to have grown out of a statement made in a low, licentious sheet published in New York, to the effect that Dr. Blackburn, who has figure so unenviably in the hellish yellow fever plot, was no other person than myself.

In 1864 Dr. Luke Pryor Blackburn, a nineteenth century expert in treating yellow fever, allegedly devised a plan to infect northern cities and Union soldiers with yellow fever by covertly distributing blood- and vomit-soaked linens of yellow fever victims.⁸ According to the conspiracy, after an outbreak of yellow fever occurred in Bermuda Blackburn initiated his plot. Ultimately the plan soured, and three days after the Confederacy surrendered in April 1865, the plot was exposed. The U.S. Bureau of Military Justice ordered his arrest, but because he was in Canada he could not be detained. Tumblety was claiming that federal detectives read the New York dailies and became suspicious that he may very well be Dr. Luke Blackburn, so on May 5th, 1865 had him arrested in St. Louis on suspicion of the yellow fever plot.

The problem with this scenario is timing. The very first time Tumblety was mentioned in the paper in connection to the yellow fever plot was AFTER the arrest of May 5th. On May 9th, 1865 Tumblety was linked to the yellow fever plot in an Associate Press article, which was published in multiple newspapers around the country including the major New York City newspapers:

Dr. Blackburn, who visited Bermuda for the purpose of obtaining clothing used in the yellow fever hospitals, in order to spread the disease in northern cities, turns out to be none other than Dr. Tumblety... He has been arrested.

Tumblety's claim that a New York newspaper report caused federal authorities to arrest him is unfounded.

7 Dueholm, J., "Lincoln's Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus: An Historical and Constitutional Analysis", *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, V. 29, Issue 2, pp. 47-66, Summer 2008.

8 Greene H., *The Confederate Yellow Fever Conspiracy: The Germ Warfare Plot of Luke Pryor Blackburn, 1864-1865*, McFarland, 2019.

What Tumblety may have got correct is, if the DC detective did confront him about the yellow fever plot while he was sitting in his prison cell, they received this from newspaper reports.

On December 1st, 1888 a reporter for the *New York World* interviewed a colorful character, Charles A. Dunham, for the purpose of relaying eyewitness accounts about Jack the Ripper suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety.⁹ Dunham claimed to have witnessed Tumblety in Washington DC in 1861 giving an illustrated medical lecture to military officers and showing off his private collection of uterus specimens. Dunham also claimed to know why Tumblety was arrested in St. Louis.

The significance of this is that he may have had inside information on the arrest. Dunham was a Manhattan real estate attorney all his adult life, but according to the foremost authority on Charles Dunham, Carman Cumming, he was most likely a Union spy during the Civil War, working for a high-ranking government official in Washington DC.¹⁰

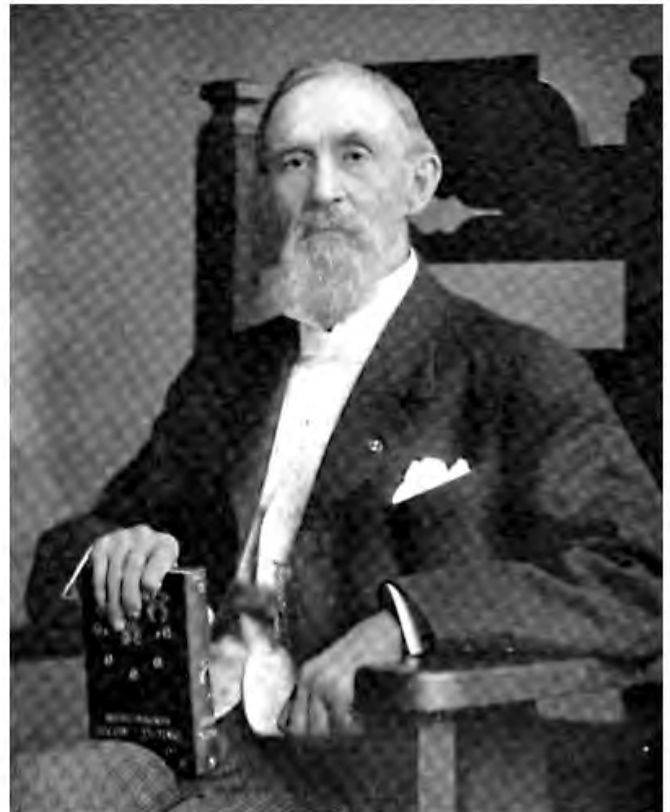
At this time, certain spies were known to have reported to a particular individual in government as opposed to a department. During the December 1st, 1888 interview, Dunham had in his hands Tumblety's autobiography, and was asked by the reporter about the 1865 St. Louis arrest, in which he replied that Tumblety was arrested "on suspicion of being Luke P. Blackburn, lately governor of Kentucky, who had been falsely charged with trying to introduce yellow fever into the northern cities by means of infected rags."

As stated, federal authorities knew where Luke Blackburn was – in Canada – so it does not make sense that they would have arrested Tumblety in St. Louis. Keep in mind that Dunham was holding onto Tumblety's autobiography, and admitted he read from it for the interview. Since Tumblety wrote about his arrest being due to misidentification of Luke Blackburn in this very autobiography, it stands to reason this was the source of Dunham's claim.

Tumblety certainly did blame Stanton for his arrest, but he had full knowledge that the order was issued by Colonel James H. Baker, Union Provost Marshal for the Department of Missouri.¹¹ During the Civil War, Provost Marshals were Union officers charged with order and discipline among both military personnel and civilians.¹² They were basically the Union's military police, which included hunting down spies and disloyal civilians. Tumblety stated:

I remained incarcerated in St. Louis two days, during which period I was visited by several military officers, who, to my anxious demand for the cause of my arrest,

laughingly replied, "Oh, they have such an immense amount of excitement in Washington, that **Colonel Baker – under whose order the arrest was made** – thinks that we ought to have a little sensation here. *[Author emphasis added]*



Colonel James H. Baker.
Union Provost Marshal for
the Department of Missouri in May 1865

According to an affidavit by the arresting officer, Captain Peter Tallon, Chief of the US Police, Department of Missouri, the order was directed by Colonel Baker, but was signed by his superior Major General Dodge, Commander of the Department of the Missouri.¹³ Dodge was directed by his superiors in Washington DC.¹⁴ This was actually the second time Tallon arrested Tumblety in St. Louis in the spring of 1865. The first was in March, before US authorities were informed of the yellow fever plot.¹⁵ In this case, Tumblety was arrested for wearing a

9 *New York World*, December 2, 1888.

10 C. Cumming, *Devil's Game: The Civil War Intrigues of Charles A. Dunham*, Univ. of Illinois Press, 2008.

11 Tumblety, F, 1866. op. cit.

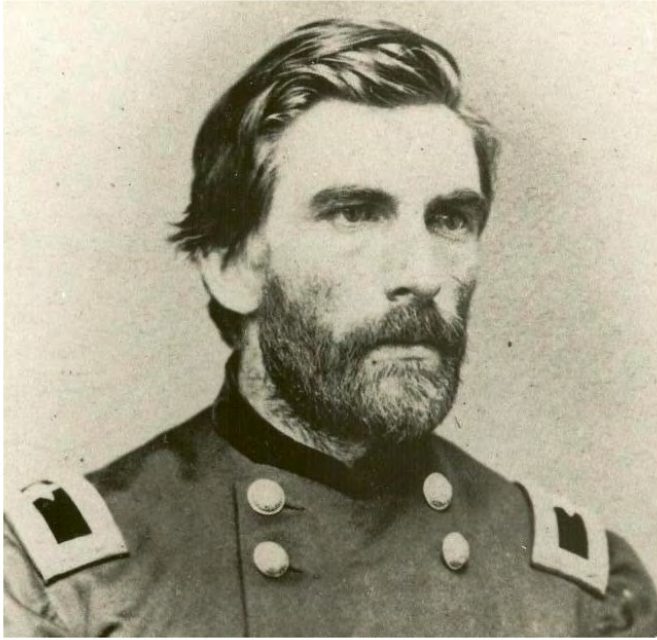
12 Craig, R., "Evolution of the Office of the Provost Marshal General", *Military Police Professional Bulletin Articles*, April 2004. www.wood.army.mil

13 Collection of letters and official affidavits discovered by David Barrat at the National Archives at Kew, London.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

semi-military uniform. The order originated from Colonel Baker and not General Dodge, meaning it was not directed by Washington DC. In view of this, the authorities in DC likely had no idea.



*Major General Grenville Dodge.
Commander of the Department of the Missouri in May 1865*

While still claiming he was arrested for the yellow fever plot – a charge he could easily refute – Tumblety then quickly glossed over a slight rumor connecting him with David Herold and John Wilkes Booth:

While in imprisonment I noticed in some of the New York and other Northern papers, a paragraph setting forth that the villain, Harrold [sic], who now stands charged with being one of the conspirators in the atrocious assassination plot, was at one time in my employ. This, too, is false... For the past five years I have had but one man in my employment, and he is yet with me... Another paper has gone so far as to inform the public that I was an intimate acquaintance of Booth's; but this, too, is news to me, as I never spoke to him in my life, or any of his family.

Actually, newspapers reported Tumblety being implicated in the Lincoln assassination before any connected him to the yellow fever plot. Additionally, while the very first yellow fever report was published after his May 5th, 1865 arrest, the initial Lincoln assassination reports were published before the arrest; and just one day before. One article, in the *New York Evening Post* of May 4th, 1865, stated:

...Herold, the companion of Booth ...is well known to the citizens of Brooklyn as the agent and companion of a man known as "the Indian Herb Doctor"...

The prisoner also stated that the doctor had been acquainted with Booth in Washington, and that it was through him that he became acquainted with Herold.

Additionally, the official reason why he was arrested on May 5th, 1865, as stated by Colonel Baker, was the Lincoln assassination. In a letter dated one day later on May 6th, 1865 to the Assistant Secretary of War, C.A. Dana, Baker reported this arrest on suspicion and distinctly made the connection between Tumblety and coconspirator David Herold:

Sir, I have the honor to forward herewith, in compliance with your telegram of this date, Dr. Tumblety, alias Blackburn. All his papers had been carefully examined to implicate him with the assassination, or showing him to be in any way connected with Herold or any of the supposed assassins.¹⁶

Notice the damning sequence of events. On May 4th reporters published Tumblety's close ties with President Lincoln's assassins. On May 5th he was arrested by federal authorities tasked specifically with rooting out conspirators of the Presidents assassination. Finally, on May 6th, Colonel Baker reported this arrest to his boss, mentioning only the assassination, and even commented upon Tumblety's reported ties with the assassins. If Baker's reason for the arrest had anything to do with the yellow fever plot, he clearly would have reported this to the Assistant Secretary of War.

Corroborating Colonel Baker's report to the Assistant Secretary of War that the arrest only dealt with the Lincoln assassination is a later letter from Secretary of War William W. Belknap to the British Secretary of State, dated August 6th, 1873. He told the Secretary of State that he reviewed the official records and reported that Tumblety "was arrested in St. Louis... on suspicion of complicity in the assassination of President Lincoln, that he was committed to the Old Capital Prison on the 10th of May 1865, and that he was released on the 31st of May that year."¹⁷

Government officials investigating the Lincoln assassination plot were not in the habit of telling the press why they arrested Tumblety, and throughout late May and June 1865 almost every newspaper article reporting on his arrest incorrectly stated it was solely because of his involvement in the yellow fever plot. For example, an article in the June 2nd, 1865, issue of the *Baltimore Sun* stated, "Dr. Tumblety, arrested in St. Louis some weeks

16 Collection of letters and official affidavits discovered by David Barrat at the National Archives at Kew, Richmond, Greater London.

17 Ibid.

ago, and brought to Washington as a confederate of Blackburn in the yellow fever plot, has been released.”

This error stuck, and when Tumblety’s name again dominated the newspapers in 1888/89 because of the Whitechapel murders, and even after his death in 1903, almost every report stated he was arrested in 1865 because of the yellow fever plot. One of the very few articles that reported Tumblety’s arrest correctly was in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* of December 11th, 1888, but there was an excellent reason. The reporter interviewed none other than Tumblety’s 1865 arresting officer, former U.S. Detective Captain Peter Tallon:

The Captain says that if he is not mistaken Tumblety is the man he arrested for being suspected of complicity in the plot to murder President Lincoln, while he was Chief of the United States Police for the State of Missouri in 1864. Tumblety was taken in custody on an order from the authorities at Washington.

Tallon never mentioned the yellow fever plot. He also corroborated the fact that while Major General Dodge signed the order for Tumblety’s arrest, the directive came from Washington DC. As stated, there is a possibility that DC detectives considered a possible connection between Tumblety and Luke Blackburn because of newspaper reports as claimed by Tumblety, but this would have been after his arrest while he was incarcerated at the Old Capital Prison.

How the papers even connected Tumblety to Dr. Luke Blackburn is apparently based upon the following circumstances.

On May 6th, 1865, the day after Tumblety’s arrest, an Associated Press article, which was published in numerous North American newspapers, reported from Halifax, Nova Scotia, the details behind the yellow fever plot from Bermuda. The report specifically named a “Dr. Blackburn.” Curiously, in the dozens of reports on the yellow fever plot published in April and May 1865, Luke Blackburn’s first name was never mentioned; only referring to him as Dr. Blackburn. On the very same day, May 6th – and in the same papers – a second Associated Press article was published reporting on Tumblety’s St. Louis arrest of May 5th, 1865, and stated his alias as J.H. Blackburn:

J.H. Blackburn, alias Dr. Tumblety... was arrested to-day in accordance with orders from the War Department.

Tumblety was connected to the name Blackburn; however, in St. Louis Tumblety was not using the alias “Dr. Blackburn”, but published Blackburn as his partner. The 1865 St. Louis City Directory listed “Blackburn J. &

Co. (John Blackburn and F. Tumblety), physicians.” This John Blackburn was very likely Tumblety’s valet, Mark A. Blackburn. Tumblety claimed he hired him in 1860 or 1861 in New York, and numerous eyewitness accounts have Mark A. Blackburn working for him in his Brooklyn office in 1864. Tumblety may very well have used “Dr. Blackburn” as his alias in Brooklyn, New York because he did so in Albany, New York in August and September 1863, just before he opened up his office at 181 Fulton Street in Brooklyn in October:

Dr. Blackburne, the Indian herb doctor, will describe diseases, and tell his patients the nature of their complaints or illness without receiving any information from them. No charge for consultation.
[*Albany Morning Express*, August 20th, 1863]



DR. TUMBLETY.

A reporter at the *Albany Evening Journal* recalled Tumblety opening up his office in Albany at this time, and reported it in their November 28th, 1888 edition: “When Tumblety was in Albany he started his establishment for herb cures... His career in Albany was not as satisfactory as he could wish and he soon packed off to Brooklyn, where he cut a great swell, and was known everywhere both in that city and on Manhattan island as the “Nankeen swell.” One month later, Tumblety did indeed open up an office in Brooklyn. Peculiarly, he added the letter “e” at the end of “Blackburne” in his Albany advertisement. It was not uncommon for quack doctors to use alternative names, such as the first doctor Tumblety worked for in Rochester, New York in 1850, W.C. Lispenard.¹⁸ His real name was Ezra J. Reynolds.

18 1857 Rochester (New York) City Directory.

Mark Blackburn travelled with Tumblety throughout the late 1860s and helped in his offices in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. Blackburn was so significant to him that Tumblety bequeathed a large sum of money to him in his 1903 will and testament, so it is not a surprise that he used Mark's last name as his alias. While earlier in Washington DC, between 1862 and April 1863, Tumblety ensured his full name was branded on all of his multi-column newspaper ads, but he purposely omitted his name in his Philadelphia ads between May and June 1863. In the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of June 27th, 1863 the ad stated, "TEN DOLLAR REWARD, if the Indian Herb Doctor from Canada fails to describe diseases and tell his patients the nature of their complaints without receiving any information from them. No charge for advice or consultation."

One possible reason why Tumblety added an alias was because on July 1st, 1863 the mayor of Philadelphia issued an arrest warrant on Tumblety for perjury, and he sneaked out of the city.¹⁹ On two other occasions when Tumblety was in trouble with the law, in 1881 when he was arrested for sodomy in Toronto and in 1888 when he absconded from England, he hid in upstate New York staying with his sister.²⁰ He likely did the same, since we have an eyewitness account of him in Buffalo, New York, in July 1863, then opening up an office in Albany, New York, one month later.

Three months later in Brooklyn, Tumblety opted for the "\$30 REWARD" advertisement and referred to himself as "Indian herb doctor." Notice that the reward increased from \$10 to \$30. A warrant was still out for his arrest, so it is not a surprise that he continued to use the alias of "Dr. Blackburn" while in Brooklyn.

An Associated Press newscable report published in the *Northern New York Journal* of May 9th, 1865 finally connected Tumblety to Luke Blackburn, which stated the following:

Dr. J.H. Blackburn, alias Tumblety... has been arrested at St. Louis. **Is this the Bermuda Blackburn?**
[Emphasis added]

This clearly shows that newsgathering organizations were fully aware of the Dr. Blackburn coincidence. A reporter or editor at the *Rochester Daily Union & Advertiser* called a *New York Tribune* reporter out for making this connection. In their May 12th, 1865 edition, the Rochester paper reprinted part of an earlier article from the Washington special correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, then stated:

The *Tribune's* correspondent has here confounded [SIC: confused] Dr. Tumblety alias Blackburn, the

"Indian Doctor" ...with Dr. Blackburn the yellow fever importer, who at last accounts was under examination in a port of one of the Provinces. The latter is not in federal custody. The coincidence in names is a little singular.

As stated, how Tumblety came to be connected to the Lincoln assassination was made public one day before he was arrested in St. Louis, and it involved the arrest of a boy who allegedly worked for John Wilkes Booth. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *New York Express*, New York City special correspondents for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the Philadelphia Press all independently released a local New York story on Thursday, May 4th, 1865 about a teenage boy having been taken into custody in Brooklyn on Tuesday, May 2nd, 1865. The New York correspondent for the *Philadelphia Press* stated:

The Government seems to be energetically at work ferreting out the scoundrels who were concerned in the assassination plot, and a new arrest has been made here which may assist it in placing the dread responsibility on every one to whom it properly belongs. The prisoner, to be sure, is only a boy, but his relation to the chief assassin, the confidential matters in which he must have been engaged, will render his testimony exceedingly valuable. He was arrested, on Tuesday evening last, while sauntering along Court street, Brooklyn, immediately opposite the Montague Hall.

The correspondent for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* on the same day gave additional details not reported in the *Philadelphia Press*:

The Boy was caught on Court street, near the City Hall, by one of the Government officers, who accidentally, as they expected they might do, met him face to face. The boy was taken by the officer to the nearest place of detention, which happened to be the 41st Precinct Station House...

The fact that these newsgathering organizations received the very same story only one day after the boy's arrest and reported different details suggests their source had timely inside information. The *New York Express* reporter even commented in their May 4th, 1865 article upon the trustworthiness of this source, stating, "Were in not that the above facts were obtained from such a

19 *North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia), July 2nd, 1863.

20 Sworn testimony of Thomas Powderly, Tumblety's nephew, Circuit Court Archives, City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Case Number 31430, Series A., 1904-1908; *Waterloo Observer*, December 12th, 1888.

reliable source, it would be difficult to believe they were other than the productions of some enthusiastic novelist.” The *New York Evening Post*, in their May 4th, 1865 issue, commented upon their own reporter speaking directly with that source, “He [the boy] refused to give his name, and as the officer who arrested him declined to give it, our reporter is unable to furnish it.” This inside source was one or more of the local 41st Precinct police officers.

What made the story particularly newsworthy was the boy’s jailhouse confession to the police. He stated that for the past few months he had been in Washington DC as the errand boy for President Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth; a man who was on the run and killed just five days earlier:

During the time that the prisoner was in the station house he conversed with some of the police officers, and from his conversation it was discovered that he had been employed by the assassin Booth for some months prior to the assassination of President Lincoln...

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* of the same date goes into additional detail about who this boy was:

Recent events which transpired in this city, have brought to light some facts in connection with the assassination of President Lincoln and the Identity of Harold [sic], the accomplice of Booth, and partner in his attempted flight, which will startle the people of this locality somewhat, and form another link in the history of the assassin, who is now about to pay the penalty of his enormous crime with his worthless life. ...the Washington detectives discovered, on visiting his haunts, that there was a boy, whose name they could not ascertain, and whose face, on his appearance being described to them, was familiar to all of them. This boy was in the habit of being a good deal of his time with Booth, being employed by him as a sort of errand boy, carrying letters, etc. On the day after the assassination the boy was missing and all search for him proved to be fruitless.

The 41st Precinct officers then revealed the connection this boy made between the assassins and Dr. Francis Tumblety:

It appears also from his [the errand boy] conversations with the officers during his stay at the station house, that Herold, the companion of Booth in his flight, and who is now in custody in Washington, is well known to the citizens of Brooklyn as the agent and companion of a man known as the “Indian Herb Doctor,” who came to Brooklyn some eighteen months since and opened an office on Fulton street, where he made himself notorious by the peculiarity of his dress. [*New York Evening Post*, May 4th, 1865]

This news of Booth’s Brooklyn errand boy came at a time when the magnitude of the Lincoln assassination conspiracy was not entirely known. The country was on edge, since President Lincoln was only murdered less than three weeks earlier. How many other conspirators were still at large? Each correspondent gave a slightly different angle to the errand boy story, but they all reported that the boy was at Booth’s Washington DC residence – likely the National Hotel – at the time of the assassination, on April 15th, 1865, then he fled the capital the next day.²¹ The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* story gave great detail on how the detectives in Washington DC first believed the conspirators may have murdered the missing boy because he knew too much, but they then discovered a boy answering the description of him being seen taking a train to Baltimore. The detectives then followed his trail through Baltimore and finally to Brooklyn.

The *Philadelphia Press* gave additional details, stating the boy was well-known as Booth’s errand boy, that he disappeared in the morning, and that only one detective was assigned to trail the boy. The newspaper also reported the detective was attached to Colonel Baker, stating:

One of the detectives, said to be attached to Colonel Baker’s force, was immediately detailed to find him and he did find him as stated.

This is not the same Colonel Baker who arrested Tumblety in St. Louis, since Colonel James Baker’s jurisdiction was specific to Missouri. This was Colonel Lafayette C. Baker, Provost Marshall for Washington DC, the Head of the National Detective Bureau, and government master spy from September 1862 to November 1863, but then transferred to New York to work for the Assistant Secretary of War, Charles Dan.²²



Colonel Lafayette C. Baker

21 Sandburg, C., *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, Volume IV, p. 318, Harcourt Brace & World, 1939.

22 Waller, D., *Lincoln’s Spies*, Simon & Schuster, 2019.

Immediately after the assassination, Stanton ordered Baker back to the capital for the singular purpose of capturing John Wilkes Booth and David Herold and rooting out the rest of the conspirators. It is known that Colonel Baker was at this very moment assigning detectives to investigate various leads, as in the case with Detective Theodore Woodall, when he sent him to lower Maryland on April 24th to assist in Booth's capture.²³

The DC detective reportedly spotted the errand boy on Brooklyn's Court Street on Tuesday, May 2nd, 1865 then arrested him. The officer then brought him to the 41st Precinct Station in order to hold him while he left for further instructions from his superiors. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* of May 4th, 1865 stated that the detective spoke with the captain of 41st Precinct, Captain Smith:

...the officer showing his authority for making the arrest, asked Captain Smith to keep him in close custody until he should be called for by him. The boy remained in the Station House that night, and on the following day he was privately conveyed to Washington.

A list of precinct captains published in the *Brooklyn Daily News* on May 16th, 1866, reported Captain Joel Smith assigned to the 41st Precinct.

The *Evening Post*, May 4th, 1865 corroborated the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* report that the DC detective returned the next day to retrieve the boy, writing: "Yesterday [May 3rd, 1865] the officer called again and took the prisoner to Washington, where he is now in custody."

Although, the boy stated he did not know if Tumblety was involved with the assassination, a close and recent relationship with the assassin clearly piqued the interest of the Washington DC detectives, as evidenced by Tumblety being arrested the very next day on May 5th, 1864 in St. Louis:

The notorious "Dr. Tumblety" spoken of, who has for some time been massing a fortune in this city, under the nom de plume of Indian Herb Doctor, who had previously assumed the name of Dr. J.H. Blackburn, was yesterday arrested by a United States detective, on a charge of complicity with the assassination of President Lincoln... Harrold [sic] and the herb doctor are said to have been partners in Brooklyn... [St. Louis Press, May 6th, 1865]

A May 5th, 1865 arrest makes sense. For Colonel Lafayette Baker and the US detectives, the publishing of the May 4th, 1865 articles came at a bad time. If their intentions were to arrest Tumblety and question him on the Lincoln assassination, their suspect was about to be forewarned, so they had to act quickly. On the very same

day Tumblety was arrested the story went national when the Associated Press picked it up and transmitted it to dozens of newspapers across the country and in Canada. Additionally, the *New York Express* story was transmitted to multiple newspapers around the country, making its way into Washington DC's *Evening Star* on May 5th, 1865. This meant that Tumblety likely did not read about his connection to the Lincoln assassination until after he was arrested.

An article in the *New York Times* dated May 5th, 1865 contradicts the five separate May 4th, 1865 accounts, stating that the teenager was not Booth's errand boy, but merely a young man who was arrested for theft in Brooklyn, who then spun the story in order to get out of the charge:

A few days since a young man, whose name has not been divulged, was arrested by Detective Frost and others on the charge of theft, and, proving to be a smart fellow, told something more than he knew to be facts, in order to exculpate himself from the actual offense of which it is alleged he is guilty. He stated that he knew the assassin Booth ...and said that Harold had been a resident of Brooklyn and an attendant of a physician who formerly resided here. The officers believing that he knew something of the assassination, and having an eye to the reward, kept him in custody for some days, and reported the case to General Superintendent Kennedy, of the Metropolitan Police. That officer examined the matter thoroughly, and as reported, found it to be "bosh."

Notice that the reporter for the *New York Times* received the story from a different source than reporters from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *New York Express*, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Press*, and received it a day later. While their stories came from officers at the 41st Precinct on the very same day the DC detective supposedly retrieved the boy – and who the *New York Evening Post* reporter commented upon their credibility – the *New York Times* reporter received second-hand information. The *Times* reporter clearly read their stories, then approached Superintendent Kennedy at headquarters the day before Tumblety was arrested in St. Louis. If Superintendent Kennedy was telling the truth, then Tumblety getting arrested the next day makes no sense. There was no other connection between Tumblety and President Lincoln's assassination but from this boy. Colonel Baker would have known the story was bosh, since his detectives were claimed to be involved, and it

23 Edwards, W., *The Lincoln Assassination – The Reward Files*, Univ. of Illinois Press, 2012.

is a stretch to believe the federal authorities would have arrested a man on a complete lie. If Colonel Baker and his detectives informed Superintendent Kennedy of their plans and asked him to keep their interest in Tumblety confidential until they decide to arrest him, then Kennedy stretching the truth and leading the *Times* reporter on a wild goose chase makes sense. Kennedy may even have been attempting to bury the story coming from the 41st Precinct officers before it went viral.

