



**Annie Chapman (8/9 1888)**



**Catherine Eddows (30/9 1888)**



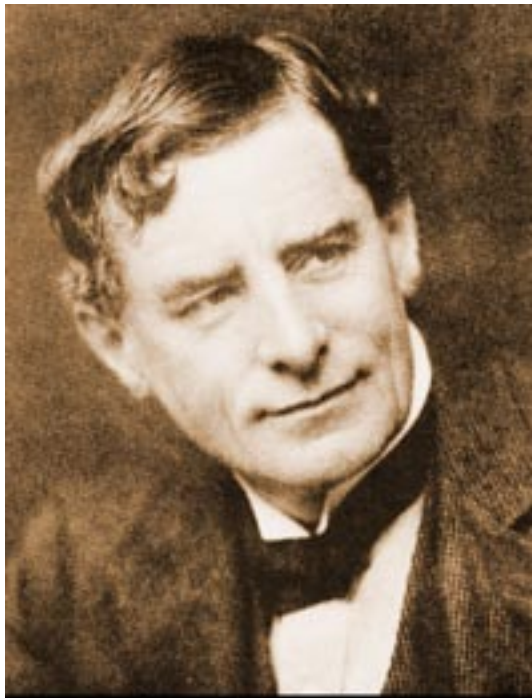
**Elizabeth Stride (30/9 1888)**



**Mary Ann Nichols (31/8 1888)**



**Mary Jane Kelly (9/11 1888)**



**Walter Richard Sickert**



**Walter Richard Sickert**



**Walter Richard Sickert**



**Walter Richard Sickert**





**Mr. Nemo alias Walter Sickert**



**Walter Sickert, 2 år**



**Walter Sickert, 9 år**



**Walter Sickert, selvportræt**



### Eddowes og Putana a Casa

And then there's the DNA. Cornwell's investigators could not find any nuclear DNA on the Ripper letters at Scotland Yard because they had been stored in plastic, which degrades DNA. But from the back of a stamp on one specimen archived elsewhere, they were able to discover a sequence of mitochondrial DNA (which is matrilineal and less likely to be unique) that matches samples taken from Sickert materials. Cornwell ever so responsibly concludes that she has a "cautious indicator" that the Sickert and Ripper mitochondrial DNA sequences may have come from the same person."

Blinded by science but fearful of Cornwell's blinkers, I contacted the New York medical examiner's office. Though reluctant to comment, my source estimated that the available sequence could be found in anywhere from one-tenth to one-thousandth of the population. As with stationery, so with demography: Cornwell's exhaustive study doesn't tell us the population of London at the time. It was actually over 3 million. Assuming the Ripper was a Londoner (Cornwell actually has Sickert the Ripper commuting for some of his slayings from northern France!) and that a third of the population were able-bodied adult males, Sickert was among 33,000 potential writers of the letter.

Cornwell is not content to have Sickert merely be Jack the Ripper. In her reckoning, he committed the Camden Town Murder as well, dispatched several children of either sex in country locales, and carried out a string of murders in the provinces. These occurred in major industrial centers such as Bradford and Manchester. In an amazing Holmesian deduction, Cornwell discovered these towns also boasted—of all things—theaters, at which the young Sickert, a member of Henry Irving's Company, had performed in the previous decade. The suspect would have known how to get to Bradford and where to have fun once he got there. Case closed. (In fact, it turns out that Sickert was out of the country at the time of most of the Ripper murders; click [here](#) to examine his alibi.)

The subject for Cornwell's sequel should now be obvious. Andy Warhol had an unwholesome preoccupation with executions, assassinations, victims. He painted Jackie innumerable times, stalking the subject with serial determination. And no one really knows where he was on the morning of Nov. 22, 1963.

Art critic David Cohen is editor of the online journal [artcritical.com](#) and gallery director at the New York Studio School.

*Artwork, respectively: Self-Portrait, circa 1908, courtesy of Leeds City Art Galleries, London; Le Journal, circa 1906, courtesy of a private collection; Camden Town Murder or What Shall We Do for Rent, circa 1908, courtesy Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund; Camden Town Murder, 1908, courtesy of the Fine Art Society, London.*

Try MSN Internet Software for FREE!

