

Was the Real Jack the Ripper Caught?

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Speaking about the most haunting mysteries of the criminal world and the most enigmatic serial killers of all times, the question of who was the real Jack the Ripper eclipses all others. There exist countless movies and books dedicated to the subject, thousands of people have been investigating the case for more than a hundred years already, but still, there is no clear answer to who the real Ripper was. Over the course of the century, different people have been coming up with numerous theories that ranged from downright absurd to more or less plausible ones, but the name of the man who butchered at least five women on the streets of London is still shrouded in mystery. Although the real Jack the Ripper was never caught, the forensic detectives still try to reveal the true identity of the man whose hideous crimes left such a prominent mark on the history of criminology.

The story of Jack the Ripper started in the Whitechapel district of the East End of London in 1888 when the body of Mary Ann Nichols was discovered in Buck's Row. Nichols was the first victim from so-called Canonical Five. It is believed that Jack the Ripper killed as many as 11 women, but the police was only sure of five victims, hence the name. At the time, the East End of London was an impoverished area, a maze of slums populated by criminals, immigrants, laborers, and prostitutes, which was perfect for shady activities of all sorts (Rosinsky, 2004). Notably, all of the five women were prostitutes, which meant that the Ripper had no problems taking them to the places where he was most comfortable killing them and then escaping the place without any obstacles.

All of the Canonical Five victims were murdered between August 31, 1888, and November 9, the same year, and, because of that, many people call this period the Autumn of

Terror. All of the victims were subjected to gruesome mutilation, which gave away some characteristics of the murderer. The way the bodies of the victims were mutilated suggests that Jack the Ripper was familiar with human anatomy, and more so, he might have been a surgeon (Rosinsky, 2004). The murderer, as his precision in cutting out the organs of the victims suggests, might have really been a skilled surgeon. That is why there emerged theories about Jack the Ripper being a representative of an upper class and a highly educated individual.

The theory about the murderer being a gone mad nobleman or a highly educated person do not align with the letters he supposedly sent to the chairman of Whitechapel Vigilance Committee George Lusk. Lusk and other investigators have been receiving dozens of letters from Jack the Ripper, but most of these letters are said to be fakes sent by the impostors or pranksters. Nevertheless, there was one particular letter that is believed to be one of, if not the only one that was actually written by the Ripper. The letter was delivered along with the part of a kidney that supposedly belonged to one of the victims who was found dead and severely mutilated earlier. This particular letter titled "*From Hell*" proves that the Ripper was not a well-educated man as the grammar and the handwriting were that of a man who barely knew how to handle a pen. Some investigators, however, suggest that the author of the letter might have made grammar mistakes on purpose to mislead the police (Rosinsky, 2004). Either way, the letter shows that the Ripper wanted people of London to be scared of him, that he wanted to show the police that they are powerless to stop him, and that he desired to leave his footprint in the history of the criminal world.

The crimes of the Ripper terrified Londoners, and although he killed only 5 women, which is not a significant body count compared to other notorious serial killers, Jack the Ripper

remains one of the most infamous murderers of all times. It is fair to say that the story of the Whitechapel murderer is only famous because he was never caught (Adam, 2019). The efforts of the Victorian Era police were not enough to identify the killer, and although the Ripper was not exactly careful, the investigation methods of the time were not so effective as to catch him.

The initial investigation led to nothing but failure and people's dissatisfaction with the actions of the police. The killings stopped as suddenly as they started, and although several women were found killed after the Canonical Five, most people believe that these murders were committed by impostors. The police concluded that Jack the Ripper either died or immigrated from London to never return, which spawned numerous theories about the murderer continuing his bloody rampage across other countries (Jakubowski & Braund, 2005). The theory of Jack the Ripper actually immigrating to the US is rather popular in media, and some people even believe that H. H. Holmes, a notorious murderer called America's first serial killer, was actually the man who killed prostitutes in London back in 1888. Nonetheless, this theory has no proofs apart from the testimony of Holmes' grandson, which might be hoaxed in an attempt to get attention and make some money. Either way, the Ripper vanished and was never caught, which makes him one of the most mysterious serial killers in history.

To this day, forensic detectives and mystery lovers from all around the world try to solve the puzzle of Jack the Ripper, and the new data that can reveal the true identity of the murderer keeps on coming. Just in March of 2019, scientists from the University of Leeds and John Moore University in Liverpool conducted a study of the DNA samples recovered from a shawl that was found near the body of Catherine Eddowes, one of the Canonical Five victims. The scientists extracted the DNA found on the shawl and collected the samples of the DNA from the living

relatives of several suspects (Adam, 2019). The results of the test concluded that the living relatives of a man known as Aaron Kosminski match the sample of the DNA found on that shawl almost perfectly, which means that Kosminski was most likely the man behind the mystery.

Noteworthy, the samples of the DNA on the shawl might have been damaged over time because it has been stored in archives and displayed in museums for more than a century, but it is the most recent find on the case of Jack the Ripper and probably the closest the investigators have ever gotten to solving the case. For that reason, it is necessary to at least briefly discuss Kosminski as a possible Ripper. Aaron Kosminski was a Polish Jew who immigrated to London around 1882 and started working as a barber in Whitechapel district. When the killings started, he was one of the suspects, as the police records of the time show, but it seems that he was never among the central suspects (Adam, 2019). Little is known about Kosminski, but the very fact that he was admitted at Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum in 1891, 3 years after the Autumn of Terror, suggests that his mental condition was unstable, to say the least. The reports from the asylum suggest that he was acting calmly but displayed signs of “self-abuse”, the day’s term for masturbation addiction (Adam, 2019). This does not align with the killer’s precision in cutting the victims, but considering Kosminski’s experience as a barber, he might have been good with shaving and cutting tools.

In conclusion, the Ripper was never caught and the justice over him was never served. Whether Kosminski was the man behind those murders or not, the contemporary police failed to catch the killer. Regardless, people still want to know the truth and the mystery of the Whitechapel Murderer still haunts millions of people around the world. Even the latest finds on that case are not conclusive enough, so that the search continues. Perhaps, in case of such

mysteries, the thing is not in finding the answer but in looking for it. The mystery is what makes the case of Jack the Ripper so special, and while catching the killer would have been great back in 1888, doing it now would end the century of Jack the Ripper's reign over the minds of people around the world.

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