Actually, there are other issues with the *New York Times* account. Nowhere did the newspaper report that one of Colonel Baker's federal detectives who pursued the boy from Washington DC was in Brooklyn to arrest the boy, then escorted the boy back to Washington DC on May 3rd. In fact, the *Times* account concludes this to be "bosh."

Where did this part of the story come from if untrue? It could not have come from the boy, since part of the story involved the boy being gone; escorted out of 41st Precinct by a DC detective. The police would not have spun a big lie like this, because Kennedy stated their interest was to collect the reward money. The local police certainly would not have baked a story involving Colonel Baker's detectives, since the very same Washington DC people would be releasing the reward money and would have known it was an elaborate lie. Merely stating they arrested a Brooklyn boy and who claims Tumblety knew Booth and Herold would have better improved their chances of collecting a reward.

One suggestion is that the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reporter made the whole story up, but this conflicts with the fact that reporters from four other newspapers received the story from the 41st Precinct police, and even reported on distinct events. None of the reports could have been a source for the other four. Even the Associated Press reporter, an independent newsgathering organization, corroborated this 41st Precinct police story and not the Kennedy story.

Further contradicting Kennedy's claim that the boy fabricated the story in order to get out of the theft charge is that information he gave proved correct, and correct on three levels.

First, the boy knew Tumblety had an office in Brooklyn, then left six months earlier, meaning around December 1864. Second, he claimed Tumblety left for New Orleans, and indeed he did. According to a passenger list recorded in the *New York Daily Tribune* of December 5th, 1864, Tumblety sailed for New Orleans onboard the S.S. *George Cromwell*. The boy had to have interacted with Tumblety in the fall/winter of 1864 to know these events. It would not be a surprise that Tumblety developed a relationship with the 15-year-old Brooklyn boy, since Tumblety always sought out the attention of older boys and younger men in

every city he operated out of. Third, and most importantly, the boy stated to the police on May 3rd, 1865, that he believed Tumblety was still in New Orleans:

The doctor [Tumblety]... left this city, and is said to be in New Orleans at the present time, and Herold returned to Washington.

This means that the boy likely believed Tumblety opened up an office in New Orleans. While it has been suggested that Tumblety left Brooklyn for St. Louis, and merely passed through New Orleans, he actually opened up an office there in December. At the end of 1864 New Orleans was occupied by the Union under the compassionate control of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, undoing harsh and repressive directives implemented by his predecessor, General Benjamin F. Butler. New Orleans' economy was prospering.²⁴

Tumblety would have been enticed by New Orleans and would have felt comfortable attempting to exploit its citizens, even hedging his bets by calling himself a Canadian. His newspaper advertisements stated, "\$30 Reward, the Indian Herb Doctor, from Canada," as he did in Philadelphia one year earlier. He placed the ad in the New Orleans dailies, the *Daily True Delta*, *Times-Picayune*, and *Times-Democrat*, up until December 28th, 1864. Found in the December 28th, 1864 issue of the *Daily True Delta*, corroborating his stay until the end of the month is a letter waiting for him at the post office on December 30th, 1864, as listed in the *Times-Picayune* on that date. It was no longer on the list the next day, meaning that the letter was retrieved by Tumblety. By January 5th, 1865 Tumblety had opened up an office in St. Louis, using the very same \$30 dollar reward advertisement he used in New Orleans, placing it in the *Missouri Republican* of January 5th, 1865.

If Tumblety was ultimately headed to St. Louis, then the boy would likely have known it. Tumblety was known to leave a city earlier than intended, for a variety of reasons. If he believed it was time to exit New Orleans at the end of December 1865, then his next city was likely a business decision. He was not done earning a lucrative living as an Indian herb doctor. The next logical, ripe, and unexploited city was St. Louis. It was the fourth largest city in the United States at the time, and the trip was just a direct, lazy riverboat ride north on the mighty Mississippi River.

While one of the bombshell stories in the articles was Booth's errand boy claiming that Tumblety had hired David Herold in 1864, there is evidence that this was a case of mistaken identity.

24 Capers, G., *Occupied City: New Orleans under the Federals, 1862-1865*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965.

In the *Brooklyn Daily News* of May 4th, 1864, the boy claimed Tumblety had two young men working for him, and he claimed the taller one was David Herold. He stated that the taller valet would wear Tumblety's clothes that he wore yesterday. Tumblety claimed in his autobiography that he was exactly six feet tall, so in order for this taller valet to fit in his clothes, he must have been near six feet tall. Herold was actually six inches shorter; according to the \$100,000 reward poster for the capture of John Wilkes Booth and David Herold, Herold was five feet six inches in height. Herold would not have been considered tall, even in 1865.

The biggest clue to the boy mistaking Herold as the tall valet is the name he stated Herold called himself when he was working in Tumblety's Brooklyn office:

Herold, **or Blackburn, as he called himself**. While here was generally considered a good fellow by those who knew him... *[Emphasis added]*

It appears the boy had mistaken Herold with Tumblety's longtime valet Mark A. Blackburn, who had been working for Tumblety in Brooklyn and was with him in St. Louis. We know Blackburn had to be near the same height as Tumblety, because we have numerous accounts of Blackburn wearing Tumblety's clothes, even as reported in this article.

An Albany resident in 1888, Mr. Arden Smith, was the private secretary for General Frank P. Blair during the Civil War and told an *Albany Journal* reporter in their November 30th, 1888 edition that he remembered seeing young David Herold as Tumblety's attendant. Smith stated:

"He [Tumblety] had his quarters in Brown's Hotel at Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventh Street. He had a big greyhound with him and an attendant named Harold [sic], the same young man who was afterward hanged for his connection with the assassination of Lincoln. While in Washington Tumblety was never known to speak to anyone but Harold [sic], who followed him about like a spaniel.

In 1863 Tumblety's offices were in the Washington Buildings, also at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventh Street. It is wrong to assume that Smith was mistaken about Tumblety staying at Brown's Hotel, because in St. Louis less than two years later, according to his ads and the St. Louis City Directory, his offices were at 52 North Second Street where his assistant Blackburn stayed, while the City Directory records Tumblety rooming at the posh Lindell Hotel.

While there is the possibility that Herold did work for Tumblety in 1863 in DC and 1864 in Brooklyn, the

comments made by Booth's errand boy suggest Smith also saw Mark A. Blackburn, who likely looked very much like Booth's photos in the newspapers.



David Herold

Of more significance than Tumblety possibly being connected to David Herold was the boy's claim that Tumblety had an intimate relationship with Booth, the mastermind of the Lincoln assassination plot. The *Detroit Free Press* of May 8th, 1865 reported, "He [the boy] states, however, that the doctor and Booth were on very intimate terms."

The *Philadelphia Press* of May 4th, 1865 gave additional details:

Booth was acquainted with the "doctor" in New York, and received many visits from him in Washington... The fact of the intimacy of this quack with the assassin, and its duration to a recent date, together with his mysterious disappearance, lead many to believe that he, also, knows something about the conspiracy.

With the boy being from Brooklyn where Tumblety had an office, being a teenager – the perfect age and gender for Tumblety's usual hires – and knowing accurate details about the doctor, it is likely the young man was Tumblety's errand boy before he was Booth's. The boy stating that Booth was acquainted with Tumblety does have merit. Tumblety had a passion for theater, and it was reported on multiple occasions throughout his lifetime that he attended a performance. For example, under sworn testimony Richard Norris stated that Tumblety introduced himself in 1881 during intermission at the St.

Charles Theatre in New Orleans.²⁵ Tumblety even knew the New York actors by name. Young Martin McGarry stated in the *New York World* of December 5th, 1888 that Tumblety hired him as a travel companion and errand boy in 1882.

McGarry stated:

Usually he went up to the Morton House, where he pointed out the actors to me and told me who they were and what they did. Sometimes in the afternoons we would drop in to the matinees.

Although John Wilkes Booth was spending more and more time in Washington DC, he was periodically in New York City. Not only did John Wilkes Booth's older brother Edwin work out of New York City in the 1860s, their mother still lived in the city.²⁶ Tumblety would have been familiar with the famous Booth family. There is even an eyewitness account of Tumblety being intimately acquainted with Booth in Buffalo, New York, in July 1863:

One particular week that will ever remain notable in local history was in July 1863... In fact quite an intimacy sprang up between him [John Wilkes Booth] and a Dr. Tumblety - or Tumulty. He drove around selling cure-alls for everything, giving lectures with Thespian emphasis. He frequently located himself on the Terrace, where he would draw big crowds by distributing bags of flour. [*Buffalo Courier*, May 31st, 1914]

John Wilkes Booth was indeed in Buffalo, New York, in July 1863, performing at the Metropolitan Theatre from July 4th to 10th in *Richard III*, *Lady of Lyons*, *Hamlet*, *Money* and *Macbeth*.²⁷ The Buffalo resident was unusually precise in witnessing Booth in Buffalo down to month and year, which makes the eyewitness account very credible. Moreover, his recollection involved Tumblety. As discussed, Tumblety was known to be in New York at this time, which corroborates the Buffalo resident's account.

Tumblety fled Philadelphia on July 1st, 1863, just one week before Booth performed in Buffalo. Weeks later, Tumblety opened up an office in Albany, New York; a city just due east of Buffalo, New York. Tumblety was known to attend the theater when in Buffalo. Buffalo resident Charles W. Gibbons witnessed Tumblety at Buffalo's Metropolitan Theatre in early 1859. Gibbons stated to a *Buffalo Courier* reporter, published in their November 30th, 1888 issue:

Tumblety used to go to the theater with a beautiful greyhound and paid \$5 to get the dog in. The dog used to lean over the railing and take in the play with great interest. He afterwards presented the dog to William H. Seward.

Curiously, when Tumblety opened up his Brooklyn office in October 1863, John Wilkes Booth was performing *Richard III* at the Academy of Music in Brooklyn.²⁸ This was only three months after their reported friendship in Buffalo, New York.

Not only does the Brooklyn boy's claim that Booth was recently acquainted with Tumblety have corroboration, but another comment he made explains how he may have come into Booth's employ as an errand boy, and that it conforms to the whereabouts of both Booth and Tumblety in November 1874.

According to the *New York Evening Post* of May 4th, 1865, the boy told the 41st Precinct officers that he had been "...employed by the assassin Booth for some months prior to the assassination of President Lincoln." John Wilkes Booth was in New York City five months before Lincoln's assassination in November 1864, and that is when he would have met up with the Brooklyn boy. Booth participated in a one-evening-only major Shakespearian theatrical event at Winter Garden in New York City on November 25th, 1864, marking the "tercentenary" of William Shakespeare's birth.²⁹ Booth joined his brothers Edwin and Junius performing *Julius Caesar* as a benefit to pay for a statue of the Bard in Central Park. It was a highly publicized event, which produced a packed crowd.



L-R: John Wilkes Booth with his brothers Edwin and Junius. This photo was taken November 17, 1864 in New York City

25 Sworn Testimony of Richard Norris, Circuit Court Archives, City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Case Number 31430, Series A., 1904 - 1908.

26 Bloom, A., *Edwin Booth: A Biography and Performance History*, McFarland & Co., 2013.

27 Loux, A., *John Wilkes Booth: Day by Day*, McFarland & Co., 2013.

28 *Brooklyn Union*, October 21st, 1863.

29 Winter, W., *Life and Art of Edwin Booth*, Macmillan & Co., 1894.

It would have been out of character for the theater-loving Tumblety not to have attended this historic event in New York. While the performance was on November 25th, 1888, he did not leave New York until November 28th.³⁰ This means John Wilkes Booth stayed in New York for a few days before heading off to his next performance. Since Tumblety had socialized with Booth in the evenings in Buffalo the previous year, it is plausible that Tumblety sought out Booth's company, and Booth met Tumblety's errand boy. Since Tumblety left New York City/Brooklyn soon after, the boy would have been out of a job, and this may have been the time Booth offered him employment. We do know Edwin Booth had an errand boy named Garrie at the time, so John Wilkes Booth may have followed his brother's footsteps.³¹

Although numerous newspaper reports on Booth's errand boy stated his name was not released, there is one newspaper article that gave his name – A. Berry:

BOOTH'S ERRAND BOY ARRESTED. New York, May 4. – **A. Berry** has been arrested at Brooklyn and taken to Washington, whose conversation leads to the belief that he was possessed of Knowledge of the assassination. He was an errand boy of Booth's. It appears that Harrold [sic] turns out to have been the agent and confidant of the notorious Dr. Tumblety, who lately suddenly disappeared from Brooklyn. [*Daily Milwaukee News*, May 5th, 1865] [*Author's emphasis added*]

While this report has no corroboration, it would be strange that a newspaper organization would randomly invent a name, especially since faking a name gives little additional weight to the story. The newsworthy aspect of the story is about Tumblety possibly being part of the Lincoln assassination conspiracy.

Researching through genealogical data, death records and city directories shows that there were possible candidates for an 'A. Berry' living in Brooklyn around 1865. The reports stated that the boy was about fifteen years old in 1865, so born around 1850. The 1870 census shows an Alphonzo H. Berry born in 1848, living in Brooklyn and married to a Christina. The 1870 census also shows and Alexander Barry (not Berry), born in Scotland in 1849, living in Brooklyn. An Arthur Berry is also shown in the 1870 census, born in 1851 and living in Brooklyn. The 1865 New York State census has an Alfred Berry, born in 1848 and living in New York City. Death records show an Arthur Berry, born in 1850 and living in Brooklyn.

In December 1888 Charles Dunham claimed Tumblety connected himself to the yellow fever plot merely for notoriety. The premise for Dunham's argument is that Tumblety was arrested for the plot and not for the Lincoln assassination conspiracy. The evidence is clear: Dunham was wrong on both counts, thus, his conclusion on Tumblety's attention-seeking agenda is wrong. Besides, Tumblety did indeed proudly promote his eccentricities when he was running his quack doctor business in the 1860s, but never did he promote anything that would hurt his public persona as a law-abiding upper class citizen. The reason why Tumblety even wrote his 1866 autobiography was to correct the record and immortalize his reputation.

The problem was that young A. Berry was eyewitness to Tumblety's friendship with John Wilkes Booth, even though he was not involved with Booth's murderous plans. Luckily, Tumblety could easily deflect this truth by exaggerating the newspapers' mistake about the yellow fever plot and take advantage of the errand boy's misidentification of Mark Blackburn as David Herold.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciations go out to Joe Chetcuti for his outstanding knowledge and advice, Howard Brown for maintaining a treasure trove of contemporary newspaper articles, and Jonathan Menges for inspiring this research with our talk in St. Louis.

30 Titone, N., *My Thoughts Be Bloody: The Bitter Rivalry Between Edwin and John Wilkes Booth that Led to an American Tragedy*, Free Press, 2010.

31 Menser, P., *Anecdotal Shakespeare: A New Performance History*, The Arden Shakespeare, 2015.



MICHAEL HAWLEY is the author of *Jack the Ripper Suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety* (Sunbury Press, 2018) and *The Ripper's Haunts* (Sunbury Press, 2016). He has published over a dozen research articles in *Ripperologist*, *Whitechapel Society Journal* and *Casebook Examiner*, and has published online articles for numerous websites. Hawley has lectured in Baltimore, Maryland, in April 2016, at RipperCon 2016 and in Liverpool, England, in September 2017, at the Jack the Ripper Conference. He was honored to be interviewed in numerous podcasts for Rippercast, Beyond Reality Radio, Jim Herald.com, and ESPN's Judge Penny Wolfgang. He is also the author of *The Watchmaker Revelations*, a mystery/thriller fiction trilogy: *The Ripper's Hellbroth* (Sunbury Press, 2017), *Jack's Lantern* (2014), and *Curse of the Bayou Beast* (2015). He is also the author of *Searching for Truth with a Broken Flashlight* (Nonfiction, 2010), which was awarded June 2011 Book of the Month for the mega-website, ReligiousTolerance.org, and was the subject of an article in the *Buffalo Spree*, June 2011.

The Swanson Marginalia: More Scribblings

By ADAM WOOD

The death of Chief Inspector Donald Swanson's last surviving child Alice on 14 November 1980 started a chain of events which would culminate in the revelation that, although he had remained publicly tight-lipped, Swanson had in fact disclosed the identity of Scotland Yard's prime suspect as the Ripper – and provoke discussion and sometimes heated debate for the next 40 years.

Alice's Executor, nephew Jim Swanson, was assisted by his elder brother Donald in sorting her papers and effects at the cottage she had shared with her sister Ada until the latter's death in 1976, aged 93.

Jim and Donald had little time to inspect the possessions at Orchard Cottage because of the need to empty the property, so simply boxed everything up and removed it to Jim's home at Badgers Walk, Peaslake in Surrey.

It was here that on flicking through a copy of Sir Robert Anderson's memoir *The Lighter Side of My Official Life* Donald noticed handwritten notes on some pages, which he brought to the attention of Jim. They had discovered what is now known as the Swanson marginalia.

Reading in more detail, Jim saw that his grandfather had made handwritten comments on four pages and also the endpaper, either adding to or correcting what was on the printed page. The major discovery, however, was notes written in the margin on page 138, which carried Sir Robert Anderson's comments on the Whitechapel murders and his Polish Jew suspect.

Although it would not be noted until Stewart Evans examined the Marginalia in 2000, the margin notes were written using two different pencils – one grey and a second, purple-tinged – and at different times.

When Swanson's annotated copy of the book was loaned to New Scotland Yard's Crime Museum in 2006, the then-Curator Alan McCormick took the opportunity of asking the Met's Forensic Science Service to look at the

handwriting to confirm it was that of Donald Swanson.

The examination was conducted by Dr Christopher Davies, who joined the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory in June 1981, since when he had been employed solely as a questioned document examiner. At the time of the 2006 analysis, he was one of the senior document examiners in the London Laboratory of the Forensic Science Service.

On 3 November 2006, Dr Davies finished his report. In it, he commented on the nature of the marginalia notes, writing that they

show evidence of occasional tremor which is similar to that sometimes found in the writing of individuals with certain neurological conditions such as Parkinsonism.

He concluded:

I have, therefore, concluded that there is strong evidence to support the proposition that Swanson wrote the questioned annotations in the book *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*.

If I were able to examine known writings by Swanson that were more nearly contemporary with the questioned writing then I might wish to alter this conclusion. Such writings would enable me to determine whether or not the difference that I have attributed to the passage of time between the production of the known and questioned writings are truly caused by this.

While conducting research for my book *Swanson: The Life and Times of A Victorian Detective*, I discovered in the family archives further examples of Swanson's handwriting, in letters, his personal address book and other documents. As a result, in August 2012 I contacted Dr Davies and asked if he would consider re-examining

tatingly identified the suspect the instant he was confronted with him; but he refused to give evidence against him.

138

because the suspect was also a Jew, and also because his evidence would convict the suspect, and witness would be the means of murderer being hanged which he did not wish to be left on his mind. J.S.S.

The Swanson marginalia: Page 138

©Adam Wood

the Marginalia against the 'new' handwriting samples. Happily, Dr Davies agreed to do so.

On 24 September he completed his report on his examinations. He upgraded his 2006 conclusion, stating:

There is very strong support for the view that the notes towards the bottom of page 138 in Donald Swanson's copy of *The Lighter Side of My Official Life* and the notes on the last leaf in this book were written by Donald Swanson.

My full analysis of the discovery of the Swanson marginalia can be read in *Ripperologist* 128, October 2012.

It would seem at this point that the provenance was confirmed. Yet this wasn't enough for some, who complained that it was unusual that such an important set of annotations should appear completely independently in a book from Swanson's library; in short, it was too good to be true.

What chance the lead detective in the investigation providing the key to the case, revealed to the world so long after the event? And wasn't it unusual for someone to sign their writing in a personal item using their initials, when it was not intended for others to see it?

What many aren't aware of is that Donald Swanson made notes and corrections in several books in his library when in his retirement.

When I took part in a podcast discussion for *Rippercast* recently it was suggested by authors Robert House and John Malcolm that an article on these other examples would be of interest to readers – so please read on!

Far from being an isolated example of marginalia, Swanson's comments on the Polish Jew suspect are joined

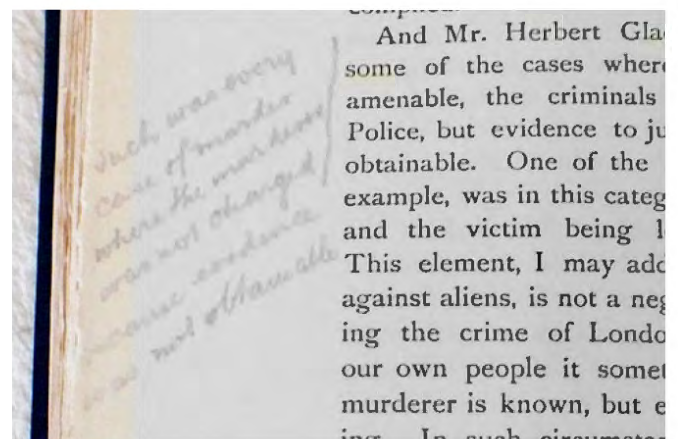
by further notes in his copy of *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*. While Anderson had long complained that criminals – including the Whitechapel murders suspect – were often identified but couldn't be prosecuted, Swanson made one such note agreeing with his former superior:

On page 144 the retired Assistant Commissioner reported the striking fact that of all murders which had been committed in London between 1903 and 1908 just six were 'undiscovered', but "...in some of the cases where no one was made amenable, the criminals were known to the Police, but evidence to justify an arrest was not obtainable."

In agreement, Swanson commented in the margin:

Such was every case of murder where the murderer was not charged because evidence was not obtainable.

– strong echoes of Jack the Ripper and the Polish Jew suspect.

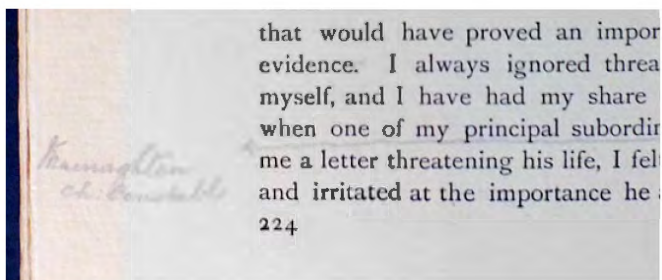


©Adam Wood

On page 224 in the same book, Anderson writes about the plot to assassinate Prime Minister William Gladstone by William Townsend in April 1893. Townsend had already sent a threatening letter to Gladstone before arriving at Downing Street to carry out his plan, which thankfully for the Prime Minister failed to materialise.¹

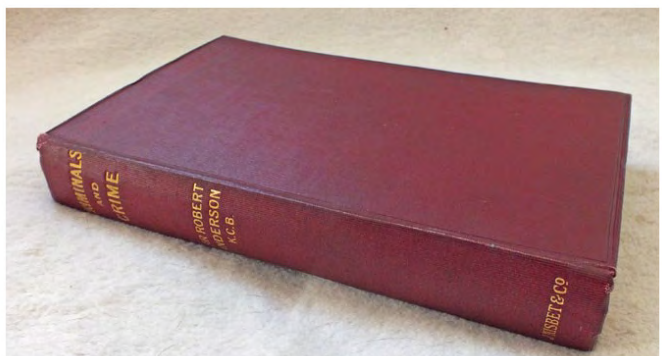
What went unreported in the newspapers, however, was the story related by Anderson in his memoirs. Claiming that he himself had received many threatening letters, always ignoring them, the Assistant Commissioner had been so annoyed that one of his officers who had also received a threatening letter from Townsend had been so worried that he had taken the missive and thrown it on the fire. Although declining to name the officer, simply describing him as “one of my principal subordinates”, Anderson later regretted his actions, realising that the letter would have been deemed evidence in the prosecution against Townsend.

In his copy of *Lighter Side*, Donald Swanson named the nervous recipient as “Macnaghten. Ch. Constable”. Curiously, the incident is missing from Macnaghten’s own memoir, *Days Of My Years*.



©Adam Wood

Similarly, Swanson was happy to name another of Anderson’s “principal subordinates”, this time mentioned in the Assistant Commissioner’s *Criminals and Crime: Some Facts and Suggestions*.



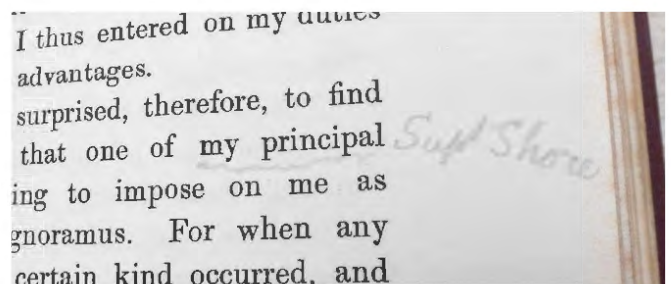
©Adam Wood

On page 87 Anderson complained that he suspected this particular officer would

impose on me as though I were an ignoramus. For when any important crime of a certain kind occurred,

and I set myself to investigate it *a la* Sherlock Holmes, he used to listen to me in the way that so many people listen to sermons in church; and when I was done he would stolidly announce that the crime was the work of A, B, C, or D, naming some of his stock heroes. Though a keen and shrewd police officer, the man was unimaginative, and I thus accounted for the fact that his list was always brief, and that the same names came up repeatedly. It was “Old Carr,” or “Wirth,” or “Sausage,” or “Shrimps,” or “Quiet Joe,” or “Red Bob,” &c. &c., one name or another being put forward according to the kind of crime I was investigating. It was easy to test my prosaic subordinate’s statement by methods with which I was familiar in secret service work; and I soon found that he was generally right. Great crimes are the work of great criminals, and great criminals are very few.

In his copy, presented to him by the author on New Year’s Day 1908, Swanson revealed the old-school copper to be Superintendent John Shore.



©Adam Wood

Anderson’s *Criminals and Crime* contains corroboration to the next example of Swanson marginalia; the identity of a notorious English crook who had assisted the American criminal Adam Worth with the theft of Thomas Gainsborough’s painting of Georgiana Spencer, the Duchess of Devonshire.

In both *Criminals and Crime* and *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*, Anderson names the accomplice as “an old sinner” named Powell, a claim which had already appeared in newspaper stories in 1897.

Yet in a booklet simply titled *Adam Worth*, published by the Pinkerton Detective Agency in 1902 which supposedly told the true story of Worth’s criminal career and his masterminding of the theft of the painting, it was claimed that the Englishman was another crook, John ‘Junka’ Phillips, who helped Worth.