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#) | [Search](#)

[Feedback](#) | [Help](#)

©2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Terms of Use [Advertise](#) [TRUSTe](#) Approved [Privacy Statement](#) [GetNetWise](#) [Anti-Spam Policy](#)



## Slate

Home

News &amp; Politics

Campaign 2004

Arts &amp; Life

Business

Sports

Technology

Travel &amp; Food

State on NPR

Output Options

About Us

Search Slate

 Go

Advanced Search

msn

My MSN.  
Personalized  
just for you.

culturebox Arts, entertainment, and more.

## Pat the Ripper

Best-selling Yank author attacks famous British painter!

By David Cohen

Posted Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2002, at 3:08 PM PT

Click on the photographs to see enlarged views and more detailed captions.

To understand Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), imagine a cross between Degas, Hopper, and Andy Warhol, and then for color and tone, add the English weather. He was a painter of fabulously murky realist scenes, smoke-filled music halls, and weirdly remote portraits worked up from press clippings. His big themes were whoredom and boredom. He was a prolific writer and opinionizer and man about town, a leading light in the art scene, with a flock of disciples, admirers, and mistresses.



A Sickert self-portrait

Let's start again: If you want to understand Walter Richard Sickert, get yourself to a butcher's shop, acquire a 32-ounce sirloin steak and some offal (make sure they have kidneys), dress your purchases in an old shirt, and attack this assemblage on the kitchen table with a selection of sharp Sabatier knives, giving off appropriate exclamations of psychopathic frenzy. This is exactly what crime writer Patricia Cornwell did in a BBC documentary that aired in England last Wednesday.

Cornwell, the flamboyant bad girl of detective fiction and creator of morgue sleuth Kay Scarpetta, has been publicly proclaiming that Sickert led a double life as the world's most notorious uncaptured serial killer. Indeed, she "staked her reputation" on her thesis, even before her investigation was complete. *Portrait of A Killer: Jack the Ripper, Case Closed* will be published in the United States next week. (Click [here](#) to read the first chapter.)

The atrocious Whitechapel murders of the 1880s, which claimed the lives of at least five prostitutes, never resulted in an arrest. But in the courtrooms of conspiracy theory, amateur criminology, detective fiction, opera, film, musicals, folklore, and Ripper walking tours, there have been countless convictions. Sickert has been indicted before for the Ripper crimes (on the evidence of an exposed bogus son) as an accomplice to a band of rogue Freemasons bent on protecting the royal family from a bastard scandal by murdering prostitute witnesses. But with vitriolic fervor, Patricia Cornwell casts him anew as a lone psychopath, a woman-hater motivated by the trauma of childhood operations on a penile fistula who arrogantly left deliberate clues in letters and paintings, clues that festered for 114 years until her own detective genius uncovered them.

Like other Ripperologists, Patricia Cornwell disdains the genre she has joined. From the first drop of blood in the East End gutter, the murders have compelled ghoulish public fascination, but Cornwell's book, a nearly 400-page study with a 13-page bibliography (but no footnotes or appendices) is unencumbered by reference to the shelves of previous speculative literature. "I have avoided the recycled inaccuracies that have metastasized from one book to another," Cornwell grandly claims—and she has done no such thing. True, she discards the royalist/Masonic explanation favored in movies such as *From Hell*. But her *idée fixe* about Sickert derives from facts and fantasies abundant in the Ripper literature. Sickert's name appears in the annals of Ripperdom only because of wacky theorizing by predecessors Cornwell brushes aside.

In a way, the painter walked himself right into the dock. A theatrical personality, trained for the stage, a great raconteur in the tradition of Wilde and of his master, Whistler, Sickert loved to enthrall his countless friends, disciples, and young admirers, many of whom were female (which doesn't strike Cornwell as an unusual attribute for a serial killer of women). The Victorians, for all their prudery, had ghoulish tastes—hence the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's—and Sickert, who aged into a Victorian eccentric, was no exception. In his 70s, he took the young sister-in-law of his third and final marriage to see the house of [Dr. Crippen](#). The artist's early biographers recount Sickert's favorite Ripper yarns, such as the time a party of young girls ran away from him in a nighttime street, calling out "Jack the Ripper! Jack the Ripper!" A landlady told him that the murderer was the previous lodger in his very room: a consumptive who burnt his clothes in the morning after nocturnal rambles.