The Pinkertons’ description of the plan was thrilling:

Jack Phillips, who was a very large and powerful man, was to stand underneath the window in front of the Agnew store, while Worth, who was a small and light

1 See trial transcript at www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18930529-549.

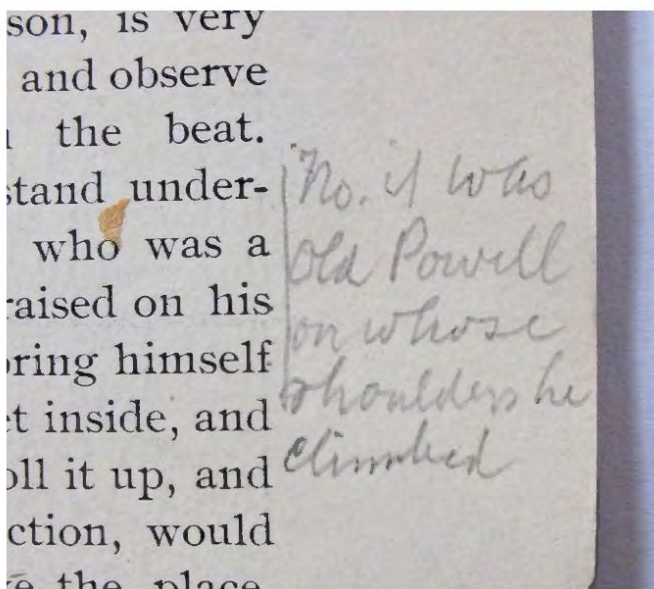
for his interest in it, which they thought they might realize some money on eventually. Ripperologists continued for several years, until Worth and Phillipps had a falling out. Phillipps demanded that the picture be produced and he would pay his indebtedness, and buy out Worth's interest. An arrangement was made for a meeting at the Criterion Bar, in London. Worth suspecting treachery, secretly took a position, watched Phillipps' movements, and found that he was accompanied by two well known detectives from Scotland Yard. Under the circumstances, neither Worth nor the picture put in an appearance, but the next time they met, which was in the Criterion, notwithstanding the fact that Worth was a small man, being about 5 feet, 4 inches high, and weighing about 150 pounds, he pounced upon Phillips, striking him a severe blow in the face, and knocking him down, and then kicking him until he was ex-

Swanson confides that it was Old Powell who took a beating from Adam Worth

©Adam Wood

man, was to mount Phillips' shoulders, and raised on his arms – like a circus performer – to the top of the sign, would spring himself up to the window, await his opportunity to raise the window, get inside, and with the aid of a step-ladder, cut the picture from the frame, roll it up, and at a given signal from [lookout] Elliott that there was no danger of detection, would pass the picture down to Phillips.

Yet in Donald Swanson's personal copy of the Pinkerton booklet, alongside this passage the detective noted in pencil "No. It was Old Powell on whose shoulders he climbed."



©Adam Wood

The Pinkerton booklet was treated to a number of corrections by the retired detective. As Superintendent of the CID at Scotland Yard, Swanson had long supervised the investigation into the theft of the painting, delegating the day-to-day work to Inspector Frank Froest, and had

liaised with the Pinkertons to arrange for its return to the Agnew family. He knew as much about the case as anyone, and in another example of Old Powell being excused his transgressions Junka Phillips was accused by the Pinkertons of conspiring with the Metropolitan Police:

An arrangement was made [between Junka and Adam Worth] for a meeting at the Criterion Bar, in London. Worth suspecting treachery, secretly took a position, watched Phillips' movements, and found that he was accompanied by two well-known detectives from Scotland Yard. Under the circumstances, neither Worth nor the picture put in an appearance, but the next time they met, which was in the Criterion, notwithstanding the fact that Worth was a small man, being about 5 feet, 4 inches high, and weighing about 150 pounds, he pounced upon Phillips, striking him a severe blow in the face, and knocking him down, and then kicking him until he was exhausted, and was dragged off by the police. The differences between Worth and Phillips were never patched up, and although this took place over 20 years ago, they never met again up to the day of Worth's death, so far as the Pinkertons are advised.

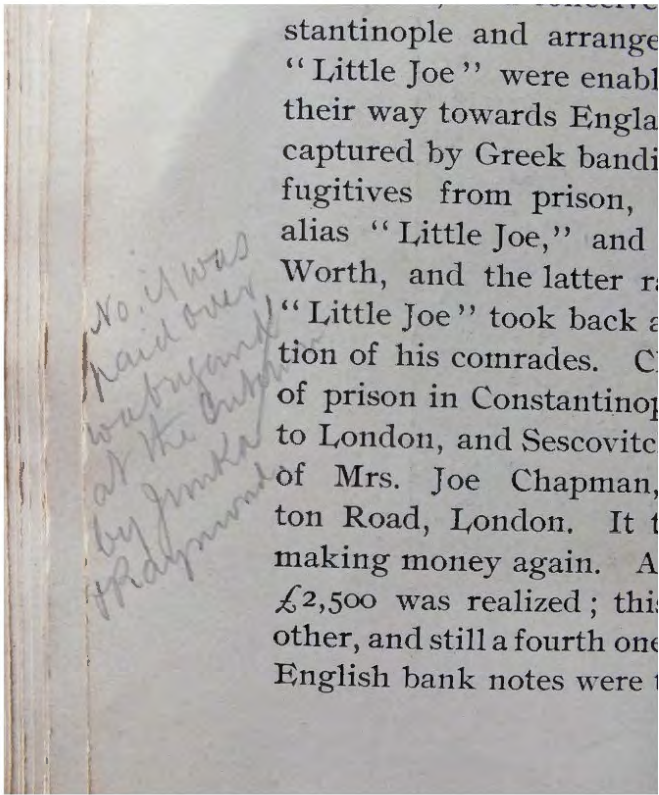
Donald Swanson was happy to oblige, writing "This is untrue. It was Old Powell that Raymond [Worth's alias] fought with & the quarrel was entirely between themselves." See photograph at the top of the page.

Yet Phillips was part of the gang, at least before the theft of the Gainsborough in 1876.

When other members of the gang were captured by Greek bandits one of them, 'Little' Joe Chapman, was released in order to raise some £2,000, a considerable sum. He got word to Worth, who supplied the cash. This, the Pinkertons wrote, "'Little Joe' took back and delivered

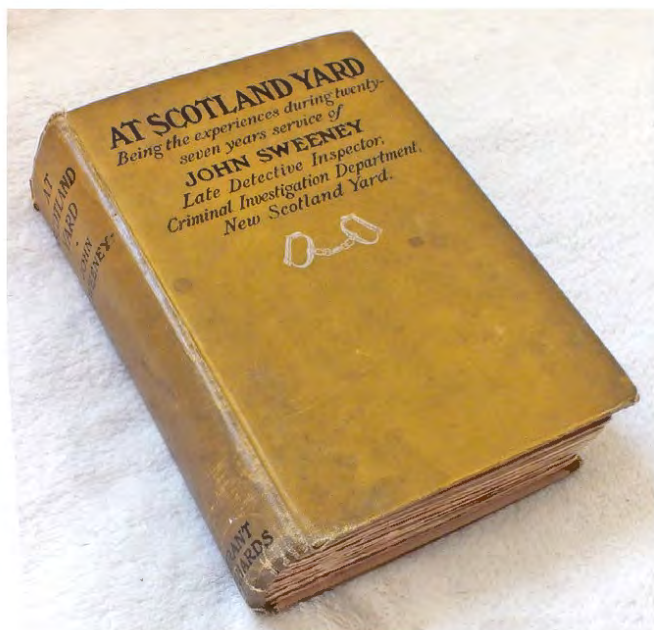
to the bandits, and effected the liberation of his colleagues.”

Again Swanson’s pencil was busy, correcting the claim: “No. It was paid over to a brigand at the Criterion by Junka & Raymond.”



©Adam Wood

In another book in his library, *At Scotland Yard: Being the Experiences During Twenty-Seven Years’ Service* by Detective Inspector John Sweeney, Swanson made more comments, despite his former colleague describing the then recently-retired Scot as “one of the best class of officers.”



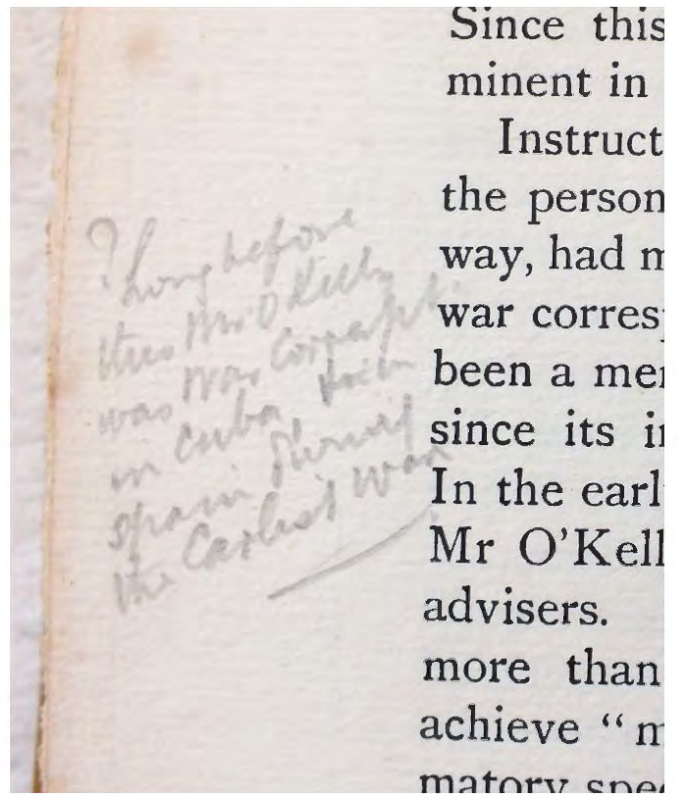
©Adam Wood

Starting with a simple correction – Sweeney’s description of Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa as an Anarchist being amended to ‘Fenian’, Swanson then took exception to Sweeney claiming that the Irish nationalist MP James Joseph O’Kelly had made a name for himself as war correspondent to the short-lived *The Irish People*.²

In the margin of page 132, Swanson wrote:

? Long before this Mr O’Kelly was War Correspondent in Cuba, Facist [sic] Spain during the Carlist War.

Indeed he had; J.J. O’Kelly had been in Havana in April 1873 in his position as War Correspondent for *The New York Herald* when he was captured and held prisoner under suspicion of being a spy.³ O’Kelly would escape, and eventually made his way back to Ireland to pursue a political career.



©Adam Wood

Already in the House of Commons was Dr Charles Kearns Deane Tanner, MP for Mid Cork. In his memoir Sweeney relates the story of the politician being the worse for wear when meeting a colleague, who asked “Hullo, Tanner, drunk again?” Sweeney writes that Tanner replied “Oh, you’re a ----- fool!”

Swanson’s scribbled note gives what is very similar to a famous quote usually attributed to Winston Churchill: “I shall be sober in 1 day but you will still be a fool”

2 1899-1903, founded by William O’Brien.

3 *Montrose Standard*, 18 April 1873.

Interestingly, this response appeared in 1904, in S.M. Hussey's *The Reminiscences of An Irish Land Agent*, in which he wrote:

The indifference of a drunken man to subsequent consequences was rather quaintly shown by that weird individual Dr. Tanner, when he went up to Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett in the lobby of the House of Commons, and abruptly observed:

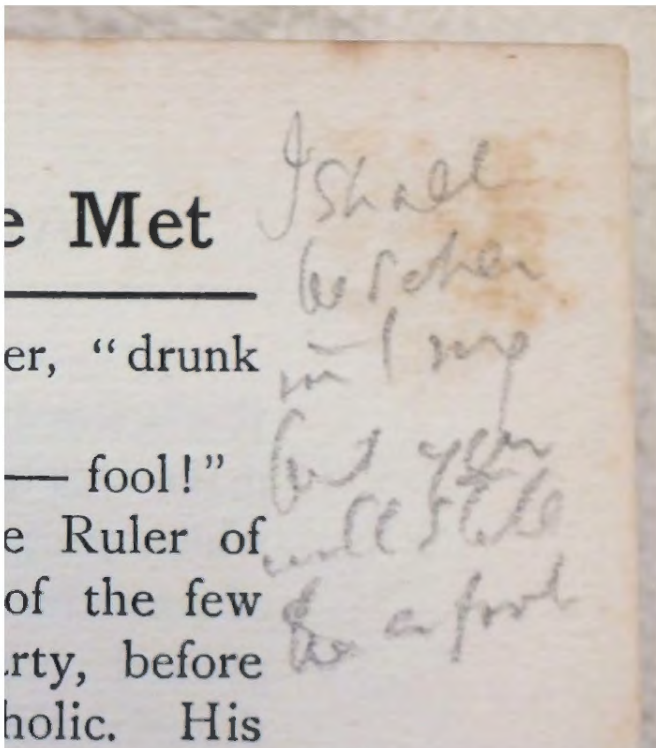
"You're a fool."

Sir Ellis fixed him with his eyeglass, and, in disgusted tones, replied: "You're drunk."

"I suppose so," retorted the Irishman, "but then I'll be sober to-morrow" – in the most plaintive tone, then in a crescendo of scorn – "whereas you'll always be a fool."

Moreover as he slouched down the lobby, he was heard to say: "If I do get a headache, I've a head to have it in, not a frame on which to hang an eyeglass."

The *Reminiscences* appeared in the same year as Sweeney's memoir; had Swanson read Hussey's work, or was he already aware of the story?⁴



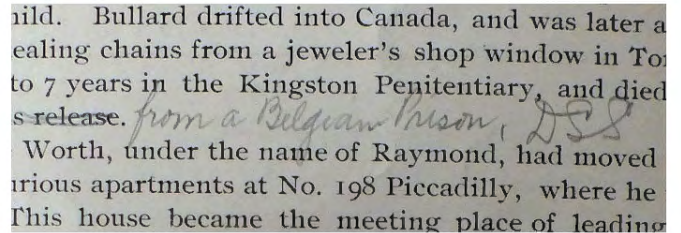
©Adam Wood

So, nine examples of other pencil marginalia in various books made by Donald Swanson. It is uncontested that this was usual practice for the retired detective.

But what about the sign-off of using his initials? Surely this is unusual in a personal note? Well, there are further examples of this as well. For Swanson, it seems appending

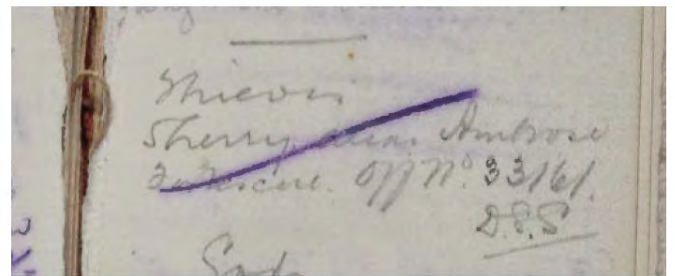
'DSS' to his writings was second nature – no doubt a habit developed over the course of his 35 year career in officialdom.

In his copy of the Pinkertons' *Adam Worth*, it is written that 'Piano' Charley Bullard had been convicted in Toronto of stealing chains from a jeweler's shop window. He was sentenced to seven years' and died in poverty shortly after his release. To this Swanson helpfully added "from a Belgian Prison. DSS"



©Adam Wood

Even in his own personal address book, kept for more than 40 years for his own private purposes, there is a note in the back about a thief named Sherry alias Ambrose which has been signed 'D.S.S.'



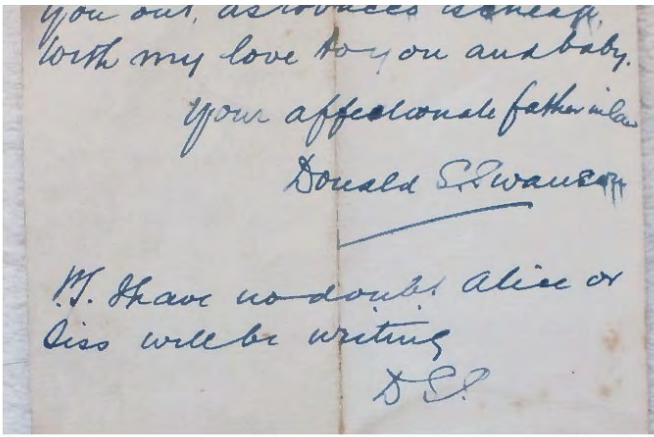
©Adam Wood

His own family were not exempt; the handful of personal letters sent by Swanson which have survived all bear a formal sign-off.

One, sent to eldest son Donald and his wife Charlotte in 1909, is signed "Your affectionate father, Donald S. Swanson" and "Your affectionate father in law, Donald S. Swanson", while a P.S. is signed "DSS".

And a letter to his grandson written in 1918 is signed formally "Your loving grandfather, Donald S. Swanson". The postscript is also noted 'DSS'. See both of these photographs on the following page.

4 According to the indispensable website quoteinvestigator.com, the anecdote can first be traced to 1882, taking place between two different MPs, and yet another pair of politicians in 1892. Dr Tanner appeared in another version in 1932, and then in 1934 the joke was used in the WC Fields film *It's a Gift*. When (as usual) being accused of being drunk, Fields quips "Yeah, and you're crazy, n' I'll be sober tomorrow n' you'll be crazy for the rest of your life." Winston Churchill supposedly made a similar exchange in 1946, telling MP Bessie Braddock "Bessie, my dear, you are ugly, and what's more, you are disgustingly ugly. But tomorrow I shall be sober and you will still be disgustingly ugly."



Letter to Swanson's son and daughter-in-law dated 11 August 1909

©Adam Wood

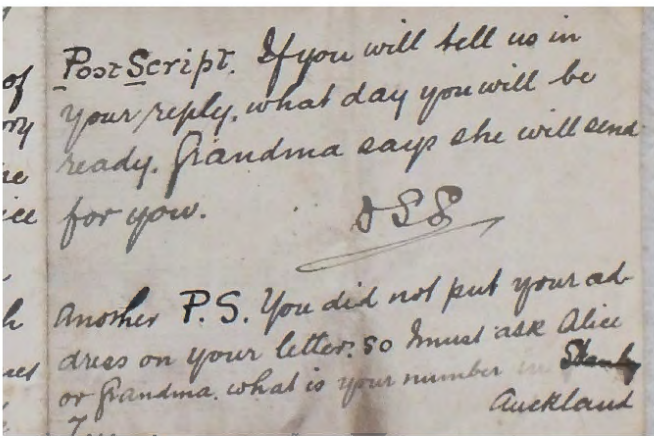
This habit lasted right up to at least August 1923, just a year before his death. In another letter to his grandson Donald written in a faint grey pencil, Swanson apologises for the brevity of the correspondence, complaining that he has had to stop writing due to his hand shaking uncontrollably – symptoms exactly as described by Dr Christopher Davies in his handwriting analysis of the ‘Kosminski marginalia’. Again, the PS is signed “DSS”.

And for good measure, the final line, thanking his grandson for writing, is in a purple pencil.

I hope this article satisfies the reader that scribbling margin notes was commonplace for Donald Swanson, as was his use of his initials. It must surely be accepted therefore that the provenance of the Kosminski marginalia is beyond reproach. Ascertaining the facts behind the claims therein, however, is far less straightforward.

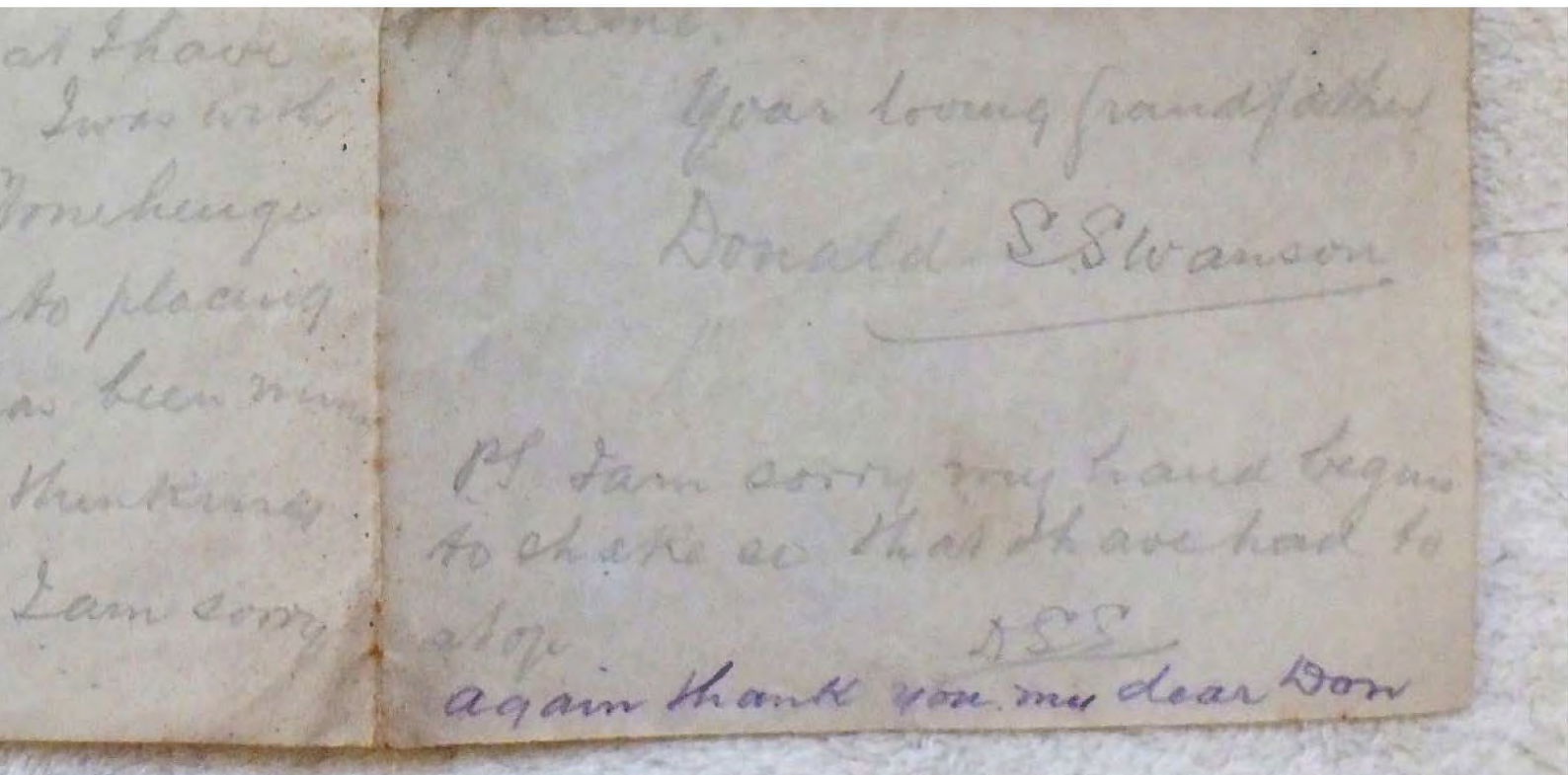


ADAM WOOD is the author of *Swanson: The Life and Times of A Victorian Detective and Trial of Percy Lefroy Mapleton*, and co-author of *Sir Howard Vincent's Police Code, 1889*. He is Executive Editor of *Ripperologist* magazine, and Editor of the *Journal of the Police History Society*. He lives in Warwickshire, and is currently writing a book on that county's longest unsolved murder case.



Letter to Swanson's grandson dated 30 December 1918

©Adam Wood



Swanson apologises to his grandson that he had to stop writing due to his shaking hand, 22 August 1923

©Adam Wood

Mrs. Booth's Most Unusual Enquiry Bureau

By SHEILLA JONES and JIM BURNS

Mrs. Booth's Enquiry Bureau was a most unusual detective agency, born out of the desperate search for girls seduced or forced into prostitution in London slums, and grew to become arguably the largest detective agency in Victorian London.

The Salvation Army's attempt to address the number of girls "lost through the portals of the abominable trade of prostitution"¹ began with the establishment of the Army's first Rescue Home for fallen women, opened on 22nd May 1884 at 212 Hanbury Street, Whitechapel.² As 24-year-old Florence Booth, daughter-in-law of Salvation Army founder William Booth and wife of Bramwell Booth, took over management of the Women's Social Work department, the Home moved to larger quarters at 48 Navarino Road, Dalston in 1885.³

The Rescue Homes that opened over the next few years provided women seeking to escape prostitution with free food, lodgings and training. But for General William Booth, that was not enough. Rural poverty had enticed many country girls to board a train to London to find work as domestics, a more appealing future than "pulling turnips in cold wind-swept fields or digging potatoes from the sodden land for a few coppers a day".⁴

Notes Richard Williams, author of *Missing: The inside story of the Salvation Army's Missing Persons Department* (1976):

These innocents abroad, simple and untutored in sophisticated city ways, were easily recognized by experienced women vultures who haunted the stations. Railway stations were not the only hunting grounds used by pimps and procurers. In parks and open spaces and wherever people gathered, the hawks would watch for unsuspecting pigeons who could by skillful enticements be induced to consent to their own abduction, little realising the horrors of the fate awaiting them.⁵

As the number of anxious parents seeking help from Salvationists to find their daughters grew, the General sought the aid of all Salvationists in setting up an enquiry service. In a July 11, 1885 address in *The War Cry* (the Army's weekly newspaper), written in English, French, German, Swedish, Italian and Spanish, Booth proposed a central office whereby:

1. Any forsaken, helpless, friendless girl can come for counsel and assistance at any hour;
2. Any white slaves can run from their prison houses and can be assisted;
3. Foreign girls unable to speak English can come for advice and assistance;
4. Girls can write when detained in houses against their will;
5. Girls who have not entirely made up their minds to abandon the life can be talked to and prayed with;
6. Parents who have lost a girl can apply for information.⁶

This was the recipe for the new Enquiry Department, a pilot scheme for tracing missing people. It was generally known as "Mrs. Booth's Enquiry Department".

- 1 Williams, Richard, 1976, *Missing: The inside story of the Salvation Army's Missing Persons Department*. Salvation Army, London, p 4. Abridged version of original 1969 Hodder and Stoughton edition.
- 2 Salvation Army UK Territorial Departments: Women's Social Services in Great Britain and Ireland, Salvation Army International Heritage Centre Archive (SA Archives), archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/329e3512-5c70-3249-9fab-eddb56bbb519.
- 3 Salvation Army homes for women: Hanbury Street and Navarino Road Refuges, SA Archives, archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/1ee8c147-f8d0-38ef-ad32-d3c5486b8af5.
- 4 Williams, *op. cit.*, p 38.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p 39.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p 40.



The Missing! column became a regular feature in weekly editions of *The War Cry* around the world beginning in 1885, asking for assistance in locating missing family and friends. This work grew to become the Salvation Army Family Tracing Service, which continues today in more than 100 countries.



Florence Soper Booth married into the Salvation Army Booth family in 1882 and, at age 22, was promptly assigned to develop and manage the Women's Social Work branch of the Army. That included the creation of the Enquiry Bureau in 1885, which became a professional detective agency in 1888.

© Salvation Army International Heritage Centre

Within a year, enquiry offices had opened in New York, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney, taking advantage of the broad reach of the Army around the world.⁷ The first advertisement for a missing person appeared on 10th October in *The War Cry*, the UK Salvation Army's weekly publication. Thereafter, a "Missing!" column ran regularly in the Army's editions of *The War Cry* around the world.

As the Women's Social Work activities expanded, the headquarters moved in 1887 into the former Salvation Army Training Home at 259 Mare Street, Hackney. This spacious building housed nine offices and a substantial reception room for all the branches of the women's work.⁸ Two rooms were set aside for the Bureau, one for interviewing people seeking the Bureau's help and a second for records and documents and attending to the correspondence from all parts of the world seeking help finding missing relatives.⁹

But General Booth was not done yet. He felt that it was not sufficient that girls be rescued and taken into a Home,

but that "an equally important part of the work was that men who tempted the girls should be brought to justice."¹⁰ To that end, Chief of Staff Bramwell Booth (Florence's husband and the Army's second-in-command) had his eye on a professional detective, Salvationist Clifford Harland, whom the Army had engaged to investigate a serious case implicating a Member of Parliament.¹¹ The case was discreetly concluded, and Harland installed as the head of

7 Williams, *op. cit.*, p 42.

8 Central Office, *The Deliverer*, Salvation Army, London, 1st January 1890, p 83.

9 Cox, Major Adelaide, Help and Enquiry Department, *The Deliverer*, Salvation Army, London, 1st January 1890, p 87.

10 Parker, Percy L., 1897, A Salvation Detective Agency, *The Young Man: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, London, Vol. 11, p 16.

11 Clifford Harland, *The Deliverer*, Salvation Army, London, September 1893, p 38.

the Enquiry Department on 1st June 1888 at the rank of Lieutenant.¹²

With the hiring of Harland, the Bureau moved beyond a missing persons bureau to a full-fledged, professional detective agency. Thus, a typical advertisement in *The War Cry* would read:

This Department will SEARCH in any part of the world for missing or runaway relatives or friends; will seek to BRING TO JUSTICE men who have ruined or wronged girls or women; will ENQUIRE into the respectability of people, houses or situations, and generally advise and help, as far as possible, those in difficulty.

Beyond the above it is prepared to undertake detective cases and investigations of certain descriptions for those in a position to pay, at moderate rates.¹³

By 1893, the Bureau had four full-time “hallelujah detectives”. Harland, now promoted to the rank of Adjutant, described them as “one man and three of the best women detectives possible — all Salvationists.”¹⁴ Harland himself was taking on cases of significant public interest, including “a *cause célèbre*, in which a baronet was the defendant; the Y.W.C.A. scandal involving the character of an aristocratic lady, which is likely to come before the Queen’s Bench”, as well as solving the Forest Hill Mystery Case¹⁵ after Scotland Yard had given up on it.¹⁶

The Bureau had the extensive resources of the Salvation Army to draw on. In 1890:

The Army had ten thousand full-time officers throughout the world and many more thousands of other Salvationists. Any of these could be called upon to act as enquiry agents to search for the lost, sometimes in the most remote areas... [and] used the English *War Cry*, with its 300,000 circulation in Great Britain, as a medium for advertising for the lost; its twenty-three other editions published in various parts of the world were also used.¹⁷

“Since the commencement in 1888,” said Harland in an interview in 1893, “we have dealt with no fewer than 8,177 cases, and 2,289 have proved satisfactory.” When asked how that compared to Scotland Yard’s rate of solving cases, he replied, “Very favorably. The official returns of Scotland Yard show an average of one in ten, whereas we discover one in three-and-a-half or four.”¹⁸

By 1897, the Enquiry Bureau was considered the largest detective agency in London. The volume of work necessitated dividing the Bureau into two wings – the Lost and Missing Friends Section and the Affiliation Section. The “Salvation Army Detective Agency” activities were described in an 1897 edition of the London magazine *The Young Man*:



Staff-Captain Clifford Harland, a professional detective, took over the SA Enquiry Bureau from 1888 to 1897, working out of 259 Mare Street, Hackney.

© Salvation Army International Heritage Centre

Mr. Harland has something like two thousand search cases a year to look after, and from two hundred to three hundred affiliation cases... Five out of six people who seek help in finding their relatives are quite unable to pay anything, and but for the Army, would never set inquiries on foot; but the average cost of an inquiry case is only four shillings.¹⁹

12 Clifford Harland’s promotion record was kindly provided by Chloe Wilson, Archivist, Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, pers.com., 27th February 2018.

13 Enquiry Bureau advertisement, *The War Cry*, UK, 7th October 1893, as referenced by Ray Wiggins, *My Ancestors were in the Salvation Army*, Society of Genealogists, London, 1999, p 34.

14 Helpers of Men, *The Deliverer*, Salvation Army, London, August 1893, p 28.

15 The “Forest Hill Mystery Case” refers to the mysterious disappearance of a Miss Eason from Forest Hill some time prior to April 1889, with a criminal conspiracy suspected. The Forest Hill Mystery, *South Wales Daily News*, 22nd April 1889.

16 Clifford Harland, 1893, *op. cit.*, p 38.

17 Williams, 1976, *op. cit.*, p 44.

18 Clifford Harland quoted in Helpers of Men, *The Deliverer*, Salvation Army, London, August 1893, p 29.

19 Parker, 1897, *op. cit.*, p 16.



The Salvation Army's Women's Social Work department moved into the spacious quarters at 259 Mare Street, Hackney, in 1887, moving to purpose-built headquarters constructed at 280 Mare Street in 1910.

© Salvation Army International Heritage Centre

The Affiliations Section of the Bureau handled “investigations of certain descriptions”, which broadly encompassed “affiliation and seductions”, “disputes between masters and servants”, “wills, legacies and property matters” and “wife desertions”.²⁰ This branch of the detective agency seemed, however, to be disrupted when Clifford Harland, then a Staff-Captain, died suddenly on 28th June 1897.

The name of the Bureau changed around 1900 to the International Investigation Department, where the cases under investigation appeared to be all focused on missing persons.²¹ The Army later changed the department’s name to the Family Tracing Service, which remains active today.

Our Murdered Sisters: The Salvation Army and the Ripper

The Army’s Enquiry Bureau was certainly well-positioned to assist in the investigation of the Whitechapel murders. However, no documentation has appeared to date that would suggest the Bureau was directly involved. The Rescue workers, on the other hand, were familiar with many of the women in the Spitalfields and Whitechapel slums, particularly the prostitutes and homeless women

they sought to help. In early 1889, the Army returned to Whitechapel, opening a women’s shelter at 194-196 Hanbury Street known as Hope Town,²² with William Ward as superintendent.²³

The close relationship between SA workers and the women of the district was highlighted in a short article by an Army officer, identified only as “R”, published in *The Deliverer* of 15th August 1889. It was titled “Our Murdered Sisters”.²⁴

Our claim to be regarded as real sisters of the poor women of the street was blessedly illustrated in connection with the last Whitechapel murder. Our Shelter captain’s wife went to try and identify the poor victim, and when she was seen approaching the mortuary, was saluted by the whole crowd of poor creatures standing around the doors with, “Here comes our captain, let her go in!”²⁵

The “last Whitechapel murder” is most likely that of Alice McKenzie, who had been murdered a month earlier in Castle Alley on 17th July 1889, with injuries similar to those inflicted by the Ripper. As McKenzie’s identity was not immediately known, it is conceivable that it was Matron Ward from the Hanbury Street shelter who made the short walk to the Whitechapel Mortuary on Old Montague Street, where the woman’s body had been taken.²⁶

The inquest into McKenzie’s murder concluded on 14th August 1889 with a verdict of “Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown”.²⁷ Given that the article by “R” was dated the next day, it is possible she knew of the verdict, and that the police and pathologists were in disagreement over whether McKenzie was a Ripper victim.²⁸ She lamented that some “poor defiled form lying

20 Weale, Sally, Looking for Someone?, *The Guardian*, January 27, 2007, www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2007/jan/27/familyandrelationships.family.

21 Haggard, Henry Rider, 1910, *Regeneration*, Longmans Green and Co., pp 63-64.

22 Berk, Louis and Rachel Kolsky, 2017, *Secret Whitechapel*, Amberley Publishing Ltd.

23 *Kelly's Post Office London Directory* lists “Salvation Army Women’s Shelter (Wm. Ward Supt.) 192 Hanbury Street”.

24 “R”, Our Murdered Sisters, *The Deliverer*, 15th August 1889, p 19.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Old Montague Street, wiki.casebook.org/old_montague_street.html.

27 Inquest: Alice McKenzie, www.casebook.org/official_documents/inquests/inquest_mackenzie.html.

28 Evans, Stewart P. and Donald Rumbelow, 2006, *Jack the Ripper: Scotland Yard Investigates*, Sutton Publishing, pp 208–209; Trevor Marriott, 2005, *Jack the Ripper: The 21st Century Investigation*, John Blake, pp 182–183.

in some out of the way court or alley”, “a poor creature is found sweltering in her blood just where the assassin has left her brutally murdered” prompted a great furor, but then was quickly forgotten. “Oh, must each poor victim die before anybody will care about them?”²⁹

The Hanbury shelter was directly linked to “Jack the Ripper” later that year by General Booth. In December 1889, Booth answered a summons to appear at the Worship Street Police Court, to face a charge by police that the Hanbury women’s shelter should have been registered under the Common Lodging-house Act. The Army’s defence was that “the premises had been opened as a charity at the time of the ‘Jack the Ripper’ scare,”³⁰ and did not fall under the Act.

The matron, Mrs. Ward, also testified that “many a woman had ‘thanked Jack the Ripper’ as the cause of such a nice shelter being opened, and she wished to give instances, but was told that it was unnecessary.”³¹ The magistrate sided with the SA and dismissed the summons.

29 Our Murdered Sisters, *op. cit.* p 19.

30 *The Standard*, Saturday, 7th December 1889. The non-paywall text is available on Richard Jones’ blog www.jack-the-ripper-tour.com/generalnews/salvation-army-summons.

31 *Ibid.*



Canadian authors SHEILLA JONES, MSc and JIM BURNS, PhD are developing a murder mystery series based on a fictional female detective working out of the 1888 London Enquiry Bureau, and welcome additional material linking the Salvation Army and the Ripper (www.sheillajones.com/contact). The authors thank Cloë Wilson (SA International Heritage Centre, London, UK), Tyler Boeneke (SA Archives and Research Center, Alexandria, Virginia, USA), and Colonel John Carew, ret., (SA Archives of Canada and Bermuda, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada) for their kind helpfulness in our researches.

23 New Road

Now leading to flats, in 1865 this doorway on a handsome Georgian house led people to the first indoor meeting of what was to become East London Christian Mission founded by William Booth. Renamed the Salvation Army in 1878, by the time Booth died in 1912, his Army operated throughout the world.

WHITECHAPEL DOORS chronicles the social and political history of this iconic area of London through the entrances and portals of its buildings.

Illustrated with over one hundred photographs by Louis Berk and narrated by award-winning London Blue Badge Tourist Guide Rachel Kolsky, the doors range from humble residences to the grandeur of public and commercial buildings, each with their own fascinating story to tell.

Available at MangoBooks.co.uk



Central News

By BRUCE COLLIE

It is unfortunate that there are no memoirs penned by the Police Surgeons involved in the Whitechapel murders investigation. They would have provided an interesting perspective on our time of interest. The contemporary press, however, does give us a window into what they had to deal with, and on a very regular basis. Their participation at inquests and the Police Courts reflects the pain and suffering that was common in the East End of London in the late nineteenth century.

It soon becomes apparent, when reading these reports, that this was not an occupation for the faint-hearted, and it would have required great mental strength to deal with the circumstances they found themselves in. Every hour of every day they were on standby, knowing that each knock on the door could lead to another horrific situation.

By definition, these medical men would have been caring people, with a will to help others in need. It must have been frustrating to arrive on the scene to find there was nothing you could do, sometimes to save a life. The area covered by their practice or the Metropolitan Police Division to which they were engaged, be it East or West, not only affected the population within but would have made a difference to the type of cases the surgeon had to deal with.

An area that also gave police surgeons a chance to preserve life was the Criminal Court. There are many examples that they were called as an expert witness, when their testimony decided whether the offender walked free or to the gallows.

Below are some examples of what they dealt with on a regular basis. In this instance I have used cases involving Dr George Bagster Phillips of 2 Spital Square, Police Surgeon of the H Division, Whitechapel.



“ONLY A LITTLE MATCH-GIRL, NOT TEN”

At Worship Street yesterday Stephen Morton Lawry, twenty-three, a private in the 1st West Yorkshire Regiment, was charged with feloniously taking one Susan Quinn out of the possession and against the will of her mother, and further, with unlawfully attempting to commit an offence upon her, at Thrawl Street, Spitalfields.

Emma Sutherland, twenty-one, domestic servant, of Thrawl Street, was charged with suffering Susan Quinn to be and to remain on the premises, 16 Thrawl Street, for the purpose above mentioned, contrary to the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Mrs Eunice Quinn, the mother of the girl, said that her daughter was nine and a half years of age. She had been living at home but had been in the habit of selling matches in the street. She left home for that purpose on the previous evening between seven and eight o'clock, being accompanied by a little boy living in the same house, who also sold matches in the street.

The girl did not return that night, and witness was out nearly the whole night searching for her. She, however, returned alone between seven and eight o'clock that [Wednesday] morning, and on being asked where she had been all night, she made a statement which led witness to send for the police.

Susan Quinn, the girl in question, who said she was 9½ years old but seemed rather big for that age, deposed that on the previous evening she left home with a boy named Derbyshire to go into the streets selling matches. They went to the Whitechapel Road, and remained together till a quarter past eight o'clock. About that time a soldier came up to her and invited her to go into a public house to have something to drink. She declined this, and he then took her by the hand, and said "Will you come with me and I will give you something?" She answered, "Yes Sir," and he gave a penny to the boy Derbyshire, telling him to go home. Witness went with the soldier through several streets, and at last he led her into a lodging house in Thrawl Street. He took her to a room. She remained with him all night, and the prisoner gave her 11½d. He was the man she had referred to as the 'soldier'. She recognised him by his face and clothes.

The boy Derbyshire gave evidence that the prisoner, after taking the little girl by the hand, offered him a penny, and told him to go home and he left the spot.

Dr George Bagster Phillips, divisional surgeon, stated that the conclusion he had arrived at was that the girl's story, which she described, were true. The girl, did not however, appear to have been seriously injured.

Police Sergeant Isaacs proved the arrest of the prisoner from descriptions furnished by the girl. The soldier was apprehended near Thrawl Street, and when told the charge he seemed much confused, and said there must have been a mistake, and that there were hundreds of men wearing the same uniform. The female prisoner was apprehended at the lodging house in Thrawl Street, where she seemed to have been employed. When told the charge, she said she took the money for a room, but did not see the person with him.

The little girl Quinn added to her evidence that when she went into the lodging house the prisoner Sunderland led the way upstairs for them with a lighted candle.

The male prisoner, who from his speech and appearance seemed to be an intelligent man, repeated the statement he made at the station.

Mr Hanney remanded both prisoners for fuller evidence, and said he thought the Treasury would take up the prosecution.¹

Private Lawry and Emma Sunderland would have a long wait to learn their fate, as an administrative error



Thrawl Street

meant that the case did not go before the Treasury when expected, and they were held in remand. It was recorded that further witnesses had been secured, however, they had been intimidated, and considerable difficulties had been thrown in the way of the prosecution.²

We find some more detail on Emma Sunderland in *Lloyds' Weekly Newspaper*, where she was named as the Deputy of the lodging house at 16 Thrawl Street.³

The trial was postponed again due to the serious illness of the prisoner Stephen Lawry.⁴ It was finally held on 7th June 1886 before Justice Hawkins at the Central Criminal Court. Lawry was found Guilty, but requested his sentence be deferred. Judge Hawkins stated that he wished that he was able to have prisoners that perpetrated these crimes flogged. Addressing the Jury, he said that something needed to be done to check these offences. He alone had tried 120 of them in the last six months.

There is no record in the press confirming Lawry's sentence. Similar cases carried a sentence of several years' penal servitude with hard labour.

1 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1st April 1886.

2 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8th April 1886.

3 *Lloyds' Weekly Newspaper*, 9th May 1886.

4 *Ibid.*

*

The evidence of Dr Bagster Phillips was on many occasions for the benefit of the prisoner; as is shown in this next case. Often it would be found that the accused was the victim, and not the accuser.

“WORSHIP STREET – STRANGE STORY”

A man of about middle age named George Willetts surrendered to bail and was charged on remand with having committed a felonious assault on a girl of 14 years of age. B.J. Abbott defended.

It appeared from the evidence that the girl, Annie Spurgeon, living in Princes Court, Bethnal Green, ran away from her home, and was away for a fortnight before she was found by her guardian, a married sister.

During that fortnight she worked one week for some persons who she said at length turned her into the streets and did not pay her. She wandered about for several nights, sleeping in doorways and sheds, until early on the morning of the 25th ult. she was taken into custody by a constable of the H Division for wandering without visible means of subsistence. On

the way to the station the constable was accosted by the prisoner, who asked the girl her history, and she, stating that she had no parents and no home, the prisoner offered to find her food and shelter if the constable would let her go. The constable thought it best to take the girl to the station, where the prisoner renewed his offer.

Frank Wells a station inspector, knowing the prisoner as a respectable man, allowed the girl to go with him, she being anxious to do so. The prisoner, a married man, without children, said that he knew his wife would be kind to the girl and she had, it appeared, furnished the girl with some clothes and linen.

She remained in the prisoner’s house for four days, and then she was claimed by her sister and given up. Subsequently she was found to be suffering and in a shocking state, and then, when questioned, she alleged that the prisoner, on the third day she was in the house, had committed the act with which he was charged.

The cross-examination showed, however, that she had not complained to his wife nor to her sister until questioned, and it was admitted that she was “a thorough bad girl”.



Princes Court, Bethnal Green

The evidence of Dr G. Bagster Phillips, surgeon to the H Division of Police, also showed that the violence to which the girl had been subjected could not have been as recent as she alleged.

Mr Bushby said that the girl's history was a remarkable one, but he could not believe her, and he ordered the prisoner to be discharged.⁵

*

In this last example the good doctor's evidence is shown to help a prisoner; however this time the stakes were much higher. This case would be held during his thirtieth and final year as H Division Police Surgeon, as he passed away in October that year.

"A SPITALFIELDS TRAGEDY – HUSBAND CHARGED WITH MURDER"

The Spitalfields police on Saturday night found a woman named Ellen Collins in Commercial Street in an apparently drunken condition. She was taken at once to the police station, and there it was found necessary to call in a doctor.

The medical man found that the woman's condition was graver than an excess of alcoholic stimulants would account for and he made a minute examination, as a result of which he discovered that in the region of the left breast there was a punctured wound, though of a very slight character. It did not appear to be sufficiently serious to warrant removal to the hospital. Half an hour later graver symptoms still were noticed, and the divisional surgeon was summoned.

Dr Bagster Phillips found that the slight wound was a downward stab, and that it penetrated right to the heart. There was internal bleeding, and the woman was evidently in a dying condition, and in less than 15 minutes from Dr Bagster Phillips' appearance she died.

The police set to work on the case at once, and it was discovered that the deceased spent nearly all day with a man who was said to be her husband. All day Sunday and Monday the police were on the look-out for the supposed husband, and late on Monday evening a man went to the Commercial Street Police Station, saying that he heard he was wanted.

At Worship Street Police Court, on Tuesday, John Collins, the husband of the deceased woman, was brought up charged with wilful murder. Collins, whose address was given as Chambord Street, Bethnal Green, is a man of average height.

Detective Inspector White said prisoner was detained at the Commercial Street Police Station, and he charged him, saying "John Collins, you will be charged with wilfully murdering your wife, Ellen Collins, by stabbing her with some sharp instrument in Brick

Lane on the evening of the 26th."

Prisoner said "No." Prisoner was remanded for eight days without bail.⁶



Commercial Street Police Station

When the case did go to trial the prosecution witnesses were found to be unreliable, and most of the evidence against him was circumstantial. The defence asked if Dr Phillips recalled treating the murdered woman a few years prior, having poisoned herself, but he did not. The opinion he gave stating that the knife wound could have been self-inflicted was enough to put doubt in the heads of the jury members.

The verdict was a familiar one for the time: Person or persons unknown were guilty of wilful murder.

John Collins had walked willingly into Commercial Street station, but the days subsequently spent in the cells must have been the longest of his life.

5 *The Daily Telegraph*, 16th November 1878.

6 *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, 2nd January 1897.



BRUCE COLLIE is an administrator on a number of Facebook groups debating the Whitechapel murders case and police history in general. He has been interested in Victorian crime and policing for several years, and enjoys combing the Nineteenth century press for reports of interesting crimes and their investigation, and various photographic archives for rarely-seen images relating to Victorian crime. Bruce has assisted authors, television reporters and journalists with research for books, programmes and newspaper articles.

Spotlight on Rippercast

The Royal Conspiracy A-Go-Go

Part One

Welcome to the latest instalment in our new series, SPOTLIGHT ON RIPPERCAST, in which Rippercast host Jonathan Menges transcribes excerpts from his extensive vault of Ripper-related podcast discussions.

Hosted by Jonathan Menges (JM), this edition is from 24 March 2009, and features Simon Wood (SW), William Ellis (WE), Chris Scott (CS), John Bennett (JB), Gareth Williams (GW), Ben Holme (BH) and Ally Ryder (AR).

JM: The Royal Conspiracy suspect theory is the most well-known of all solutions to the Whitechapel murders. Over the past half-decade it has been ingrained into the popular culture through best-selling books, big-budget movies and mass-distributed documentaries. Prince Albert Victor, the Queen's physician William Gull, a coachman name Netley, and plus or minus Sir Robert Anderson and Walter Sickert, have collectively been routinely named as the main suspects for the crimes of Jack the Ripper. On today's show we will trace the Royal Conspiracy theory back to its origins and proceed from there to discuss its evolution throughout the last six decades.

Let's start off by going back to 1895 and Robert James Lees. His story first appeared in print on my side of the Atlantic in 1895 in the *Chicago Sunday Times*. It was reprinted a few weeks later in the London newspaper *The People*. Which one of you wishes to describe for us the contents of RJ Lees' story?

SW: Well, I'll put it in a nutshell. Robert James Lees led the police to a fashionable London doctor who was put in an asylum under the name Thomas Mason – note the Mason – and he had a number, 124. And apparently some sort of funeral was held to take care of his disappearance. But Melvin Harris suggested that the story was hoaxed by the Whitechapel Club of Chicago. We don't know how much of this is true, probably not much of it, but this set the tone. This set one of the ingredients for the eventual Stephen Knight Royal Conspiracy theory. We have the society doctor, Dr. Gull if you like.

JM: So the Robert James Lees story first appeared in *Chicago Sunday Times* and it was reprinted in London a few weeks later and then was reprinted, reprinted and reprinted for the next 60 years in various newspapers and magazines. Robert Lees, although it has in a sense nothing to do with Sir William Gull (the original story, and it was probably all made up to begin with) it gets dropped into all these other Royal Conspiracies down the line.



Robert James Lees

SW: Yes indeed. This unknown doctor morphed into Sir William Gull over 60 years.

JM: Right. Now there was a Jack the Ripper letter that came about – and will talk more in detail about Stephen Knight here in a little bit as we get up to the 20th century – but there is a Jack the Ripper letter that Stephen Knight quotes in his book *The Final Solution* that refers to “Lees”. Who wants to tell us a little bit about that Jack the Ripper letter, how it was used in the suspect theory, and then later on what was discovered that it actually said?

GW: This is a letter that was received in July 1889, after the canonical murders, which taunted the police in their failure to capture the murderer. It says something along the lines of “You haven’t caught me yet, with all of your blue bottles, with all your ‘Lees.’” This was interpreted by Knight as confirmation that Lees had been heavily involved with the Royal Conspiracy and the Ripper case. In fact Lees did take some interest in the murders, in fact he offered his services to the police on at least one occasion that I can recall, shortly after the Double Event, but the police called him a lunatic and that was the end of that as far as he was concerned. It was some years later, I think it was Stewart Evans, who examined the so-called ‘Lees letter’ and found out that the reference wasn’t to Lees at all but to ‘tecs’ – short for ‘detectives’. So, it fits in with the rest of the taunt which mentions blue bottles, which would be the Bobbies on the beat – the detectives from Scotland Yard. So, if you like the circumstantial confirmation of Lees, the alleged Royal clairvoyants involvement in the police investigation was based on nothing at all.

WE: I believe the body of the letter says “You have not caught me yet with all your cunning, with all your lees (tecs), with all your blue bottles.”

JM: Another aspect early on in the Royal Conspiracy theory that I thought I’d throw in here was discussed on the message boards about four years ago [2005] but no one really brought it up since, and that is this book that came out 1929 by Clarence Gordon Haddon called *My Uncle, George V* in which he claims he is the illegitimate son of Prince Eddy and Margery Haddon. This affair between Prince Eddy and Ms. Haddon would have occurred in India in 1889. This fellow Clarence Haddon suggests that the royal family and the Metropolitan Police covered up the affair and the illegitimate child that was birthed by Ms. Haddon and Prince Eddy, and letters and documents between the two of them were destroyed. Ms. Haddon came back to Britain but then was quickly deported back to India and Clarence Haddon, the son, claims that he was arrested and jailed. Does anyone know anything further about this little tale? Because it does show some shades of what became the Royal Conspiracy: an illegitimate child and Metropolitan Police and Royal family cover-up.

JB: There does seem to be shades of it. This is perhaps one of the first times, if not the first time, when Prince Eddy is kind of considered the black sheep of the family and that has sort of carried on ever since. As if it is if people have it in for Prince Eddy. It’s similar to that, isn’t it? But its like the names are changed, the dates are slightly changed



Prince Albert Victor

GW: One other thing that’s interesting about the Haddon claim is its more general point. I dare say history is littered with people who’ve proclaimed honorable parentage or celebrity parentage of one form or another. The really interesting thing about this claim by Clarence Haddon is if it is indeed the root of the Royal conspiracy, then we come full circle when we reach Mister Sickert a bit later. The whole of the Stephen Knight theory hinges largely on what Joseph Gorman said about his parentage. Namely, that he was the son of Walter Sickert, and part of that story is that there was an illegitimate child born to Price Eddy.

SW: I agree completely with Gareth there. With Lees we have in place the doctor who eventually became Gull. With the Haddon story we now have the secret marriage and the illegitimate child. These are all ingredients in what eventually became Stephen Knight’s story. So, we are seeing it shaping up.

JM: Three years after the publication of the Clarence Haddon book comes Dr. Thomas Dutton, whose story come to us via Donald McCormick. Thomas Dutton claimed that Jack the Ripper was a middle-aged doctor who had become embittered by the death of his brilliant son. There

is a *Daily Express* article in 1935 that mentioned that Thomas Dutton, the source of this story, who supposedly wrote a book called *The Chronicle of Crime*, was friends with the Duke of Clarence. Later newspaper articles start to flesh out Thomas Dutton's suspect theory. It is believed that Donald McCormick, who later wrote a book based on Dutton's story naming as Jack the Ripper 'Dr. Pedachenko', also authored these early newspaper accounts about Thomas Dutton's suspect theory. Though, I don't believe that McCormick is the source of the story that Thomas Dutton was close friends with the Duke of Clarence.