## Also in Slate

## News &amp; Politics



## The Vanishing

Three years ago, the United States was preparing to inaugurate a president who had lost the... [More](#)

## Arts &amp; Life



## Women in Love

I am not a lesbian, but while watching the first episode of *The L Word* (Showtime, Sundays, ... [More](#)

## News &amp; Politics



## Liberal Hawks Reconsider the Iraq War

Thanks to all seven of you all for contributing to what has been, at last for me, an illum... [More](#)

## TOP HEADLINES



- [U.S. death toll in Iraq reaches 500](#)
- [Democrats cool harsh rhetoric in Iowa](#)
- [Dead heat in closing days of Iowa race](#)
- [Bush appoints Pickering to appeals court](#)



Damning evidence?

Like bad detective fiction, the key to reading Ripperology is to work everything backward. Stephen Knight, the first of the royalist/Masonic theorists, asserted that Sickert's tale of the landlady inspired the best-selling 1911 novel *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes. Logic would dictate that it was the other way around, with an old painter titillating gullible young acolytes with a personalized tale lifted from pop culture. *The Lodger* was filmed in 1926 by Hitchcock, with Ivor Novello in the lead, carrying his notorious Gladstone bag. Sickert's Ripper anecdotes were all recorded in the

1940s.

Conspiracy theorists and literary sleuths never seem to get cultural history. The lore of Jack the Ripper set in before the last of the murders took place, and fascination only accumulated as the undetected Jack became the archetypal psycho. And yet Cornwell, who spent \$6 million (deductible) on her investigation and enlisted an army of forensic experts, art consultants, and conservationists, presents as prime evidence of the painter's guilt the fact that Sickert titillated a young mistress by donning a red Ripper scarf at his easel.

Sickert was a *flaneur* straight out of Baudelaire and was supremely self-conscious about it. He was a "painter of modern life" who roved the seedier quarters of the metropolis in search of subject matter, taking studios in dingy districts, usually several at a time. A people-watcher and an addict of music halls, he also had what Flaubert called the "undertaste," a lurid voyeuristic fascination for the oldest profession. This, of course, he shared with legion modern artists, from Degas and Lautrec to Picasso and beyond. The notorious Camden Town Murder of 1907 provided the occasion for a particularly lurid series of nudes in the artist's trademark grimy interiors. To an artist fascinated by modern city life, convinced that art's proper subject was "gross material facts," the phenomenon of sexual murder inevitably drew his attention. Typically for Sickert, however, these works are rich in ambiguity. What could be a man contemplating the nude body of a woman he has or is about to dispatch could equally be read as a laborer about to set off in the morning while his missus enjoys a lie-in. The same composition is alternately titled, between paintings and etchings, *Camden Town Murders* and *What Shall We Do for Rent?*



Murderously ambiguous?