SW: I'm not sure time-wise where Dr. Dutton fits into this, but there seems to be some confusion here. Again, we have another doctor and this story gets a little bit confused with, of all people, Tumblety. Tumblety was the person who got confused with Dr. Stanley, and Dr. Stanley I believe was the pivotal figure in Leonard Matters' book. So, there seems to be a whole heap of confusion, possibly around the 1930s.

GW: Again, as we build this rather rich, and dare I say, nutty cake, that is another ingredient. There is the Dr. Stanley story about the son dying of syphilis and how that morphs into the Prince Eddy story as well. Which is nonsensical, because Eddy would have had to contract syphilis when he was about nine years old. Again, this premature syphilis theme runs through the Royal Conspiracy and possibly ties into Leonard Matters and similar theories just before the Second World War.

JM: Another thing that struck me about the Thomas Dutton story that has its echoes in later stories, in particular that of Thomas Sowell, and that this is a physician upset over the death of his syphilitic son and so he seeks revenge by killing prostitutes. It kind of has slight shades in Dr. Thomas Stowell's story that pops up about Sir William Gull. He not being a participant in the Jack the Ripper murders, but attempting to get Prince Eddy certified as a lunatic, as kind of like a father figure type. Would anyone care to comment on that? Or agree or disagree?

CS: I do not agree that I see him as a father figure. In most of the interpretations I've seen, both visual and written, Gull in the telling of it is cast as a sort of establishment figure who doesn't see his first priority as protecting Eddy *per se* but as protecting the monarchy and the establishment. So I think he's rather the pillar of the establishments and one of the leaders of any cover-up you believe in, rather than having any sort of quasi-paternal feelings towards Eddy.

WE: Well, the most recent movie made about the Royal conspiracy theory, the Johnny Depp movie *From Hell*, does sort of portray Gull as a paternal figure for Eddy, insofar as

keeping Eddy healthy. It made him like a father figure and the prostitutes that gave him the syphilis was destroying his life's work. I get that's completely Hollywood.



Sir William Gull

GW: It may be completely Hollywood but it follows in a grand tradition, doesn't it? Making this whole story almost a Greek tragedy.

WE: You've got to add to it, otherwise you're just retelling the same story.

GW: Maybe even a Greek Street tragedy for those of you with Soho and Cleveland Street.

JB: What Gareth just said there about you gotta keep adding to it, with the least story you have the name of the physician under the name of Thomas Mason 124 and then it goes on to Clarence Gordon Hadden, who suddenly mentions Prince Eddy, so suddenly you have a physician but there's no name or no official name. It's almost as if – as Simon was saying – they're building up the germ of the idea over the years and people are slowly beginning to follow and place were being put into place until you get to the Thomas Stowell story. There are others, and obviously I'm jumping ahead here, but you start getting the Freemasons put in, and who knows what else. So yes, you have to start adding things to it.

BH: And adding more people too, specifically. We eventually get Robert Anderson as well, which is crazy.

JB: Lord Randolph Churchill.

BH: Churchill, that's my personal favorite.

JB: Yes, so the seeds were sown and then it was just

a case of putting the right people or possibly the right people in the right roles to fit the conspiracy.

SW: I think you're absolutely right, John. It's a sort of unconscious Chinese whispers. 'I've heard the story. Wasn't there a doctor involved?' 'Yes, I've heard the story. Wasn't Prince Eddy involved?'

JB: Yes, and it could also be that because there is a doctor involved, let's see who could possibly fit the bill. So you end up with Gull. So it's sort of germinating. It's generating as time goes on until you get to the Knight one, which everybody seems to know even if you don't know anything about Jack the Ripper. You know all about the Knight story because it was such a big seller.

SW: He put it all together in one very neat package with no constraints. He made it make sense.

WE: What's interesting to me is you have all these disjointed pieces of the puzzle and it takes really a master storyteller to put it all together to make a composite. At the time it was plausible, but we believe now it is ridiculous.

SW: Well, at the time it was absolutely compelling.

AR: I don't get that. The logic of it is so completely ridiculous that I don't see that at any time it could have been taken as more than a nice story. Once you've added all these pieces together of the entire full-blown Royal Conspiracy theory – the idea that the Royals are going to attempt to hide something like an illegitimate child by doing a series of brutal murders that cause not only their own press attention, but the press attention of the entire world. That's not plausible in any century.

WE: I think the idea behind that is it is kind of like the idea of wagging the dog. You have something over there taking place that captures everyone's attention, while over here you're covering up whatever it is you need to cover up.

CS: I agree with Ally entirely. The whole story is impervious to logic. It's also subsequently impervious to any external evidence from the research that's been done. We know the whereabouts of Eddy at various times through the court circulars. On the general consciousness of the story, as far as the people I've talked to you do still get this 'Oh, it was someone in the Royal family, wasn't it?' My take on it is the defining quality of the story is it has all the elements of a fairy story. If you analyze all the characters and their roles, you've got this benighted prince who falls for a poor servant girl, and they have a daughter who has to be secreted away. And then you have the equivalent of the wicked uncle from a melodrama, a villain who is after her, and the mother has these ghastly things done to her and she secreted away in prisons and institutions... to me it reads like a myth, or a fairy story.

WE: And it also comes complete with what many would

consider a mad queen with Queen Victoria, so it's almost like an *Alice in Wonderland* story.

CS: Yes, exactly. To me it's got so many elements that if you just write it as a story, without getting too arty-farty about it, if you look at some of the myths about heirs to the throne hidden away and then they came back and claimed it. And then there was the one who lost his sandal, I think it was Perseus. When you've got these hidden royal children, which is by implication what Alice Crook was. She was like the lost princess who had to be secreted away, placed in an ivory tower. And then you've got damsels in distress and ladies of the night and all of these wonderful characters. But, as Ally said, it has very little to do with logic.

JM: Let's build some more of the wall here as we approach Stephen Knight's theory and touch upon Thomas Stowell's contribution to the Royal conspiracy, which is a pretty big one. In 1960 he first contacted Colin Wilson, the true crime author and novelist, after reading Wilson's story in the *Evening Standard* titled 'My Search for Jack the Ripper'. Stowell related to Wilson his theory that the Duke of Clarence was Jack the Ripper. Wilson shared the story with several individuals including Donald McCormick, Dan Farson and Nigel Moreland, who was the editor of *Criminologist* magazine. It didn't make it into print until a year later, when Colin Wilson's *The Encyclopedia of Murder* came out in 1961, in the context of again discussing the Robert Lees story, which we started off the show with. Wilson is the first one to suggest in print that the murder was either the Queen's physician or "a relative of the royal family". So, it takes 30 years for the story to germinate until finally in 1961 do we see it made public. The accusation that the Duke of Clarence was Jack the Ripper. A year later we see Philippe Julian's book *Edward VII*, in which he says "The rumour gained ground that the Duke of Clarence was Jack the Ripper. Others attributed the crimes committed in Whitechapel to the Duke of Bedford". Basically, what I see is happening is that Thomas Stowell told Colin Wilson, Colin Wilson told everybody he knew, which got around to an individual named Sir Harold Nicholson who was cited in Philippe Julian's book as the source for his information. This was before Stowell's article – nine years before Stowell himself came out with his theory in print, which a lot of people cite as causing so much stress on Stowell that it led to his death.

WE: I think it's kind of interesting he names his suspect as 'Mr. S', which has later connotations with Sickert in passing this person off who everyone assumes was Prince Eddy as 'Mr. S', and if you tie that into Sickert he could be posing as Sickert's brother.

JM: It should be noted that he called his suspect 'S' in 1970, when he himself printed his article in *Criminologist* magazine called 'Jack the Ripper: A Solution'. Prior to that

it was known in Colin Wilson's circle of friends, at the very least, ever since 1960, that Stowell's candidate was the Duke of Clarence. He was the man hiding behind the initial S. Which I believe Stowell denied in print, did he not?

CS: Yes he did. Afterwards he wrote a letter to *The Times*. He maintained the basis of the story but described him as a man of a noble family. So he was saying he is well-connected, but he denied absolutely that his candidate was Eddy or had anything to do with the monarchy.

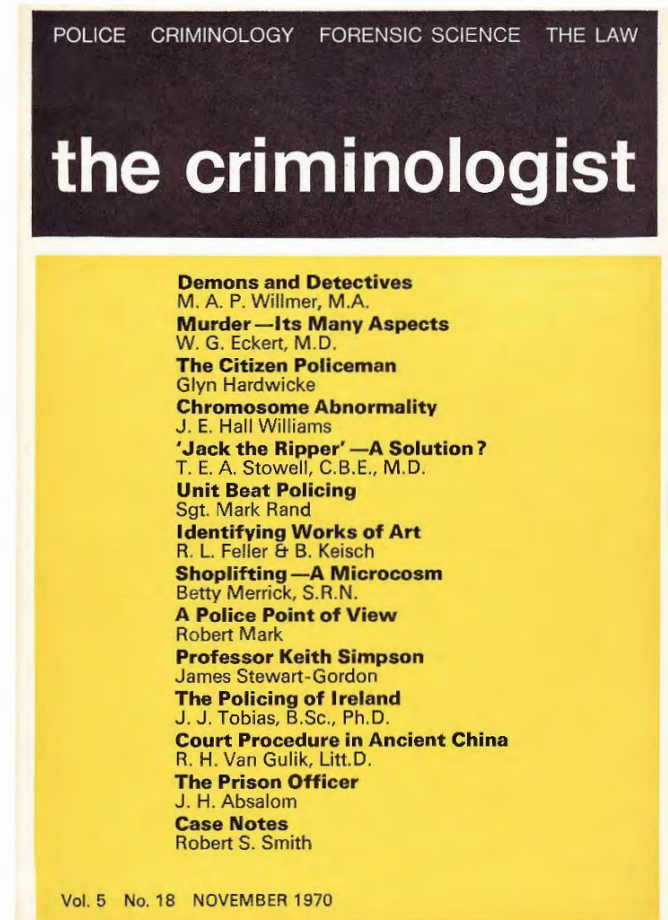
JM: Right, and as I mentioned earlier in the context of the Dutton story, Stowell's theory has Jack the Ripper as a Royal physician and he's attempting to certify Prince Eddy as insane. It is again couched in the context of the RJ Lees story about psychically tracing the Ripper to the home of a prominent London physician.

CS: A problem with two of these lynchpins that you mention is that we come back to this recurring problem with either problematic or disappeared evidence. In the case of Thomas Dutton you have this unpublished tome called *The Chronicle of Crime*, which nobody has seen hide nor hair of. And in the case of Stowell, he allegedly based his research on papers and diaries of William Gull which he somehow had access to, but that nobody else is ever seen. And then when all this brouhaha sort of blew up, and after Stowell had written to *The Times* denying the furore and sadly shortly afterwards he died, I think on the anniversary of Mary Kelly's death, ironically, his son then wrote to *The Times* saying that the family knew nothing about it and they weren't at all interested in Jack the Ripper, and that all of his father's papers relating to it had been destroyed. So we have nothing to go back to look at. We have absolutely no basis to know what papers Stowell had, how he came by them or whether they were authentically Gulls papers as he claimed, or whether original letters and correspondence from Gull was destroyed, in which case it would be a great shame.

GW: I don't know if anybody knows the truth of this story that Stowell had actually studied under Theodore Dyke Acland, who was William Gull's son-in-law, so there is a tenuous connection there with Gull, at least through Stowell and his friendship and tutelage with Gull's son-in-law. So there might be some scabby rumor going around the Dyke Acland family, I suppose, that might lay at the origin of this. But we'll never know.

CS: No, I don't think we will. If these papers ever existed in which Stowell based his claims, his son, in the letter to *The Times*, basically said we don't want to be troubled. This furore went around the world in 1970. In fact, I remember seeing it in the papers. So I think Stowell and his family were absolutely flabbergasted by it. If I remember rightly, Stowell didn't publish his original article in a mainstream

press outlet, he published in *Criminologist*. So it wasn't like the 'Ripper Diary'. He didn't go to *The Times* or *The Telegraph* or any big national papers with it. It was done in a specialist magazine and whoever picked it up. Then the floodgates opened.



JM: And then, as I mentioned earlier, supposedly Wilson told the editor of *Criminologist* magazine Nigel Moreland about the story ten years prior to it showing up in print in his magazine. Now, 1970 also sees the entrance of Walter Sickert. Donald McCormick had written his book *The Identity of Jack the Ripper* prior to 1970, and it had come out in a couple of revised editions since it was first published. In another revised edition in 1970, McCormick is the first author to mention the possibility that Walter Sickert is a suspect in the Whitechapel murders. The reason that McCormick gave for Walter Sickert's suspect candidacy is echoed in Patricia Cornwell's as well as Jean Overton Fuller's books, and that is that Walter Sickert painted pictures of crime scenes. So Sickert was first mentioned by McCormick in 1970 as a separate suspect from any kind of Royal or Masonic conspiracy.

JB: Yes, it was mentioned in that McCormick book simply due to the fact that he painted a famous painting called 'Jack the Ripper's Bedroom' which is a giveaway, I suppose, showing that the artist is interested at least in

the murders. Obviously, later on people started finding other things in his paintings and all the rest of it. I believe someone who knew him said he had 'Jack the Ripper moments'. There were times when he would be infatuated by the idea of Jack the Ripper before he moved on to be infatuated by something else. So I suppose that's how it was brought in. He had a painting that had Jack the Ripper's name in it, and so he became a possible suspect.



Jack the Ripper's Bedroom' by Walter Sickert

GW: I'd like to mention the Camden Town Murders, and there is a series of paintings that Sickert did and these were grim, earthy, kitchen-sink type subjects that would have appealed to his sensibilities and may have betrayed a morbid interest on his part.

JM: Because of Thomas Stowell's article in *Criminologist* and as Chris mentioned it made headlines worldwide, we get a book in 1972 called *Clarence* by Michael Harrison in which Harrison is the first to establish an alibi for Prince Eddy during the Whitechapel murders. This predates the Barlow and Watt television series and Joseph Gorman and Stephen Knight. So here we have Michael Harrison's book preceding all these things, already establishing Prince Eddy's alibi. Although Harrison probably takes the unwise step of then accusing JK Stephen of being the Ripper, nevertheless in 1972 we already have the whereabouts of the Duke of Clarence ascertained.

JB: So therefore it's probably not unusual to assume afterwards possibly the Duke of Clarence being Jack the

Ripper stops and then suddenly somebody else is Jack the Ripper. Eddy is involved, but he is not Jack the Ripper. Even in Barlow and Watt it's all to do with the conspiracy that we know today, but they do not suggest that Prince Eddy is the Ripper. Whereas before that there were all these hints and innuendos that it might be him. When the Clarence book comes out with alibis, it suddenly stops and they're finding somebody else now.

BH: It's that mistaken idea that 'OK, he's been alibied out, but maybe there's an element of truth in there somewhere. Let's find somebody else connected to Eddy who is involved.' And not just that, the whole thing is nonsense; let's pursue more a sensible avenue.

CS: It's almost as though it is too good to drop. I think it's ironic in that in the Harrison book, one of the dates he quotes as an alibi for Prince Eddy ends up being what I think is one of the more ludicrous points that he uses to accuse Stephen, and that is the date of the Kelly murder, which is also the birthday of Eddy's father. So he is actually at Sandringham delivering a speech in honour of his father's birthday. But it's also some obscure classical feast. I haven't read the book in ages, but I remember that Stephen's candidacy is partly on the basis that the dates of the murders allegedly coincide with obscure feast days, and I remember one of them was the Feast of Terminalia which was the feast of endings, which I presume was probably the Kelly one.

BH: Wasn't the motive for JK Stephen's something kind of fantastically spurious? He had stopped being his gay lover so he took his revenge by killing prostitutes? That would never work because it is not revenge. It perpetuates the fallacy that it wasn't Eddy, but he must be involved somehow.

GW: I think it was a case, as has been mentioned before, but it was too good to let go of. It's almost like a religion in that sense or a myth or a fairytale as we've already heard. Want to go on believing, so we keep changing the parameters in order to keep our belief alive and it seems to be happening at an alarming rate with this story.

JM: Joseph Gorman Sickert is first introduced to us a year after Michael Harrison's book *Clarence* in the BBC television miniseries Barlow and Watt. He appears in the final episode, and what took place there was that the producers, somehow in researching this television series, were poking around in Scotland Yard and a Scotland Yard detective – who I don't think has ever been named – suggested to the producers that they interview Joseph Gorman Sickert. And in interviewing him we get all of the essential elements of the Royal Conspiracy theory revealed. We have the secret marriage between Prince Eddy and Alice Elizabeth Crook, Walter Sickert the artist is portrayed by Joseph Gorman as Prince Eddy's mentor,

and Eddy meets Crook and impregnates her. The Queen finds out about this and orders Lord Salisbury to take care of the matter. Salisbury enlists the physician Sir William Gull, who raids a house on Cleveland Street, spiriting Eddy away, and performs an operation on Crook that makes her basically an imbecile and ends up putting her in an asylum. Now the Jack the Ripper part of the story is introduced when Joseph Gorman claims that Mary Kelly was the nanny of Eddy and Alice's child. Mary Kelly the nanny puts the illegitimate child with nuns and then flees into the East End, where she becomes a low-rent prostitute and chronic alcoholic. So Gull and the coachman Netley and, in this version of the story, Sir Robert Anderson acting as a lookout, are all involved in the cover-up. So we have Gull and Netley and Sir Robert Anderson all carrying out the Jack the Ripper murders.

GW: Robert Anderson must have had the strongest eyesight in the world, because he was in Switzerland for most of the murders.

CS: You had Sickert involved as well, because Knight said in his book that the only reason that Joseph Sickert didn't mention his alleged father's involvement when the television series was being made was because of family loyalty. Knight felt that he was able to reveal that over the course of revealing the truth.

JM: Right, but initially before Stephen Knight enters the picture, Gorman story doesn't implicate Sickert as being directly involved in the murders. Nor does Gorman mention the Freemasons in his story, although the Barlow and Watt television show is heavily leaning towards the Freemason angle. Nevertheless, I don't believe that the Freemasons played a role in Gorman's part of the story. Neither is the motive for the murders given as blackmail, as later told by Stephen Knight. All that Gorman claims is that the murders occurred out of the fear that Mary Kelly might talk, not that she was involved in some blackmail scheme involving three of the other victims of Jack the Ripper. It wasn't until Stephen Knight interviewed Joseph Gorman, I believe about a month after the Barlow and Watt television series aired, that we get the major elements of the Royal Masonic conspiracy.

GW: I think if my memory serves me right Stephen Knight was actually a researcher on that Barlow and Watt programme. I know he was a journalist who worked for one of the local London newspapers, but I think he was actually working on the Barlow and Watt program as a researcher. So it's probably where he picked up a lot of these nuggets, and it's certainly when his attention was first drawn to Joseph Sickert.

CS: I think it might be worth pointing out that the major players were actually real people. Alice Crook and Annie Crook and John Netley did exist. Regardless of their role,

they were real people.

JM: Let's talk about see Knight's book. The book that became *The Final Solution* initially began as a newspaper article that Stephen Knight was going to write about the claims of Joseph Gorman Sickert. But Knight apparently thought that the claims were too good for just a simple newspaper article, and so turned it into the book *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*. And from this we get a Final Solution documentary, the '70s TV series *In Search Of...* names Prince Eddy as Jack the Ripper, there is a movie, *Murder by Decree*, that has Sherlock Holmes versus Jack the Ripper, whose plot was drawn directly out of this book; the 1988 Michael Caine miniseries and then the graphic novel and later movie *From Hell*. So *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution* is the genesis of the popular Royal Conspiracy theory that we know of today.



Chris, you were talking about Annie Elizabeth Crook and Alice Margaret Crook; can you tell us a little bit about who they were?

CS: Alice Margaret was the daughter, she was born – and this is something that's always nagged me – there wasn't a very short time frame between the birth of the daughter in the alleged blackmail plot, because Alice Margaret was actually born in 1885. So she is over three years old when the murders took place. Annie Elizabeth Cook was in and out of institutions. She obviously came from, if anything, a poorer and more humble and wretched background than Stephen Knight paints, her because she is painted as a shop girl. The information we can find about her, which is few and far between apart from the stuff that comes from Joseph Gorman, there is a photograph in existence of Annie which came from the Gorman family, and there is also a photograph of Netley, but any relationship between Netley and Gorman, to my knowledge, has not been established.

But the story basically was that Annie was from a very humble background and she forms this liaison with the Prince, and they had a daughter. People have actually

traced the birth of Alice, and as I said she was born in 1885. Under the entry for the father it is just left blank. Obviously that implies that she is illegitimate at that stage and she [her mother] wasn't married. But the story becomes more gruesome, because according to the Royal Conspiracy theory some kind of cerebral procedure was carried out either by Gull or other medics under his control to impair Annie's faculties, so that either she couldn't say anything or nobody would believe her if she did. In the story she spends the rest of her life in and out of institutions. She was in and out of the workhouse certainly, and she died in an institution, but this was a long time later.



Annie Crook

There certainly wasn't a drastic brain operation to turn her into a vegetable. There is no evidence for that. She was afflicted by deafness, which she passed on to her daughter and apparently Joseph Gorman was also afflicted by it. Alice Gorman was Joseph Gorman's mother. She married William Gorman, hence the family name. He claimed, of course, that he was not the child of William Gorman but Walter Sickert. He claimed that Alice Gorman ended up as Walter Sickert's mistress, and he says in one account that he [Walter Sickert] secretly took her to France and looked after her, they became involved and he was the result. So yes, they did exist and they can be traced, and we do know a certain bit about their lives. There is a rather blurry photograph of Annie and a photograph of Netley, but like I said the family connection there isn't clear. Some people claim that John Netley was Joseph Gorman's grandfather,

but I don't think that's been proven.

WE: In Stephen Knight's book there is a picture of who he claims is Alice, and he puts it beside a picture of Princess Alex and asks if there was a family resemblance.

CS: Yes, next to a photograph of Princess Alexandria. He notes that Princess Alexandra also suffered from hereditary deafness as well.

JM: Simon, in 1987 you wrote an article for *Bloodhound* magazine in which you basically tore apart Stephen Knight's section where he deals with Annie Elizabeth Crook and the Cleveland Street story in particular. Not only the birth and everything in its relative closeness in time to Annie Elizabeth Crook's legitimate marriage, but also the address where she supposedly lived and worked in Cleveland Street and the location of Sickert's supposed studio, that according to Knight was located across the street. Can you go into a little of that please?**SW:** Sure. Chris has summed up Annie Elizabeth Crook's life pretty well. We can trace her from her grandmother through to Annie's death in 1920. We've got a pile of information on her, none of it really fits into Stephen Knight's story. What Stephen Knight does is he draws a connection between Annie Elizabeth Crook and a woman called Elizabeth Cook, who was living at 6 Cleveland Street. And he really fudges the dates here. 6 Cleveland Street was pulled down between 1866 and 1888, and the block of flats that Elizabeth Cook lived in went up after 1888 and she was still living there in 1893. So the two women are not the same. Also, Stephen Knight tells us that Walter Sickert had a studio at 15 Cleveland Street and Salisbury raided this and Eddy was taken away and taught a lesson. But the year before this, No. 15 had been pulled down. In fact, numbers 4 through 16 had been pulled down, and in the place of these houses was built the Middlesex Hospital Trained Nurses' Institute. So basically this whole raid thing could not have happened. A couple of important points here: when Alice Margaret Crook was born in 1885, and as Chris says, it is three years before Ripper events, her religion and that of her mother was entered into the workhouse creed register and they are both Church of England. Neither of them were Catholic, so that knocks the whole idea of a secret Catholic wedding ceremony on its head. Catholicism only comes into the Crook/Gorman family in 1918, when Alice Margaret marries William Gorman according to the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholics. So this suggests to us that it was William Gorman who was the Catholic. So, add that into the equation.



Part Two will appear in the next edition of *Ripperologist*. To listen to the complete broadcast of this episode, or explore other podcast releases by Rippercast, visit www.casebook.org/podcast.

Ameer Ben Ali and an Actor's Tale

By NINA and HOWARD BROWN

On 24th April Nina and I decided to look into newspapers for articles in commemoration of the 129th anniversary of the murder of Carrie Brown at the East River Hotel down in the bowels of the Lower East Side of New York City. There's a considerable amount of newspaper coverage of her murder during 1891 and the following years already on JTR Forums and on Casebook, and the thought of finding something new was not at the forefront of our expectations. As fate would have it, we did just that.

I came across the following article in the *Buffalo Courier*, containing the bold headline exclaiming that the Glaswegian-born thespian William H. Thompson expressed his understanding that the court interpreter for Ameer Ben Ali actually revealed to him that he *had* killed Carrie Brown.

I wasn't able to find another article in which a confession in any form by Ali is made to the murder in Room 31, and obviously none that refute the charges made within it. That doesn't mean one doesn't exist, or that if it does it won't be found.

By the time of the *Buffalo Courier* article, Ameer Ben Ali had been a free man for some six weeks.

After locating that article, and not to be outdone, Nina was able to locate, in the *New York Evening World* of 23rd April 1902, the first known (or at least, first shared) photograph of Ameer Ben Ali after his 1902 release, 118 years ago.

It's a shame that the photo and the accompanying article are of such inferior quality; the version included in this article has been enhanced as best possible by the Rip's Adam Wood.



Top: 'Frenchy' sketched during his trial

Bottom: The first known photograph of Ameer Ben Ali

ACTOR TELLS A STRANGE STORY

*

Wm. H. Thompson of the Mannering-Belew Co. says
"Frenchy" Confessed Brutal Murder Of "Old Shakespeare"

*

"Ripper" Case Which Stirred New York

*

Ameer Ben Ali, or "Frenchy" Convicted of the Crime on
Circumstantial Evidence. Sent to Prison and Pardoned
Two Months Ago

Buffalo Courier
June 12, 1902

William H. Thompson, a member of the May Mannering-Belew theatrical company, which appears in this city at the Star Theater tonight, states that Ameer Ben Ali, alias "Frenchy", who was pardoned by Gov. Odell, confessed to a cell mate, to Emilio Sultan, the court reporter, and to others that he murdered 'Old Shakespeare'¹ in an East Side hotel in New York City several years ago. Mr. Thompson's² statement has created something of a stir in metropolitan police circles.



Carrie Brown: 'Shakespeare'

When "Old Shakespeare's" horribly mutilated corpse was found in a cheap lodging house, the discovery created a sensation not only in New York, but throughout the country. It was about this time that 'Jack The Ripper' was startling London by his fiendish crimes. It was about a nightly occurrence in London for the police to find the mutilated body of one of London's unfortunate women. A few days prior to the murder of 'Old Shakespeare' Thomas Byrnes, who was then superintendent of police in New York, was quoted in several of the newspapers to the effect that it would be impossible for anyone to emulate 'Jack the Ripper's' crimes in New York.

MUST MAKE GOOD HIS BOAST

Supt. Byrne had scarcely given his interview when New York woke up one morning to be shocked by the news that an old, dissipated character, who had been nicknamed 'Shakespeare', had been found mutilated exactly similar to the bodies in London. At once almost the entire detective force of New York was put on the case. Supt. Byrnes was on his mettle. He declared that he would have the



William H Thompson

- 1 Brown, as has been pointed out in other modern articles on her, was known as 'Shakespeare' and not, as often mistakenly labeled, as 'Old Shakespeare'.
- 2 According to the film trade magazine *Motography* of 5th February 1916, Thompson was known as the 'Dean of the American Stage'.

murderer of 'Old Shakespeare' behind the bars within twenty-four hours. Several suspects were arrested, and finally 'Frenchy', who was known to be in the company of the woman a few hours before she was found dead, was taken into custody.

The evidence against 'Frenchy' was entirely circumstantial. He stoutly protested his innocence. A public cry was raised that 'Frenchy' was being persecuted in order that the reputation of the metropolitan police force might be sustained. 'Frenchy' was convicted and sentenced to State's Prison for life. A few years ago he developed symptoms of insanity, and he was transferred to the State Asylum for the Criminally Insane at Matteawan. Several efforts were made to secure him a pardon on the grounds of newly discovered evidence. None was successful, however, until Governor Odell took an interest in the case and pardoned him about two months ago.

HARDLY A SECRET

"I am surprised that the story of 'Frenchy's' confession was not published long ago," said Mr. Thompson. "I know the facts are in the possession of several men. The news of the confession could not by any means be called a secret.

"Emilio Sultan,³ an Arab, kept cigar stores in Broadway and in 42nd Street, and it was there that I knew him. He was the interpreter at Frenchy's trial. Frenchy was a member of a wild ruffian tribe and he spoke more Arabic than French.

"Sultan talked with Frenchy many times in jail. The savage prisoner was glad to see the only man in New York with whom he could talk without restraint. I used to drink coffee in Sultan's place and buy cigars [from] him, and he told me the story. He said that Frenchy admitted the crime to him.

"But his admission took a curious form. On the night of the murder, Frenchy admitted he went to the room in which the woman's body lay. He handled the mutilated body, he said, but would not admit killing the woman. Sultan has been dead for years. I never regarded what he told me as a secret, for he never treated it as such."

3 Nina's research on the court interpreter revealed that his first name was Emile, not Emilio. He had been born in France in 1849, and received US naturalisation on 17th October 1877. Although recorded in the 1880 Census in Washington DC as a waiter at the Pennsylvania Avenue hotel, Sultan is listed as a cigar seller in the New York City directories of 1878, 1879, 1888, 1891 and 1894.



More on Ameer Ben Ali in the next issue of *Ripperologist* magazine. NINA and HOWARD BROWN are the proprietors of JTRforums.com.



PRESS TRAWL

The Short Reign of Leather Apron

In the early days of September 1888, following the murders of Polly Nichols and Annie Chapman, suspects soon came to the attention of the police as a result of their enquiries. Perhaps the most serious – and certainly the most elusive – was the mysterious ‘Leather Apron’, who, it was reported, “had more than once attacked unfortunate and defenceless women” after luring them with promises of money only to rob them of what little they had and “half kill” them into the bargain.

The moniker had caught on to such a degree that suspect Jacob Isenschmid had told the Medical Superintendent at Bow Infirmary Asylum that the girls at Holloway, where he lived, called him ‘Leather Apron’, to which he jokingly agreed.

But the fear of the unknown assailant was increased when *The Star* of 5th September 1888 described him as “The strange character who prowls about after midnight; Universal fear among women; Slipped feet and a sharp leather-knife.”

Such was the terror the name brought that young Thomas Cox tragically died when his sister told another brother that “Leather Apron was under the bed”; the older boy bent down with a lit candle to look, and set fire to the bed clothes.

Here, we present a collection of newspaper reports on the East End bogeyman who, for a few weeks before the name “Jack the Ripper” catapulted the murderer into the international spotlight, caused fear and intrigue around the country.

Sheffield Independent

Saturday, 1st September 1888.

**HORRIBLE MURDER
IN WHITECHAPEL**

*

**A WOMAN
SHOCKINGLY MULTIATED.**

*

REVOLTING CASE.

A photograph of the woman was taken yesterday for purposes identification. A number of women who had missing relatives to report called at the police station and desired to see the body. Parties from the Lambeth Workhouse came down also to view her, but could not establish her identity. The clothing she wore came from the Workhouse, but may have been given out any time in the last three or four years, and may have been given to some other person before she obtained it.

Some women in the neighbourhood knew the woman

as a person called “Polly,” who lived at a single women’s lodging house for last five or six weeks. On Thursday night she engaged a bed at this house at a late hour, but of course never returned.

She was seen by woman called “German Moggy” at about half-past two yesterday morning, and was speaking to her. The deceased had no money for a lodging, and “German Moggy” had no money either, so the unfortunate woman had to patrol the streets till she met her sad end.

The women in a position similar to that of the deceased alleged that there is a man who goes by the name of the “Leather Apron” who has more than once attacked unfortunate and defenceless women. His dodge is, it is asserted, to get them into some house on the pretence of offering them money. He then takes whatever little they have and “half kills” them in addition.

The woman told her companions that she had been married, but her husband had left her some time ago. She is described as having been quiet, for the life she followed.



The Star
Wednesday, 5th September, 1888.
Fifth Edition

"LEATHER APRON."

*

**THE ONLY NAME LINKED WITH
THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS.**

*

A NOISELESS MIDNIGHT TERROR.

The Strange Character who Prowls About Whitechapel
After Midnight - Universal Fear Among the Women -
Slipperd Feet and a Sharp Leather-knife.

The mystery attending the horrible murders in Whitechapel shows no sign of lessening. The detectives at work on the case, who were quick to confess themselves baffled, only continue to make the same confession, and there is every prospect that the last ghastly tragedy will go unpunished like its predecessors. Whitechapel is loud in its indignation over the inefficiency of the detectives, and is asking several questions to which there does not seem to be any satisfactory answer. Among other things the people wish to know why the police do not arrest "Leather Apron."

"Leather Apron" by himself is quite an unpleasant character. If, as many of the people suspect, he is the real author of the three murders which, in everybody's judgement, were done by the same person, he is a more ghoulish and devilish brute than can be found in all the pages of shocking fiction. He has ranged Whitechapel for a long time. He exercises over the unfortunates who ply their trade after twelve o'clock at night, a sway that is

BASED ON UNIVERSAL TERROR.

He has kicked, injured, bruised, and terrified a hundred of them who are ready to testify to the outrages. He has made a certain threat, his favorite threat, to any number of them, and each of the three dead bodies represents that threat carried out. He carries a razor-like knife, and two weeks ago drew it on a woman called "Widow Annie" as she was crossing the square near London Hospital, threatening at the same time, with his ugly grin and his malignant eyes, to "rip her up." He is a character so much like the invention of a story writer that the accounts of him given by all the street-walkers of the Whitechapel district seem like romances. The remarkable thing is, however, that they all agree in every particular.

Ever since the last murder the name "Leather Apron" has been falling repeatedly on the ears of the reporters. On the afternoon of the day following the murder a group of women in Eagle-place, near the mortuary, were busily discussing something to the detriment of their household

duties. The subject was "Leather Apron," and the report had spread that

"LEATHER APRON" HAD BEEN ARRESTED

for the murder. Ever since then women have been shaking their heads and saying that "Leather Apron" did it. The strangest thing about the whole case is that in view of public opinion in Whitechapel, the man has not been arrested on suspicion, and his whereabouts on the night of the murder inquired into.

About 50 of the unfortunates in the Whitechapel district gave a description of "Leather Apron" to a *Star* reporter between midnight and three o'clock this morning. The descriptions all agreed, and most of them added to it a personal experience with the man during the last two years in which they were more or less injured. From all accounts he is five feet four or five inches in height and wears a dark, close-fitting cap. He is thickset, and has an unusually thick neck. His hair is black, and closely clipped, his age being about 38 or 40. He has a small, black moustache. The distinguishing feature of his costume is a leather apron, which he always wears, and from which he gets his nickname.



*"Leather Apron" from The Illustrated Weekly Telegraph,
15th September 1888*

His expression is sinister, and seems to be full of terror for the women who describe it. His eyes are small and glittering. His lips are usually parted in a grin which is

not only not reassuring, but excessively repellent. He is a slipper maker by trade, but does not work. His business is blackmailing women late at night. A number of men in Whitechapel follow this interesting profession. He has never cut anybody so far as known, but always carries a leather knife, presumably as sharp as leather knives are wont to be. This knife a number of the women have seen. His name nobody knows, but all are united in the belief that he is a Jew or of Jewish parentage, his face being of a marked Hebrew type. But the most singular characteristic of the man, and one which tends to identify him closely with last Friday night's work, is the universal statement that in moving about

HE NEVER MAKES ANY NOISE.

What he wears on his feet the women do not know, but they all agree that he moves noiselessly. His uncanny peculiarity to them is that they never see him or know of his presence until he is close by them. When two of the Philpott-street women directed the Star reporter to Commercial-street, opposite the Princess Alice Tavern, as the most likely place to find him, she added that it would be necessary to look into all the shadows, as if he was there he would surely be out of sight. This locality, it may be remarked, is but a few steps from the model dwellinghouse in George's-Yard, where the murdered woman of four weeks ago was found.

The noiselessness of 'Leather Apron's' movements recalls the statement of Mrs. Colwell, of Brady-street. She said that about the time the murder was said to have been committed she heard a woman running up the street shrieking "Murder; Police." "She was running away from somebody," said Mrs. Colwell, "who, from the way she screamed, was hurting her as she ran. And it struck me as very strange that I did

NOT HEAR THE SOUND OF ANY FOOTSTEPS

whatever except hers. This took place where the bloodstains were found, and where the woman evidently received her death cuts. Taken together with the absolutely noiseless way in which she was carried up Brady-street; so noiselessly that three people wide awake and only a few feet distant heard no sound, this looks as though "Leather-Apron" was worth interviewing, to say the least.

"Leather-Apron" never by any chance attacks a man. He runs away on the slightest appearance of rescue. One woman whom he assailed some time ago boldly prosecuted him for it, and he was sent up for seven days. He has no settled place of residence, but has slept oftenest in a fourpenny lodging-house of the lowest kind in a disreputable lane leading from Brick-lane. The people at this lodging-house denied that he had been there, and appeared disposed to shield him.

"LEATHER-APRON'S" PAL, "MICKELDY JOE,"

was in the house at the time, and his presence doubtless had something to do with the unwillingness to give information. "Leather-Apron" was last at this house some weeks ago, though this account may be untrue. He ranges all over London, and rarely assails the same woman twice. He has lately been seen in Leather-lane, which is in the Holborn district. There is no question, considering his general character and the certainty that the murders were done by some unsettled character of this kind but that he should be taken into custody and investigated.



Manchester Evening News
Thursday, 6th September, 1888.

One of the evening papers published a sensational story last night bearing upon the Whitechapel mystery. The upshot of it is that there is an individual well known in the lower districts of London who goes by the nickname of "Leather Apron", who is in the habit of prowling about the streets at night levying blackmail upon unfortunate women. This man is said to be armed with a long knife such as is used by shoemakers, and wears soft boots which enable him to move about noiselessly.

The general description given of him reminds one so much of Mr. Mansfield's impersonation of the character of Mr. Hyde at the Lyceum Theatre as to raise the suspicion that the imagination of the reporter has been at work, but if any such individual really has an existence the sooner the police take cognisance of him the better.



Bradford Weekly Telegraph
Thursday, 6th September 1888.

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER.

Up to midnight yesterday no further information has transpired respecting the Whitechapel murder. Whatever information may be in possession of the police, they deem necessary to keep strictly secret; but considerable activity quietly being exercised in keeping a watch on suspected persons.

It is believed that their attention is particularly directed to two individuals, a notorious character known as "Leather Apron," who has been the terror of women in the neighbourhood for some time, and a seafaring man, who has already stood his trial for a crime not far short of murder.

Currency is given to the statement that a man who, though not immediately concerned in the Whitechapel murder, has a knowledge of the circumstances, will

probably make a confession with respect to crime.



North British Daily Mail

Thursday, 6th September 1888.

THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY.

There is a widespread idea in the Whitechapel district of London that the perpetrator of the latest murder is a man known as "Leather Apron", and there is general wonder why he has not been arrested by the police. This man is said to have ranged the district for a long time. He exercises over the unfortunates who ply their trade after 12 o'clock at night a sway that is based on universal terror. He has kicked, injured, bruised, and terrified a hundred of them, who are ready to testify to the outrages. He has made a certain threat – his favourite threat – to any number of them, and each of the three dead bodies represents that threat carried out. He carries a razor-like knife, and two weeks ago drew it on a woman called "Widow Annie" as she was crossing the square near London Hospital, threatening at the same time, with his ugly grin and his malignant eyes, to "rip her up." He said to be one of several men who live by this horrible system of terror and blackmail.



Eastern Daily Press

Friday, 7th September 1888.

The mystery of the Whitechapel murders becomes more mysterious as time goes on. Theories abound, but facts are scarce. One party starts the very likely hypothesis that the criminal is a maniacal homicide of the type of Williams, De Quincey's horrible hero, and that disclosures await us as terrible as those which made the Ratcliff Highway murders a daily and nightly terror to the inhabitants of the locality. There are some curious parallels between the two cases; and there are also some fairly remarkable contrasts. If the one man then is disposed of, there are others at hand. If "Leather Apron" proves to be either a harmless lunatic, or can prove a satisfactory alibi, or is even a mythical outgrowth of the reporter's fancy, we have the "High Rip Gang" to fall back upon.



Globe

Friday, 7th September 1888.

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER.

The officers of the Criminal Investigation Department, having received certain information with respect to a man

known throughout the districts of Bethnal Green and King's Cross by the nickname of "Leather Apron," and who, it alleged, for some time past has been threatening and ill-using a number of women, have been busily engaged in searching different lodging-houses and casual wards throughout the metropolis in the hopes of tracing out this man; but whether he is in any way connected with the murder of the woman Mary Ann Nichols or not cannot be ascertained. The description of the man wanted is: Aged 30 years; height, 5ft. 3in.; complexion, dark, sallow; hair and moustache black; thick set; dressed in old and dirty clothing; and is of Jewish appearance. It being stated that the murdered woman was seen in the company of this man a few hours before her body was discovered in Buck's Row, Whitechapel, he ought at least to be an important witness at the adjourned inquest.



St James's Gazette

Saturday, 8th September 1888.

...Scotland Yard must bend every energy to the task of catching this monster. We may hope that it realizes the gravity of the situation, though the signs are not very apparent. We do not know whether there is any reasonable ground for the suspicion which has been loudly uttered against a particular person. "Leather Apron" may be no more than a myth fostered by the imagination of vivacious reporters; and the fact that a leather apron and shoemaker's knife were found near the body of the latest victim may just as well be a blind as a valuable piece of evidence. Still this individual, we are told, has been openly accused of the crimes by many people in Whitechapel; and if that is so, it is scarcely possible to believe that the man has already been in the hands of the police during the last week and has been allowed to slip through them. Yet much is stated to be the case. Obviously there would be something for a Watch Committee to do.



Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper

Sunday, 9th September 1888.

During yesterday afternoon the occupants of the house adjoining the scene of the murder charged an admission fee of one penny to people anxious to view the spot where the body was found. Several hundreds of people availed themselves of the opportunity.

As the day advanced and the Jewish East-end crowds congregated around the scene of the murder, and its neighbourhood became more leavened with English working men, the excitement grew; and, unfortunately, owing to the rumours about the individual "Leather Apron", took a rather nasty turn. Bodies of young roughs

raised cries against the Jews, and many of the disreputable and jabbering women sided with them. This state of things caused several stand-up fights, thus putting a further and serious strain on the police, many of whom began to express their fears of rioting.

Describing the scene in the district last night, a correspondent says: The excitement in Hanbury Street and the surrounding neighbourhood still continues, and extra police have been employed to keep a course for the traffic of the evening, but in this they are very much hampered by noisy crowds of men and boys crying "Down with the Jews." Sometimes there is a show of resistance, but the strong force of police on the spot are equal to the occasion, and promptly separate assailants. Just as our correspondent was writing a gang of young vagabonds marched down Hanbury Street shouting "Down with the Jews!" "It was a Jew who did it," "No Englishman did it!" After these the police were prompt, and whenever there was a stand they quickly, and without ceremony, dispersed them. There have been many fights, but the police are equal to it, as men are held in reserve under cover, and when there is a row they rush out and soon establish order. As the night advances the disorderly mobs who openly express antipathy to the Jews increase, and a request has been forwarded to headquarters for extra men. This request has been promptly attended to, and men have been sent.



Lancashire Evening Post
Monday, 10th September 1888.

ARREST OF LEATHER APRON.

About nine o'clock this morning, a detective arrested a man, known as "Leather Apron," who was wanted in connection with the Whitechapel murder, at 22, Mulberry Street, Commercial Street. The real name of the man arrested is John Piser, but his friends deny that he has ever been known under the nickname of "Leather Apron."

When the detective called at the house, the door was opened the prisoner himself. "Just the man I want," said the detective, who charged him, on suspicion, of being connected with the murder of the woman Chapman. The detective searched the house, and took some finishing tools, which the prisoner was the habit of using in his work. By trade he is a boot finisher, and for some time

has been living at Mulberry Street with his stepmother, (Mrs. Piser) and married brother, who works at cabinet-making. When he was arrested his brother was at work, and the only inmates of the house were the prisoner's stepmother, his sister-in-law, and a Mr. Nathan, for whom he has worked.

His stepmother and his sister-in-law declared positively to a reporter that Piser arrived home at half-past ten on Thursday night, and had not left the house since. They further stated that the prisoner was unable to much work, on account of ill-health, and that he by no means strong. Some time since he was seriously injured in a vital part. About six weeks ago left a convalescent home on account of a carbuncle in the stomach.

He is about 35 years of age, and since he was three years old, has been brought up by Mrs. Piser. He lost his father some seventeen years ago.

At the Leman Street Police Station, whither the prisoner was taken, a large force of police was kept in readiness, with drawn staves. Only few people amongst the crowd outside seemed aware that an arrest had been made; and so quietly did the police act in Mulberry Street that few, even in the neighbourhood, connected the arrest with the murder. The police at Leman Street refused to give any information. It is stated that a large number of long-bladed knives and several hats were found in the prisoner's possession. The arrest was made by Detective Sergeant Thicke.

The Press Association, in a later despatch, says: The excitement upon the arrest of the man said to be "Leather Apron" was intense, large crowds surrounding the police station and discussing the affair. The police, however, refuse to give details at present. The prisoner has evidently not been specifically charged with any offence. Several residents in Mulberry Street, in an interview with the Press Association representative, stated that the prisoner was a harmless sort of person, and unlikely to commit the crime alleged.

The Central News telegraphs: The man arrested as "Leather Apron" gives his name John Piser. He denies that he is "Leather Apron." He is bootmaker by trade, and has been living with his family. He is man of weak appearance, though he bears some slight resemblance to the published description of the man wanted. It is understood that the police evidence against him is only of the slenderest character, and his early discharge anticipated.

GHASTLY MURDER

IN THE EAST-END.

DREADFUL MUTILATION OF A WOMAN.

Capture : Leather Apron

Another murder of a character even more diabolical than that perpetrated in Back's Row, on Friday week, was discovered in the same neighbourhood, on Saturday morning. At about six o'clock a woman was found lying in a back yard at the foot of a passage leading to a lodging-house in a Old Brown's Lane, Spitalfields. The house is occupied by a Mrs. Richardson, who lets it out to lodgers, and the door which admits to this passage, at the foot of which lies the yard where the body was found, is always open for the convenience of lodgers. A lodger named Davis was going down to work at the time mentioned and found the woman lying on her back close to the flight of steps leading into the yard. Her throat was cut in a fearful manner. The woman's body had been completely ripped open and the heart and other organs laying about the place, and portions of the entrails round the victim's neck. An excited crowd gathered in front of Mrs. Richardson's house and also round the mortuary in old Montague Street, whither the body was quickly conveyed. As the body lies in the rough coffin in which it has been placed in the mortuary - the same coffin in which the unfortunate Mrs. Nicholls was first placed - it presents a fearful sight. The body is that of a woman about 45 years of age. The height is exactly five feet. The complexion is fair, with wavy brown hair; the eyes are blue, and two lower teeth have been knocked out. The nose is rather large and prominent.

Victorian Fiction

The Lady, or the Tiger? *and* The Discourager of Hesitancy

By Frank R Stockton

Edited with an introduction by Eduardo Zinna

In 1701, in the city of Caen, on the coast of Normandy, the scholar, traveller and librarian Antoine Galland began work on the translation of a fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript entitled *The Thousand and One Nights*. The manuscript contained a collection of fantastic stories, fables, humorous or erotic tales, anecdotes, poems, romances, tales of adventure and epic stories of Indian, Persian and Egyptian origin held together by a framework story.

Betrayed by his wife – of whom he quickly disposed – King Shahryar took an oath that every night he would marry a virgin and in the morning put her to death, for there was not one chaste woman on the face of the earth. After three years of this brutal regime, Shahrazad volunteers to be married to the King in order to deliver the women of the kingdom from their sovereign's wrath. On her wedding night, after her marriage has been consummated, Shahrazad begins to tell a story. At the break of day, the story remains unfinished, and the King, eager to learn how it ends, grants Shahrazad her life for one more day. Story follows story for many more nights, and every morning the story remains unfinished and the King grants Shahrazad her life for one more day. After one thousand and one nights, the King has learnt to love Shahrazad and the child born of their union and renounces his vengeance.

Galland was well qualified for his chosen task. He had spent nearly fifteen years travelling in the Middle East, had a sound knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Turkish and had authored or translated a number of texts, including the Turkish version of the *Panchatantra* and the *Voyages of Sinbad*. His objective in translating the *Nights*

was to produce a collection of marvellous, entertaining and pleasing stories, in the tradition of the popular fairy tales collected by Charles Perrault. He rightfully felt that King Shahryar was a good match for Bluebeard and that the *Nights* boasted of enough foolish maidens, ensorcelled princesses and talking animals to stand up to Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella and Puss in Boots.



Antoine Galland

Nowadays the roles of the author and the translator are clearly defined; in olden times, the translator had great freedom to add, alter, enlarge, delete and generally improve a text – according to his lights. John Dryden, the translator of Horace, Ovid, Lucretius and Virgil, speaks of when ‘...the Translator ... assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion’. In the case of the *Nights*, not the work of an author but of many anonymous authors, the translator’s latitude was even greater. Galland took full advantage of this privilege. The manuscript of the *Nights* consisted of far fewer stories than could be told in 1,001 nights. To round off their number, Galland added stories from other sources, many of them now lost, as well as from the tales told to him by a Syrian friend which he then recast and retold as he saw fit. We should perhaps be grateful to this infidel translator. Among the stories which gained a place in the *Nights* entirely through the agency of his pen are the tales of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves and Sinbad of the Sea.

sorcerers, despotic rulers and traitorous viziers, flying horses and living statues, *jinn*, *ifrit* and ghouls, poisons, liquors and spells, and multitudes of slaves ensconced in rings or oil lamps to enchant the old and the young for many generations to come.

The first volume of the *Nights* was published in 1704 to great acclaim. The Occident had discovered in its pages the Orient, not the impoverished land of later centuries but its mighty rival for world supremacy, the source of unknown mythologies, unseen art, unheard music. It was rather to be expected, however, that the success of the *Nights* should be accompanied by the disdain of the critics and the hostility of fellow writers. Three more volumes of the *Nights* followed before the end of the year; two in 1705, one in 1706. Volume XII, the last one, appeared posthumously in 1717. Galland had died in February 1715; his King, Louis XIV, seven months later.

‘But what is there still to say? What to tell?’ wrote the Moroccan writer and scholar of Arabic literature Abdelfattah Kilito in his essay on the *Nights*. ‘Because if a thousand books have been the origin of the *Nights*, the *Nights* have been the origin of a thousand books.’ Galland’s *Nights* and their hasty translations into Danish, English, German and a dozen other languages generated imitations, parodies, pastiches, Oriental tales and all sorts of extravaganzas. As the first volumes of the *Nights* appeared, the Irish nobleman Anthony Hamilton published the *Story of Mayflower* and *The Four Facardins* (*Fakhr al Dins*), the scholar François Pétis de la Croix *The Thousand and One Days*, Jean-Paul Bignon, *The Adventures of Abdalla*, and Thomas Simon Gueulette, *The Thousand and One Quarters of an Hour: Tartar Tales*.



The tales in the *Nights* had once been recited by professional storytellers in the market-places of India, Persia and Egypt to an audience of merchants and artisans, thieves and cooks, beggars and snake-charmers. But Galland lived in the France of Louis XIV, and refashioned the stories to suit the society of his time. His sultans, princesses and courtiers, and even his tailors, porters and shopkeepers, act as though they were not in mediaeval Baghdad but in the Court of the Sun King. They do not speak the often vulgar or ungrammatical Arabic of the manuscript but its translator’s elegant and refined French. Eager to accommodate his patrician readers, Galland deleted or toned down the manuscript’s frequent erotic passages, omitted most of its poetry, ascribed philosophical observations to fishermen and cobblers, conjured up details designed to enhance the exoticism of the tales – camels, palm trees, deserts – and on occasion substituted dishes agreeable to the European taste for the unfamiliar delicacies of the Orient. He still left untouched enough visions of winged princesses and hooded

Imitations and parodies gave way to critiques of contemporary mores disguised as vaguely Oriental tales which often showed the influence of the *Nights* but did not openly admit to it. In 1721 Montesquieu published *Persian Letters*, a satirical vision of European culture from a pseudo-Oriental perspective, and in 1748 Voltaire published *Zadig*, an attack on religious bigotry spread against a hazily Arabian background. Superior works inspired by the *Nights* were William Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786), a disturbing fantasy which had a significant influence on the Gothic novel, Jacques Cazotte’s *The Arabian Tales or A Continuation of the Arabian Nights* (1788) and Jan Potocki’s *The Saragossa Manuscript* (1814) which, in emulation of the *Nights*, ran stories inside stories inside stories, just like so many Russian dolls.

During the nineteenth century the fascination of the *Nights* was unabated. The hegemony of Galland’s translation came to an end as a plethora of translators challenged it. There were new English translations by Edward Lane (1839-41), John Payne (1882-84), and

Richard Burton (1885-88), one French translation by Charles Mardrus (1899-1904) and German translations by Gustav Weil (1839-42) and Max Henning (1895-97). The *Nights'* significant influence in Western literature was evident everywhere. Théophile Gautier (*La Mille Deuxième Nuit*, 1842), Edgar Allan Poe (*The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade*, 1845) and Mark Twain (*Tom Sawyer Abroad*, 1894), wrote additional tales. Robert Louis Stevenson published a contemporary version entitled *New Arabian Nights* (1882). Alexandre Dumas's Count of Montecristo adopted the identity of Sinbad the sailor in some of his adventures. Byron, Chesterton, Coleridge, De Quincey, Dickens, Flaubert, Elizabeth Gaskell, Goethe, Washington Irving, Meredith, Pope, Proust, Pushkin, Southey, Tennyson, Wordsworth and even Cardinal Newman evoked the Nights in their writings or plundered them outright. Many stories with an Oriental flavour saw the light during the last years of the nineteenth century. Among them were our Victorian Fiction offerings for the present issue: *The Lady, or the Tiger?* and its continuation, *The Discourager of Hesitancy*, by the American humourist Frank R Stockton.