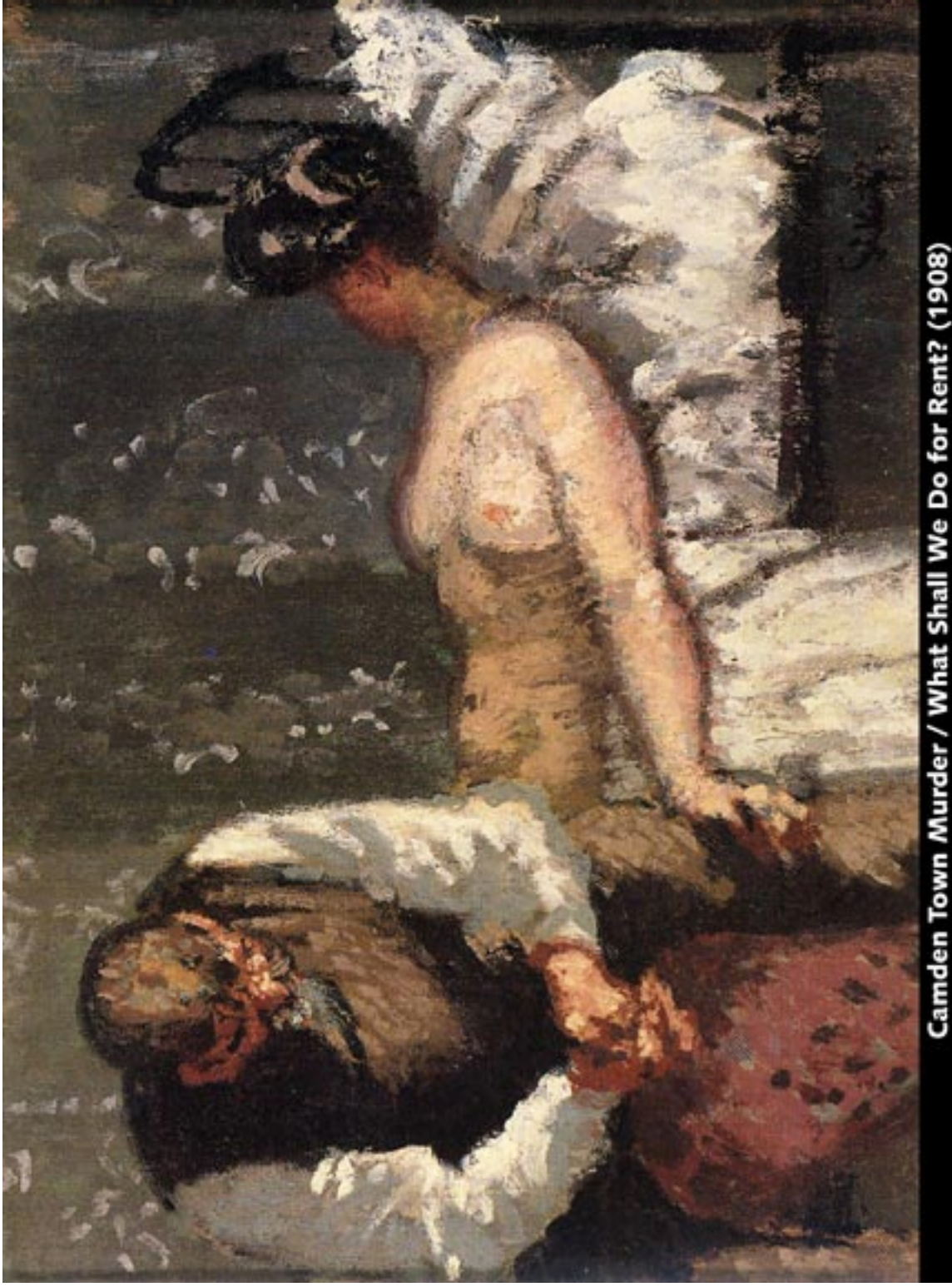
As a graduate of crime reporting and years in the city morgue, and chairman of the Board of the Virginia Institute of Forensic Science and Medicine, Patricia Cornwell set out to prove her case with technology and thoroughness unknown to the befuddled Scotland Yard of the 1880s. The problem is that in her scramble to get down to forensic business, Cornwell gets befuddled herself by first principles. The police were flooded by letters from would-be Rippers, most of which were filed away as crank mail. Cornwell has decided, however, that they are virtually all authentic and that they come from the hand of Sickert himself.

Cornwell subjects these texts to thoroughgoing analysis and in a stroke of deconstructive brilliance, hits upon a tell-tale clue. "Ha ha," she claims, is a distinctly Yankee exclamation of laughter. Sickert, who had an Oedipal anxiety about his American master, Whistler, was unconsciously emulating Whistler's cackle in his Ripper letters. Typically,

Cornwell presents no evidence to back up this bold linguistic claim. In fact, the Oxford English Dictionary cites "Ha Ha" as an exclamation of laughter dating back to Old English. Webster's quotes the eminent Victorian Thomas Carlye with a reference to "Ha-has, and inarticulate hootings of satirical rebuke." Cornwell is barking up the wrong tree.