Francis Richard Stockton, the son of a well-known Methodist minister, was born in Philadelphia on 5 April 1834. Contrary to his father's wishes, he refused to study medicine and, in the best tradition of American writers, held several jobs, notably as a wood engraver, before settling for journalism and later, literature. Little in his life was outstanding except for his literary production, which was both substantial and admirable.

His fairy tales, to which he devoted a good part of his early career, were distinguished by their sophistication, sense of humour and utter lack of didactic intention. The best of them were collected in *Ting-a-Ling Tales* (1870), *The Floating Prince, and Other Fairy Tales* (1881) and *The Bee-Man of Orn, and Other Fanciful Tales* (1887).

His novel *Rudder Grange* (1879) narrated the escapades of a family living on a canal boat. Its success led to the publication of two sequels, *Rudder Grangers Abroad* (1891) and *Pomona's Travels* (1894). *The Casting*

Away of Mrs Lecks and Mrs Aleshine (1886) dealt with the experiences of two middle-aged castaways on a deserted island. Other novels included *The House of Martha* (1891), *The Adventures of Captain Horn* (1895), *The Water-Devil* (1897), *The Girl at Cobhurst* (1898), *The Vizier of the Two-horned Alexander* (1898), *The Young Master of Hyson Hall* (1899) and *A Bicycle of Cathay* (1900).



Stockton contributed to the early science fiction canon the short story *Negative Gravity*, whose protagonist invents a device that nullifies gravity, and the novels *The Great Stone of Sardis* (1898), where an inventor sends an expedition to the North Pole and investigates the centre of the earth in the then far future, the year 1947, and *The Great War Syndicate* (1889), in which America wins a war against Britain through the use of advanced technology.

Stockton died on 20 April 1902 in Washington, DC, of a cerebral haemorrhage. On this sad occasion, the *New York Outlook* said of him 'He had a genius for friendliness which attracted all men, and once drawn to him, his friends were held by his sincerity, his integrity, his modesty, and his capital good-fellowship.' It

further said: 'He who adds to the pleasantness of life, to the good cheer of human fellowship, to the sum-total of human gaiety, is a benefactor. Mr. Stockton belonged in the small group of those who make life more agreeable, not only by the play of their own humor, but by persuading other people to use this great resource.'

The Lady, or the Tiger? first appeared in *The Century Magazine* in November 1882. Its continuation, *The Discourager of Hesitancy*, was published in the same magazine in July 1885. A century later, in June 1985, both stories, their appeal and power intact, appeared in *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*. It must be made clear that although the second story advertises itself as a sequel or a continuation, it does not solve the riddle with which the first story ends. The author left that task to the readers. The second story, however, is as delightful as the first one, brings back its despotic and choleric king and introduces the self-effacing official mentioned in its title. It is indeed advisable to allow some time between the stories, so as to savour both in full.

The Lady, or the Tiger?

Frank R Stockton

In the very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbours, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing; and, when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places.

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valour, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheatre, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished. Or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's arena – a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed – from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than

pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.



When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheatre. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial, to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased: he was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible chance. If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the

fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him, and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection: the king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers' and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood side by side; and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady: he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: the accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty; and, if innocent, he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments or the king's arena.

The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming

as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardour that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion; and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial.



Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after-years such things became commonplace enough; but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling.

The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena; and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that he, young man, might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he,



she, nor anyone else thought of denying the fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of; and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena; and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors, – those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity.

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king: but he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there; but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent

on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth, that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done, – she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them; but gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on

most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door.

When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than anyone in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed.

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: 'Which?' It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a Rash; it must be answered in another.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement towards the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

He turned and, with a firm and rapid step, he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands, as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair, when she saw his start of

rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door, the lady, or the tiger?



The Discourager of Hesitancy

A Continuation to 'The Lady, or the Tiger?'

Frank R Stockton

It was nearly a year after the occurrence of that event in the arena of the semi-barbaric king known as the incident of the lady or the tiger, that there came to the palace of this monarch a deputation of five strangers from a far country. These men, of venerable and dignified aspect and demeanour, were received by a high officer of the court, and to him they made known their errand.

'Most noble officer,' said the speaker of the deputation, 'it so happened that one of our countrymen was present here, in your capital city, on that momentous occasion when a young man who had dared to aspire to the hand of your king's daughter had been placed in the arena, in the midst of the assembled multitude, and ordered to open one of two doors, not knowing whether a ferocious tiger would spring out upon him, or a beautiful lady would advance, ready to become his bride. Our fellow citizen who was then present was a man of supersensitive feelings, and at the moment when the youth was about to open the door he was so fearful lest he should behold a horrible spectacle that his nerves failed him, and he fled precipitately from the arena, and, mounting his camel, rode homeward as fast as he could go.'

'We were all very much interested in the story which our countryman told us, and we were extremely sorry that he did not wait to see the end of the affair. We hoped, however, that in a few weeks some traveller from your city would come among us and bring us further news, but up to that day when we left our country no such traveller had arrived. At last it was determined that the only thing to be done was to send a deputation to this country, and to ask the question: 'Which came out of the open door, the lady or the tiger?'

When the high officer had heard the mission of this most respectable deputation, he led the five strangers into an inner room, where they were seated upon soft cushions, and where he ordered coffee, pipes, sherbet, and other semi-barbaric refreshments to be served to them. Then, taking his seat before them, he thus addressed the visitors.

'Most noble strangers, before answering the question you have come so far to ask, I will relate to you an incident which occurred not very long after that to which you have

referred. It is well known in all regions hereabout that our great king is very fond of the presence of beautiful women about his court. All the ladies in waiting upon the queen and royal family are most lovely maidens, brought here from every part of the kingdom. The fame of this concourse of beauty, unequalled in any other royal court, has spread far and wide, and had it not been for the equally wide spread fame of the systems of impetuous justice adopted by our king, many foreigners would doubtless have visited our court.'

'But not very long ago there arrived here from a distant land a prince of distinguished appearance and undoubted rank. To such a one, of course, a royal audience was granted, and our king met him very graciously, and begged him to make known the object of his visit. Thereupon the prince informed his Royal Highness that, having heard of the superior beauty of the ladies of his court, he had come to ask permission to make one of them his wife.'



‘When our king heard this bold announcement, his face reddened, he turned uneasily on his throne, and we were all in dread lest some quick words of furious condemnation should leap from out his quivering lips. But by a mighty effort he controlled himself, and after a moment’s silence he turned to the prince and said: “Your request is granted. Tomorrow at noon you shall wed one of the fairest damsels of our court.” Then turning to his officers he said: “Give orders that everything be prepared for a wedding in the palace at high noon tomorrow. Convey this royal prince to suitable apartments. Send to him tailors, bootmakers, hatters, jewellers, armorers, men of every craft whose services he may need. Whatever he asks, provide. And let all be ready for the ceremony tomorrow.”’

“But, your Majesty,” exclaimed the prince, “before we make these preparations, I would like—”

“Say no more!” roared the king. “My royal orders have been given, and nothing more is needed to be said. You asked a boon. I granted it, and I will hear no more on the subject. Farewell, my prince, until tomorrow noon.”

‘At this the king arose and left the audience chamber, while the prince was hurried away to the apartments selected for him. Here came to him tailors, hatters, jewellers, and everyone who was needed to fit him out in grand attire for the wedding. But the mind of the prince was much troubled and perplexed.’

“I do not understand,” he said to his attendants, “this precipitancy of action. When am I to see the ladies, that I may choose among them? I wish opportunity, not only to gaze upon their forms and faces, but to become acquainted with their relative intellectual development.”

“We can tell you nothing,” was the answer. “What our king thinks right, that will he do. More than this we know not.”

“His Majesty’s notions seem to be very peculiar,” said the prince, “and, so far as I can see, they do not at all agree with mine.”

‘At that moment an attendant whom the prince had not noticed came and stood beside him. This was a broad shouldered man of cheery aspect, who carried, its hilt in his right hand, and its broad back resting on his broad arm, an enormous scimitar, the upturned edge of which was keen and bright as any razor. Holding this formidable weapon as tenderly as though it had been a sleeping infant, this man drew closer to the prince and bowed.’

“Who are you?” exclaimed his Highness, starting back at the sight of the frightful weapon.’

“I,” said the other, with a courteous smile, “am the Discourager of Hesitancy. When the king makes known his wishes to any one, a subject or visitor, whose disposition in some little points may be supposed not wholly to

coincide with that of his Majesty, I am appointed to attend him closely, that, should he think of pausing in the path of obedience to the royal will, he may look at me, and proceed.”

‘The prince looked at him, and proceeded to be measured for a coat.’



‘The tailors and shoemakers and hatters worked all night, and the next morning, when everything was ready, and the hour of noon was drawing nigh, the prince again anxiously inquired of his attendants when he might expect to be introduced to the ladies.’

“The king will attend to that,” they said. “We know nothing of the matter.”

“Your Highness,” said the Discourager of Hesitancy, approaching with a courtly bow, “will observe the excellent quality of this edge.” And drawing a hair from his head, he dropped it upon the upturned edge of his scimitar, upon which it was cut in two at the moment of touching.’

‘The prince glanced, and turned upon his heel.’

‘Now came officers to conduct him to the grand hall of the palace, in which the ceremony was to be performed. Here the prince found the king seated upon his throne, with his nobles, his courtiers, and his officers standing about him in magnificent array. The prince was led to a position in front of the king, to whom he made obeisance, and then said:

“Your majesty, before I proceed further—”

‘At this moment an attendant, who had approached with a long scarf of delicate silk, wound it about the lower part of the prince’s face so quickly and adroitly that he was obliged to cease speaking. Then, with wonderful dexterity,

the rest of the scarf was wound around the prince's head, so that he was completely blindfolded. Thereupon the attendant quickly made openings in the scarf over the mouth and ears, so that the prince might breathe and hear, and fastening the ends of the scarf securely, he retired.'

'The first impulse of the prince was to snatch the silken folds from his head and face, but, as he raised his hands to do so, he heard beside him the voice of the Discourager of Hesitancy, who gently whispered: "I am here, your Highness." And, with a shudder, the arms of the prince fell down by his side.'

'Now before him he heard the voice of a priest, who had begun the marriage service in use in that semi-barbaric country. At his side he could hear a delicate rustle, which seemed to proceed from fabrics of soft silk. Gently putting forth his hand, he felt folds of such silk close behind him. Then came the voice of the priest requesting him to take the hand of the lady by his side; and reaching forth his right hand, the prince received within it another hand, so small, so soft, so delicately fashioned, and so delightful to the touch, that a thrill went through his being. Then, as was the custom of the country, the priest first asked the lady would she have this man to be her husband; to which the answer gently came, in the sweetest voice he had ever heard: "I will."

'Then ran raptures rampant through the prince's blood. The touch, the tone, enchanted him. All the ladies of that court were beautiful, the Discourager was behind him, and through his parted scarf he boldly answered: "Yes, I will."

'Whereupon the priest pronounced them man and wife.'

'Now the prince heard a little bustle about him, the long scarf was rapidly unrolled from his head, and he turned, with a start, to gaze upon his bride. To his utter amazement, there was no one there. He stood alone. Unable on the instant to ask a question or say a word, he gazed blankly about him.'

'Then the king arose from his throne, and came down, and took him by the hand.'

'"Where is my wife?" gasped the prince.'

'"She is here," said the king, leading him to a curtained doorway at the side of the hall.'

'The curtains were drawn aside, and the prince, entering, found himself in a long apartment, near the opposite wall of which stood a line of forty ladies, all dressed in rich attire, and each one apparently more beautiful than the rest.'

'Waving his hand toward the line, the king said to the prince: "There is your bride! Approach, and lead her forth! But, remember this: that if you attempt to take away one of the unmarried damsels of our court, your execution will be instantaneous. Now, delay no longer. Step up and take your bride."

'The prince, as in a dream, walked slowly along the line of ladies, and then walked slowly back again. Nothing could he see about any one of them to indicate that she was more of a bride than the others. Their dresses were all similar, they all blushed, they all looked up and then looked down. They all had charming little hands. Not one spoke a word. Not one lifted a finger to make a sign. It was evident that the orders given them had been very strict.'

'"Why this delay?" roared the king. "If I had been married this day to one so fair as the lady who wedded you, I should not wait one second to claim her."

'The bewildered prince walked again up and down the line. And this time there was a slight change in the countenances of two of the ladies. One of the fairest gently smiled as he passed her. Another, just as beautiful, slightly frowned.'

'"Now," said the prince to himself, "I am sure that it is one of those two ladies whom I have married. But which? One smiled. And would not any woman smile when she saw in such a case, her husband coming toward her? Then again, on the other hand, would not any woman frown when she saw her husband come toward her and fail to claim her? Would she not knit her lovely brows? Would she not inwardly say "It is I! Don't you know it? Don't you feel it? Come!" But if this woman had not been married, would she not frown when she saw the man looking at her? Would she not say inwardly, "Don't stop at me! It is the next but one. It is two ladies above. Go on!" Then again, the one who married me did not see my face. Would she not now smile if she thought me comely? But if I wedded the one who frowned, could she restrain her disapprobation if she did not like me? Smiles invite the approach of true love. A frown is a reproach to a tardy advance. A smile—'

'"Now, hear me!" loudly cried the king. "In ten seconds, if you do not take the lady we have given you, she who has just been made your bride shall be made your widow."

'And, as the last word was uttered, the Discourager of Hesitancy stepped close behind the prince and whispered: "I am here!"

'Now the prince could not hesitate an instant; he stepped forward and took one of the two ladies by the hand.'

'Loud rang the bells, loud cheered the people, and the king came forward to congratulate the prince. He had taken his lawful bride.'

'"Now, then," said the officer to the deputation of five strangers from a far country, "when you can decide among yourselves which lady the prince chose, the one who smiled or the one who frowned, then I will tell you which came out of the open door, the lady or the tiger!"

At the latest accounts the five strangers had not yet decided.

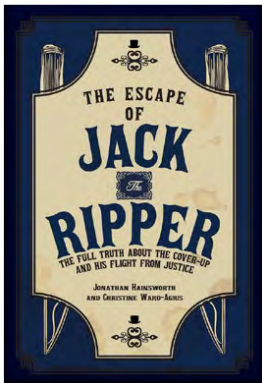
Non-Fiction Reviews

Included in this issue:

The Escape of Jack the Ripper and more!

**THE ESCAPE OF JACK THE RIPPER:
THE FULL TRUTH ABOUT THE COVER-UP
AND HIS FLIGHT FROM JUSTICE**

Jonathan Hainsworth and Christine Ward-Agius
Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2020
www.amberleybooks.com
286pp; illus; appendices; notes; biblio; index
hardcover
ISBN: 978-1-4456-9814-4
£20



This book proposes that Sir Melville Macnaghten and two or three friends conspired to publicly acknowledge that the identity of Jack the Ripper was known and that he was dead, yet at the same time make sure his family name be disgraced. To this end, Macnaghten leaked information to trusted sources and ran a successful

damage-limitation campaign when others in the know talked too much. And according to Hainsworth and Ward-Agius, Macnaghten was responsible for everything from Anderson's belief that the Ripper was a Polish Jew through Mrs Belloc Lowndes writing her famous story *The Lodger* to America putting a man on the moon.

Okay, that last bit's not true. Macnaghten had nothing to do with the American space programme, but Hainsworth and Ward-Agius credit so much to Macnaghten that from time to time they refer to him as Super-Mac!

Hainsworth and Ward-Agius think – and there is an awful lot of 'we think' and 'we believe' in this book – that Montague John Drutt admitted his guilt under seal of the confessional to his cousin, Reverend Charles Drutt (1848-1900). The family tried to commit Montague to a private asylum in France, and the authors believe that a fascinating story in the *Philadelphia Times* describes their effort to do this. Drutt managed to return to England, where he drowned himself in the Thames.

The shame and humiliation that would have been attached to the family name if Montague had been caught were relieved by his death, but the matriarch of the Drutt clan, Montague's strong and intimidating aunt Isabella Drutt (1823-1899), became concerned in case

an innocent person was accused of the murders. There was also the additional anxiety that William and Charles Drutt, who had overseen Montague's committal to the French asylum, could be arrested as accessories and for withholding information.

Fortunately, Charles Drutt had in 1888 married the daughter of a step-cousin of Colonel Sir Vivian Majendie, the Chief Inspector of Explosives at the Home Office and a friend of Macnaghten. The Drutts enlisted Majendie's help and he, in turn, enlisted Macnaghten's, who, as much to protect disgrace and opprobrium attaching to Majendie's name, agreed to help.

Macnaghten called upon the services of his friend, George R Sims. A playwright, novelist, and social commentator, Sims also wrote a weekly column called 'Mustard and Cress' for *The Referee* sporting newspaper. At Macnaghten's behest, Sim's repeatedly wrote that Jack the Ripper's identity was known and that he was dead.

This argument all seems reasonably plausible, and Hainsworth and Ward-Agius present their case in a very straightforward way – although I enjoyed the book more on a second reading. However, the authors accept without reservation that Montague John Drutt was guilty of the canonical Whitechapel murders. There's also a lot of 'we think' and 'we believe', without much, if any, discussion of their reasons for thinking or believing it. The trouble is that it's so easy to forget they only think and believe it. It's not what they know. They also get carried away with how much they attribute to the machinations of Macnaghten. But their basic theory seems plausible, and the article in the *Philadelphia Times* immeasurably adds to it.

Or does it?

Whether or not the authors intended this newspaper story to be the beating heart of their book, that's what it is. If it's what Hainsworth and Ward-Agius think it is, it's the only proof outside of Macnaghten that Montague Drutt was Jack the Ripper, it's the only proof that Montague Drutt's family suspected or believed that he was Jack the Ripper, and it is the only proof we have that the family tried to commit Montague Drutt to an asylum.

According to this newspaper story, two Englishmen, a lawyer and a clergyman, asked the director of a private and expensive mental institution outside Paris to take a severely deluded and homicidal relative as a patient. After

providing all the necessary papers and paying handsomely for three months' care and extras, the English patient arrived. The director was warned that the Englishman believed he had committed the most horrible murders, and it was not long before the patient was gripped by these delusions and began talking about and acting out his crimes.

As chance would have it, of all the asylum staff the only one who could speak English was the attendant in charge of the English patient's day-to-day care. He understood the patient's every word and even recognised the names of people and places associated with the Whitechapel murders. Motivated by the social good, and a financial reward, the attendant told what he knew to the French police, who investigated and contacted Scotland Yard.

"We believe that the English patient was Montague Druitt, the lawyer and friend were his brother William, and the clerical cousin was the Reverend Charles Druitt," write Hainsworth and Ward-Agius, and who can blame them for believing that? Druitt was a raving lunatic, at least according to Macnaghten, and two of Druitt's closest relatives happened to be a doctor and a cleric! Let's face it, they fit the roles as if they'd been written for them.

But is the story true?

Unfortunately, the authors haven't found a speck of corroboration, although they're so upbeat about the article that you'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise. They call the story a 'scoop', which it wasn't. A 'scoop' is a story obtained or released ahead of the competition, but there doesn't appear to have been any competition in this case. Nobody else reported it. The authors also refer to the story having been 'leaked' to just the *Philadelphia Times*, but 'leaked' means a story released without official sanction, and there is no reason to believe this story was leaked at all. The author could have made it up. And there is no explanation – the authors don't even theorise – why the story would have been 'leaked' to the *Philadelphia Times*. Did that newspaper even have a Paris correspondent?

There was no follow-up story in the *Philadelphia Times*, the story wasn't reported in other newspapers, not a single French newspaper repeated it, and in Britain, where the murders had rarely been out of the nation's newspapers for months, not one newspaper gave the tale even the shortest of paragraphs. None of this means the story is a fake, but it calls its veracity into serious doubt.

The story also hasn't any names. Hainsworth and Ward-Agius explain that the writer "published not a single name because, according to his account, the English ones would have been bogus anyhow." But I think I'm correct in saying that the writer said that the English names were bogus, not that this was the reason why he didn't publish them. There is a very distinct difference. Anyway,

whether the names were bogus or not, that didn't prevent the writer from giving them, or the names of the British policemen, or the French policemen, or the director of the asylum, or the attendant who told the story. This isn't exceptional; take the North Country Vicar or the West of England MP stories as examples, but those were no more than a gossipy filler paragraph or two. The *Philadelphia Times* story, published less than two months after Mary Kelly was butchered, was unusually long and otherwise detailed, and potentially dynamite. No names set off deafening warning bells.

And while those bells are jangling loudly, the question must be asked whether the asylum existed. The asylum was exclusive, catering for no more than twenty-five patients, expensive, and named after its founder. It was also very close to Paris. You would think that such an establishment would have been easily identifiable, even at this distance in time, but Hainsworth and Ward-Agius were unable to find anywhere that fitted those details. They did find Vanves, about three miles from the centre of Paris.

Vanves asylum was a suitably select and expensive mansion, but it was not named after its founder, and it cared for up to seventy patients. Hainsworth and Ward-Agius also found an undated pamphlet which said something they thought would have been significant to the Druitt family. It said that the asylum's owners, "having spent some time in England, and having had several English patients in their establishment, understand the peculiar management they require."

Let's pass on the intriguing information that English lunatics required a 'peculiar management' that French lunatics did not, and consider instead that the Vanves asylum boasted that English patients were welcome and their needs catered for. The pamphlet does not explicitly state that English was spoken, but one wonders if that care, that 'peculiar management', could have been afforded the patients if the asylum authorities and attendants could not communicate with their demented patients? The point is that the *Philadelphia Times* story made it clear that nobody at the asylum could speak English except the English patient's attendant, and his ability to speak English was utterly unknown to anyone there. If Vanves catered for English patients, could it have been the non-English speaking asylum of the newspaper story?

So, no other newspaper picked up the story and the *Philadelphia Times* didn't follow it up, the story contains no names, and the asylum is unidentified (or uncertainly identified, depending on what faith you place in Hainsworth and Ward-Agius's belief that it was Vanves). On top of that, the story makes it clear that the police seriously believed the English patient was – and thought

himself to be – a member of a gang. The police had even obtained the names of at least six confederates. We don't know that Montague Druitt, if the Ripper, couldn't have been deluded into thinking he was working with others, and that wouldn't have influenced the actions of his family in placing him in an asylum, but it does raise the possibility that the English patient wasn't Druitt and that the whole story was a fiction reflecting one of the early theories suggested by the police. I'm not saying that this was the case, but it needs to be considered along with the other problems presented by the story.

But the biggest problem appears to be the timescale of the story. The article is datelined 24 December 1888. The Paris detectives informed Scotland Yard about the patient ten days earlier, around 14 December. The asylum attendant told the French police about the patient a few days before that, say about 11 December. The attendant said the patient had arrived at the asylum about three weeks earlier, about 20 November.

The English patient therefore arrived at the asylum on or about 20 November 1888, and the article suggests that he was still there at least on 14 December and probably 24 December. This would rule out Montague Druitt as the patient, because he was dead by early December. Also, on 28 November, Montague Druitt was at the High Court in London, clearly *compos mentis* and ably fulfilling his responsibilities (see *The Times*, 29 November 1888).

Hainsworth and Ward-Agius's theory doesn't collapse if the *Philadelphia Times* story turns out to lack factual foundation, but it casts serious doubt on the credibility of their theorising.

Very briefly, let's look at something that does have a direct bearing on their theory, the idea that George R Sims was enlisted by Melville Macnaghten to spread the word that the Ripper's identity was known.

There is no doubt that George R Sims knew about Montague Druitt. The question is, how much did he know, when did he know it, and who told him?

It was in January 1899 that an unidentified clergyman – referred to these days as the 'North-Country Vicar' – began claiming that a brother clergyman had taken the confession of Jack the Ripper, who was a former surgeon who had 'engaged in rescue work among the depraved women of the East End'. This doesn't sound much like Montague Druitt, but Hainsworth and Ward-Agius write believe that it was Montague who confessed and 'we believe' that Arthur Du Boulay Hill, married to a Druitt, a former mater of Montague's at Winchester College, and a vicar in Nottinghamshire 'to be the 'Morth Country vicar''. It is to scotch the threat he posed to the security of the Druitt name that the authors propose that George R Sims was brought in.

From January 1899 onwards, George R Sims began writing that Jack the Ripper was a young doctor or medical student who had drowned in the Thames at the end of 1888 (*The Referee*, 22 January 1899). This had been revealed by Major Arthur Griffiths in his book *Mysteries of Police and Crime*, published only a couple of months earlier, at the end of November 1898. In 1903 Sims acknowledged that Griffiths was his source (*The Referee*, 5 April 1903).

Sims definitely wrote in January 1899 in response to the widely reported North-Country Vicar story, but from what little we know of that story it wasn't about Druitt, but someone who did rescue work among prostitutes in the East End. And apart from their belief, Hainsworth and Ward-Agius offer nothing remotely concrete to connect Arthur Du Boulay Hill with the North-Country Vicar; and Boulay was a vicar in Nottinghamshire, which is arguably in the Midlands, not the north-country. Also, as far as can be told, Sims didn't write at Macnaghten's behest, but drew upon Major Griffiths' book, published only a couple of months earlier.

Jonathan Hainsworth passionately believes his theory, perhaps to a point where his objectivity is thrown into doubt, but his sincerity is in every word of this book and I really wanted his theory to hang together. Sadly, it just builds speculation on speculation – that Druitt confessed his crimes, that Druitt confessed to Du Boulay Hill, that Du Boulay Hill was the North-Country vicar and would have been described as such, that he was about to spill the beans, and so on and so on. And once you catch on to it, it amazing how many time you notice Hainsworth and Ward-Agius say 'we believe' and 'we think'.

The *Philadelphia Times* had every appearance of being a stunning discovery, and I imagine Hainsworth and Ward-Agius were very excited when they first read it. I know I was. A doctor and cleric and a young Englishman enacting violent Ripper-like murders... It just had to be Montague Druitt. But when you start to look at it, so much of it doesn't hold together.

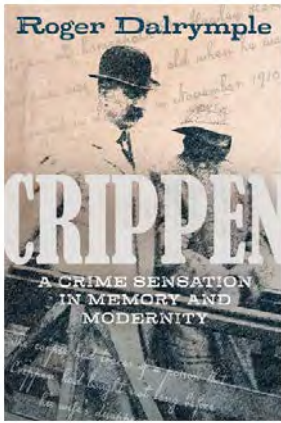
This book is Jonathan Hainsworth's second attempt to present his theory to the world, the first being *Jack the Ripper: Case Solved, 1891*, published back in 2015, and sincerity drips from his every word. He is convinced and he wants you to be as convinced as he is, and I wanted to share that conviction too. I really wanted his argument to hold together, and the *Philadelphia Times* article seemed to be the necessary glue that would do the job, but as you look closely at the theory the more obvious it is that it's speculation built on speculation, all held together with 'we think', 'we believe', and unqualified assumptions.

We are asked to believe that Montague Druitt confessed to his crimes, that his confession was genuine and not a delusion, that Druitt confessed to Du Boulay Hill, that Du

Boulay Hill was the North-Country vicar, that Du Boulay Hill was about to spill the beans, that Macnaghten enlisted the help of George R Sims and provided information about the Thames suicide to deflect attention from the vicar, and so on and so on. As much as it all seems to fit and interconnect, there is very little or no supporting evidence. *The Escape of Jack the Ripper* is enjoyable reading if conspiracy theories are your cup of tea.

CRIPPEN: A CRIME SENSATION IN MEMORY AND MODERNITY

Roger Dalrymple
Boydell and Brewer
Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2020
www.boydellandbrewer.com
hardcover
250pp; illus; biblio; index
ISBN: 978-1-78327-508-3
£45



The case of Hawley Harvey Crippen's murder of his wife Belle Elmore holds a place just below Jack the Ripper as one of the most notorious of British crimes. Although interest in the case of Dr. Crippen has waned over recent decades, in part due to the explosion of interest in Jack the Ripper in the 1970s (an interest that continues to eclipse the

Crippen case to this day), prior to '70s the murder at Hilldrop Crescent was the subject of numerous treatments in all artistic mediums. Books both fiction and non-fiction, musical broadsides, theatre performances and films were produced either about Crippen, or based on him, steadily for five straight decades after his execution at Pentonville prison. *Crippen*, by Oxford scholar Roger Dalrymple, is the first to present a wide-ranging survey of the Crippen case and its representations in popular culture. It is a welcome volume indeed.

The book seeks to account for the long-term endurance of the Crippen case in popular memory and culture by examining two distinct interpretations of the event: the contemporary crime reportage by the melodramatic press of 1910 and then in various renditions of the case over the succeeding decades through books, plays and films.

The first half of Dalrymple's book sets the stage by presenting the reader with a well-researched history of the case and the era in which it occurred. Sections are devoted to the late-Edwardian press, the evolution of policing since the late-Victorian period familiar to Ripper students, and as complete a biography of H.H. Crippen as possible given the scarcity of material available. Dalrymple's

retelling of the entire murder case from beginning to end is surprisingly thorough, and he successfully brings in a variety of already available sources as well as his own research to make for as solid a depiction of the events as one can get.

The author argues that several representations and receptions of the Crippen case have existed, transforming the case in popular imagination over the years. The original reporting of events mirroring a classic Victorian crime narrative while set in the final days of the Edwardian era; a kind of throwback which would have still been enthusiastically consumed by the early 20th century nostalgia-seeking reading public, containing such Victorian elements as music halls, execution broadsides, and even mysterious letters and confessions arriving just after the condemned prisoner has dropped from the gallows.

The second half of the book is devoted to the arts and literature that emerged in the decades after Crippen's execution, and how Crippen morphed from a Jekyll and Hyde-Mad Doctor/Hypnotist-type character in the early years into a more sympathetic, badgered husband-as-victim made most famous by Donald Pleasance's portrayal in the 1962 film *Crippen*. In between, Dalrymple covers a whole range of popular – and not so popular – representations of Crippen from Agatha Christie, Ursula Bloom, Ernest Raymond and many more. The impact Filson Young's treatment of Cora Crippen had on subsequent author's works is examined, as well as the history and reception of Crippen's waxwork effigy at Madame Tussauds.

Readers will be surprised to see within this book's pages a previously unpublished photograph identified as being H.H. Crippen taken in Johnson, Vermont in the early 1880s. The author admits we have no concrete information on why Crippen would have been in Vermont at that time (perhaps while he was an itinerant medicine hawker). While the photograph bears a slight resemblance to the Crippen we know so well, to me the identification is still inconclusive and so I remain skeptical. More investigation into this photo is needed.

Another mystery that the reader will encounter is why this book is so darned expensive. The price tag, while admittedly being out of the author's control, will be a limiting factor as to who will place this on their bookshelf, and it should be on your bookshelf. *Crippen: A Crime Sensation in Memory and Modernity* is to 'Crippeniana' what Robin Odell's *Ripperology: A Study of the World's First Serial Killer and a Literary Phenomenon* is to Ripper Studies – an essential addition to your collection.

Review by Jonathan Menges

DONALD HUME: NOTORIOUS BANK ROBBER AND DOUBLE MURDERER

Jonathan Oates

Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Wharncliffe True Crime, 2020

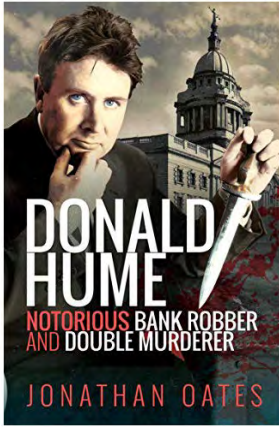
www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

hardcover

243pp; biblio; notes; index

ISBN: 1526769662

£15.99



Back in 1950 the trial of Donald Hume was the crime sensation of the year. He was widely believed to have murdered a man named Stanley Setty, but nothing could be proved against him, except that he had disposed of the body by dumping it from an aircraft over the sea. He received a prison sentence and was released in 1958. It was

now that he achieved considerable criminal notoriety; he admitted that he murdered Setty. Donald Hume was the man who got away with murder.

Stanley Setty – apparently known as ‘Stan the Spiv’ to the kerbside car-dealing fraternity of London’s Warren Street, the heart of Britain’s post-war questionable used car trade – went missing early in October. A little over two weeks later a man named Sydney Tiffin discovered Setty’s dismembered corpse in some mudflats. It didn’t take long before the police hauled in Donald Hume.

Hume quietly did his time, was released in 1958, and sold his detailed confession to the *Sunday Pictorial*. A career criminal with jealousies, ambitions beyond his grasp, and something of a fantasist, he returned to the life he knew, which included committing several bank robberies, and eventually went to Switzerland.

It was in Zurich in 1959 that he shot and killed a taxi driver. There was no question about his guilt this time, and he received a life sentence. His luck was holding out though, because Switzerland did not have the death penalty. Back in Britain, the sentence would probably have sent Hume to the gallows. After spending some time in a Swiss prison, the authorities returned Hume to Britain, where he was committed to Broadmoor. Here he associated with the likes of Ronald Kray and Charles Bronson (who was kind enough to share his memories of Hume with Oates), and where he caused no trouble and aroused no outside interest. His release in 1988 or 1989 passed without notice in the British press.

Hume’s life after his release is something of a mystery. Nobody knows much about his final years except that he appears to have lived quietly in a basement flat in London.

But at 7.00am on 9 July 1998, on some land behind a hotel in Basingstoke, his body was found by an unnamed hotel guest. The authorities found nothing on his body to identify him, and it was some time before his dental records at Broadmoor were checked and put an end to that little mystery. A post-mortem concluded that the cause of death was heart disease.

Jonathan Oates deals with the end of Donald Hume in just a couple of pages, and it seems that he turned up very little information about it. The police apparently concluded that there was nothing to indicate that Hume’s death was due to foul play, and Oates suggests nothing to suggest otherwise, but his account left me frustrated. Hume lived a quiet life in a dingy London flat, and he had little money. The hotel where he was found was in Basingstoke, it was about a mile from the centre, and Hume wasn’t a guest there. These anomalies raise questions about why he was there, how he got there, and when he got there. There is also the question of why a man so far from home had no identification about his person. Perhaps I am overly suspicious, but it does seem odd to me.

The remarkable thing about Donald Hume is that deservedly or otherwise he achieved notoriety as one of the worst criminals in wartime and post-war Britain, the man who got away with murder and who cheated the hangman twice. But he was very soon forgotten. There has been one book about him, *Hume: Portrait of a Double Murderer* by John Williams, published in 1958, and he has been given chapters in numerous publications, but all repeat much the same story. Oates is the first writer to take a close look at this fantasist’s life, undertaking considerable original research and consulting official files and other sources unavailable to researchers in the past. He raises some serious questions about the truth of Hume’s story, and asks if the popular accounts have reflected the truth.

KING ARTHUR: MAN OR MYTH

Tony Sullivan

Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Pen & Sword, 2020

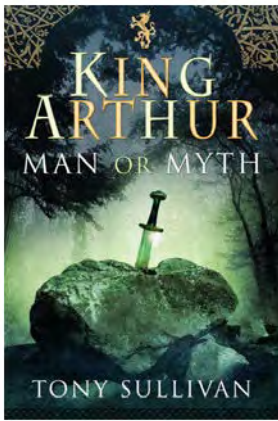
www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

246pp; illus; list of maps and tables; references; biblio; index
hardcover

ISBN: 1526763672

£19.99

There are quite a few parallels between Jack the Ripper and King Arthur. Both are mysteries of identity – who was? – and both seem to have endless books offering theories about who he might have been. These books also seem to generate considerable frustration among people who seem unable to understand that reading and thinking about those theories is half the fun of the mystery for many aficionados. The mystery of King Arthur has a further problem, one that the mystery for Jack the Ripper



doesn't have, which is that we don't know whether Arthur existed as a real historical person. Okay, some argue that the Ripper murders were committed by different people, but at least there's no doubt that the murders actually happened. With King Arthur, there is a very real possibility that he never existed and that none of the stories about him

are true.

Opinions about King Arthur are sharply divided. Academics seem to emphatically say he didn't exist, whilst bookshop shelves groan under the weight of books by so-called 'amateur historians' who just as emphatically say that he did. Both opinions are largely based on the same source materials, albeit often selectively used, the scholarly historians cautious in their assessment of the evidence, whilst the 'amateur historians', not having hard-won reputations, careers, salary cheques, and reputations to jeopardise, can afford to be more adventurous (and in some cases wildly so) in their speculation.

Finding a balance between the two isn't easy, but Tony Sullivan may have provided just such a primer in *King Arthur: Man or Myth*. He begins back in Roman Britain. The Romans had governed Britain for over 300 years, but the troops were withdrawn in the early 5th century – traditionally 410 – to fight elsewhere in the empire. Precisely what happened in Britain after that isn't certain, but at some point, somewhere, there was a collapse of government and chaos ensued. The Britons eventually rallied and they fought a series of battles which culminated in a victory at an unidentified place called Mount Badon. The leader at this battle is always said to have been Arthur.

Arthur, whoever he was – if he ever was – is to be found in the aftermath of the collapse of Roman Britain, a time that was called the dark ages because so few records survive to tell us what was happening. These diverse records are essential to any understanding of the world in which Arthur possibly lived, and Sullivan takes a close examination of each, from a 5th century ecclesiastic named Gildas through the 'father of English history', Bede, to ambiguous sources like the *Historia Brittonum* and *Annales Cambriae*.

The growth of the legend is equally important, from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the French romances, all of which contribute considerably to the Arthurian legend we know and love today.

I don't agree with all Tony Sullivan's conclusions, but given the subject that's to be expected. What I do like is

that he has explained what the sources are and some of the problems they present. If the subject interests you, this is a worthwhile investment.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KING ARTHUR

Andrew Beattie

Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2020

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

softcover

200pp; illus; biblio; index

ISBN: 978-1526727817

£12.99



King Arthur is a fleeting shadow on the face of history. Whether or not he was a real person is a touchy topic, as mentioned in the previous review. The best solution to is that if Arthur existed, he is beyond recovery, lost in the swirling mists of time. But whether he was real or legendary, Arthur left an indelible imprint on the geography of Britain. North, east, south, or west, there is hardly anywhere that doesn't have at least one small claim on Arthur.

Following in the Footsteps of Arthur is divided into two parts, beginning with a quick but reasonably comprehensive account of the 'history' of Arthur, from the earliest sources through to his Victorian re-birth and popularity in the 21st century. With part two, Beattie gets down to the nitty-gritty, charting the story of Arthur through the places associated with him. The first chapter concerns the conception of Arthur at Tintagel, that magnificent and atmospheric promontory on Cornwall's rugged coast.

Notice that the emphasis is on the conception of Arthur, not his birth. The story, as told by the medieval chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth, is that Arthur's father was Uther Pendragon, a figure who has left a few ambiguous traces in Welsh legend. In one, the triad called the Three Great Enchantments of the Island of Britain he is the teacher of a wizard who is known from elsewhere to have been a shapeshifter (someone who can change their shape and appearance). Geoffrey's story probably draws upon this ancient tale; Uther lusted uncontrollably for the wife of the Duke of Cornwall, but she would have nothing to do with him. Merlin therefore magically gave Uther the form of the Duke, and thus disguised he slept with the Duke's wife, and she became pregnant with Arthur. Tintagel is the location for this act of seduction and deception.

Chapter two takes a look at places associated with Camelot, where King Arthur had his court and the bravest

knights in Christendom would sit at a round table. As it is highly unlikely that Arthur was a king, he wouldn't have had a court, and if he had it wouldn't have been anything like Camelot. Some early stories do give Arthur a court and brave knights, but the name is Celliwig, which has been identified with Killibury or Kelly Rounds, an Iron Age hillfort in Cornwall. Nothing worth seeing is there anymore. Geoffrey located Artur's court at Caerleon, now a town in Gwent, South Wales. There was an Iron Age hillfort here too, and a Roman legionary fortress called Isca Augusta (sometimes referred to as Isca Sillurum, which for some reason always brings to mind *Dr Who*; I just checked and, of course, back in 1970 the Sillurians were the adversaries of Jon Pertwee's incarnation of the good Doctor. Isca Sillurum in fact takes its name from the Silures, the pre-Roman tribe who lived in the area and probably hailed from Spain, or so early writers like Tacitus and Jordanes thought. The Silures resisted the Romans under the leadership of Caratacus.)

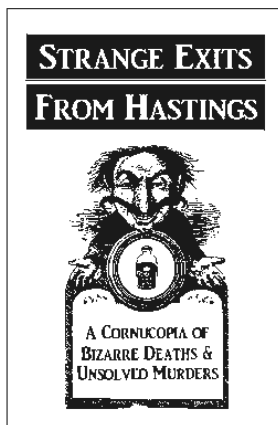
The chapter about Camelot inevitably includes the round table at Winchester. As a child, I gazed at it in awe and wondered if it was real. It isn't, of course, but it is satisfyingly old.

But you get the idea. The book concludes with a look at places suggested to be Camlann, the battle where Arthur is supposed to have been killed, and Glastonbury, where traditionally he was buried.

This is a clever book, telling the Arthur story through places with which he is associated and which you can, for the most part, visit. I recommend Tintagel. The last time I was there I bought as a souvenir a large and heavy rock with a sword-like letter opener in it. I forgot that I had quite a distance to walk with a backpack in which I'd have to lug the sword in a stone!

STRANGE EXITS FROM HASTINGS

Helena Wojtczak
 Hastings: The Hastings Press, 2020
 www.hastingspress.co.uk
 194pp; illus; notes
 ISBN: 9781904109365
 £10.00 + £2.00 p&p softcover



You might think that during a global pandemic there would be little appetite for books on death and murder. But Helena Wojtczak's new work, *Strange Exits From Hastings*, suggests otherwise. Thanks to a smart marketing campaign[1] the book has been selling steadily and is reaching its audience of quarantined and locked-down readers. Life goes on, even if

it's reading about the handiwork of the Grim Reaper.

Strange Exits From Hastings takes a look at over 30 unusual or unexplained deaths that occurred in the seaside towns of Hastings and St Leonards (and surrounding area) between 1800 and 1950. Here you will find unsolved murders, perplexing suicides, freakish fatalities, deaths on the railway, and a whole host of other extraordinary endings to life. A short chapter is devoted to each case, and the book is profusely illustrated with street maps, old photographs, and cuttings from vintage newspapers.

Unlike the *Fortean Times Book of Strange Deaths* or Wendy Northcutt's *Darwin Awards* books, which curate collections of bizarre deaths mostly for laughs, *Strange Exits From Hastings* is serious social history told in an entertaining, informative, and thought-provoking way. With the skill of a pathologist, the author peels back the skin on these deadly stories to reveal the human dramas behind the 'strange exits'.

It is a book that will appeal mainly to local residents interested in the dark history of this part of East Sussex, but all readers will find something to enjoy in this fascinating dusty attic of a book. No better account exists anywhere of the dreadful Mary Ann Geering murders; there are tales of a circus animal trainer mauled to death by a polar bear, a fisherman who met his maker when he swallowed a live sole for a lark, and a baronet fatally struck on the head by the vane of a windmill at Fairlight. There are also several unsolved murder cases where the author turns sleuth, cracking mysteries like a fearless and groundbreaking Victorian lady detective. Her unravelling of the Bopeep Railway Tunnel murder of 1891 is breathtakingly good, and one of the many highlights of this superb book.

Every tale in this book is sad in its own way, and every story will make you reflect, briefly or at length, on the vicissitudes of life and death. When the lockdown ends, and the inhabitants of Hastings and St Leonards are finally allowed back out onto the streets, I imagine they will stroll around town a little more trepidatiously than previously, mindful of being in the wrong place at the wrong time like the holidaymaker in 1900 who died when a galvanised zinc vegetable strainer fell from the fourth floor kitchen window of the Palace Hotel and shattered his skull.

Read this book before you are dead.

Review by David Green

- 1 Copies are even on sale at the butcher's shop in the village of Guestling where notorious poisoner Mary Ann Geering murdered her husband and two sons in 1848 and 1849.

All reviews by Paul Begg except 'Crippen: A Crime Sensation in Memory and Modernity' and 'Strange Exits From Hastings'

Fiction Reviews

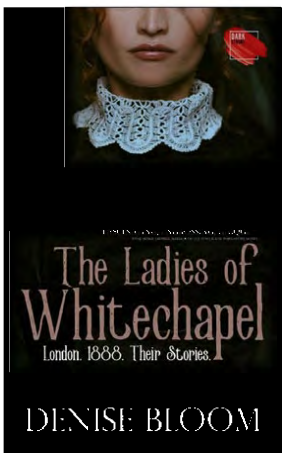
By DAVID GREEN

Reviewed in this issue:

The Ladies Of Whitechapel, The Ripper Club and Whitechapel Retribution

THE LADIES OF WHITECHAPEL

Denise Bloom
Darkstroke Books, 2020
Kindle Edition, 171pp.
£1.99



Denise Bloom has taken the life stories of four women murdered in 1888 – Emma Smith, Annie Millwood, Martha Tabram and Rose Mylett – and transformed them into a novel about social conditions in Victorian London. Each tale is a journey into poverty and destitution: at nearly every turn her female protagonists are beaten, raped, enslaved into

domestic drudgery, immured in workhouses, and finally killed by brutish men. Writing about disturbing themes doesn't always mean that readers will be disturbed, but these dark stories are relentless in the way they explore suffering and oppression, and they inspire a visceral sense of sympathy.

Emma Smith, for example, is portrayed as a Yorkshire heiress who elopes with the groom, takes up residence in the East End, and after experiencing a series of misfortunes resorts to selling cockles and mussels from a barrow at a weekend market. It is only at the end of her life, when she takes lodgings with Mary Russell, that her story converges with the known historical facts. By contrast, Rose Mylett's life is pure fantasy: she is depicted as a music hall songbird ('The Rose of Tralee') who is abused by the pervert Lord Witton.

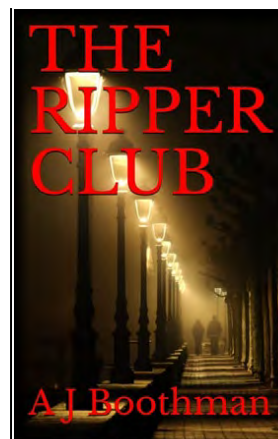
The streets and buildings of Whitechapel form the shared backdrop to this quartet of tales, but there are many other threads connecting the stories. The odious mortuary workers Robert Mann and James Hatfield crop

up many times throughout the book, and the thug Patrick Smith links two of the fictions.

While these women mostly lived and died in Whitechapel before the Jack the Ripper murders, the Ripper's shadow nevertheless encroaches on their narratives, and in the final chapters an attempt is made to draw together the canonical five and the lives of these other women. Denise Bloom has used her experience of working with the victims of domestic violence to create a powerful, absorbing and relevant tale.

THE RIPPER CLUB

A J Boothman
Independently published, 2020
Paperback, 157pp.
£5.99



Chris and Emma are final year students at University College London. Chris is also a hacker and a World of Warcraft geek. The story gets going when Emma meets Patrick Blackburn, an oddball American professor on sabbatical leave, who is an expert on the Jack the Ripper murders. Blackburn's visit to London just happens to coincide with a Ripper-style knife murder in Regent's Park.

Chris breaks into the mainframe computer system of the Metropolitan Police. What he discovers are similarities between the Regent's Park incident and the murder of Polly Nichols over a century earlier. And when he hacks the Facebook page of Penny Holland, the Regent's Park victim, he finds a photograph of Penny with three other girls attired in Victorian fancy dress calling themselves 'the Ripper Club'. What is going on? Chris and Emma begin

to investigate...

Sadly, *The Ripper Club* turns out to be just another dreary Ripper copycat yarn involving webcam girls, Ripper memorabilia, and a string of increasingly implausible murders. The novel lacks thrills and suspense. There is far too much maladroit exposition – information about the Ripper case is dumped into the story with a staggering lack of finesse, and the conceit of hacking into private information is overused. While the tensions of undergraduate life are well delineated at times, the characters and sentiments rarely rise above their student union bar origins.

WHITECHAPEL RETRIBUTION

Rebecca M Senese

RFAR Publishing, 2020

Kindle Edition, 28pp.

£0.99



Canadian writer Rebecca Senese has given us a short story about Dorie, a butcher's daughter, walking the streets of the East End at the height of the Ripper scare. There is no escaping the grime of Whitechapel, but the author finds beauty amid the squalor – a courtyard fog is thin and gauzy as a woman's slip, high-class ladies peel grapes in a room full of lace, a cup of tea

warms the air in Miller's Court. Her fascination lies not so much in murder and death ('I'd seen a glimpse through that window and it would haunt me forever. Red. Just so much red.') but in the small hopes and tiny, valuable moments of truth and kindness that give meaning to life. *Whitechapel Retribution* is a bewitching cameo that marshals a smooth and expert technique to tell a melancholy tale.

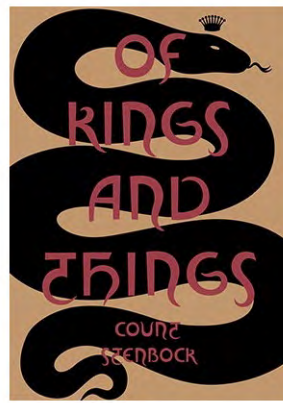


PROPER RED STUFF: Ripper Fiction Before 1900

In this series we take a look at forgotten writers from the 1880s and 1890s who tackled the Jack the Ripper theme in their novels and short stories.

No. 7: Count Eric Stenbock: *A Secret Kept* (1894)

Eric Stenbock wrote a number of short fictions with morbid, macabre and sometimes fantastical or supernatural themes. His allegorical werewolf tale, 'The Other Side' (1893), is perhaps his best work, although



the *conte cruel* 'Viol D'Amor', in which the tone of a violin is greatly improved by restringing it with human gut, has real charm. In 1894 he wrote a short story entitled 'A Secret Kept', which dwells on the 'peculiarly atrocious and absolutely motiveless crimes' of a serial killer known as 'the London horror'.

Stenbock was born in Cheltenham in 1860. His mother was the daughter of a well-to-do German cotton importer and his father was a member of the Swedish aristocracy. Eric was schooled in Germany with the expectation he would become a soldier in the Russian army; instead, he went up to Balliol College in 1877, dropped out after four terms, lived off a vast inheritance, descended into cocaine addiction, and died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1895. Arthur Symons's description of Stenbock's lifestyle as 'bizarre, fantastic, feverish, eccentric, extravagant, morbid and perverse' perfectly catches the measure of the man: apparently, in his final years he draped a snake around his neck like a scarf and was accompanied nearly everywhere he went by a life-sized wooden doll he believed to be his son.

In 1887 Stenbock (now Count Stenbock) settled in Sloane Terrace in Chelsea. The Casebook.org Ripper website has a single newspaper report involving the Count, describing how he testified at Westminster Police Court in September 1888 in defence of cab driver James Henderson (a friend of his from Oxford now greatly reduced in circumstances) who was charged with being drunk on duty. Possibly the Casebook has conflated the cab driver James Henderson with James Henderson the tailor, who three days after the court appearance of his namesake was fined 40 shillings at Dalston Police Court for striking Rose Goldstein several times over the head with his buckthorn walking stick and threatening to 'rip her up'.

'A Secret Kept' offers a more direct association between Stenbock and the Jack the Ripper murders.

Lord Vivian Vandrake breaks off his engagement to Lady Viola Vargas on the eve of their wedding, declaring to her that he is deranged. Next day the newspapers carry details of the latest attack by the 'London horror'. But it will be the final murder because later that evening the perpetrator is arrested. Surprisingly, despite being attired in the clothes of an artisan, the murderer is very much a gentleman; he is docile, of pleasant appearance, with refined manners and affable conversation. Furthermore, he fully admits to the crimes.

Of course, the culprit is Lord Vivian Vandrake. In prison,

awaiting trial, he is examined by five alienists who can find no trace of insanity. Meanwhile, masquerading as Vandrake's sister, Viola bribes the warder to let her spend one final night with Vandrake in his cell. She smuggles in a phial of prussic acid, and the doomed lovers commit suicide. In the morning, their bodies are found lying together in an embrace.



Eric Stenbock

'A Secret Kept' is basically a foray into Gothic romance in which the emotions of the lovers are heightened by

mental instability and the intrigue of terrible crimes committed by a Jack the Ripper figure. Despite its unconvincing storyline the yarn has much to recommend it: Stenbock cleverly uses mock newspaper reports to convey information about the London murders and the police investigation; and as with most of Stenbock's fiction, there is a gloomy sense of morbidity and erotic perversion running through the tale. The suicide pact at the end of the story faintly echoes a real life incident from 1884, when Stenbock spent the night in bed with a vicar from Brentwood, only to wake in the morning to find the Reverend Ogle dead from an opium overdose.

Stenbock was living in London at the time of the Jack the Ripper murders, and 'A Secret Kept' is obviously influenced by events during the Autumn of Terror. It is a mediocre effort, I think, but Stenbock had a unique voice and his take on the 'London horror' has a tangible atmosphere of threat about it that makes for an enjoyably sinister read.



Next issue we review *To Rule the Dead* by Matt Orren and *Bloody London* by R.G. Morgan, plus all the latest Ripper fiction.



DAVID GREEN lives in Hampshire, England, where he works as a freelance book indexer. He is the author of *The Havant Boy Ripper* (Mango Books, 2018), an account of the Percy Searle murder case of 1888. He is currently editing *Trial of Frederick Baker* for the revived Notable British Trials series.



COMING 2028

JACOB THE RIPPER

THE CASE AGAINST JACOB LEVY

NEIL AND TRACY I'ANSON

PRE-ORDER NOW AT
MANGOOKS.CO.UK