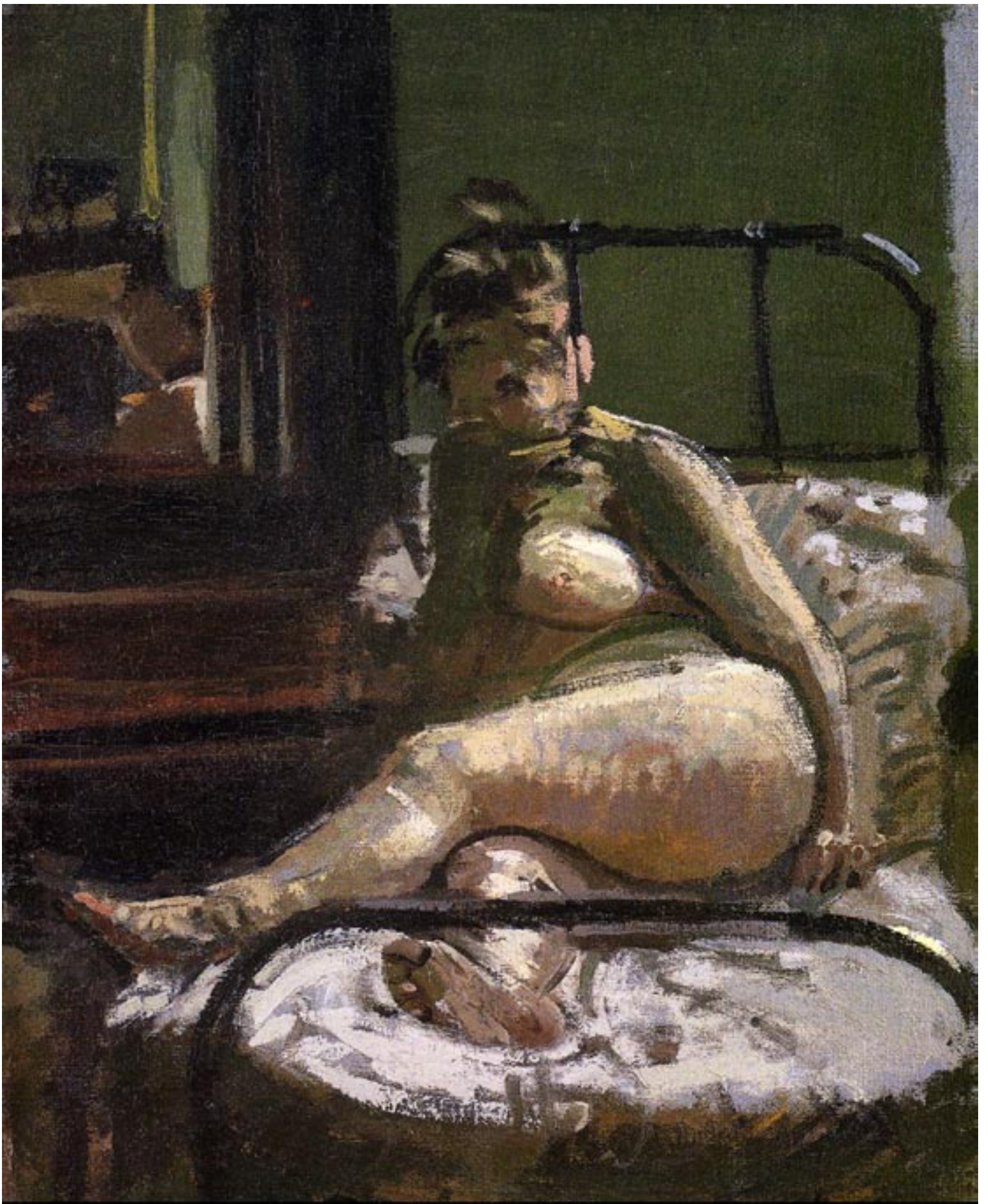
Two of the hundred or so Ripper letters are on stationery with the watermark of a Scottish mill, A Pirie & Sons, the very stationery used by Sickert and his wife, Ellen Cobden. A smoking gun? Again, hard data is drip-fed to the reader. We are told about "two cold, rainy days" sifting through archives "to ascertain migraine-producing details about lime waster, rag boiling, paper machines, how many tons of soda were ordered," etc. This is typical Cornwell padding when what the reader simply wants to know is what market share Pirie & Sons enjoyed. I put in a call to London's St. Bride Printing Library on Fleet Street and spoke to the curator, Nigel Roche. There were probably around 90 mills in the whole British Isles providing stationery; Pirie, established in 1770 and active to this day, was one of the biggest. The coincidence fast recedes into an inconsequence. The smoking gun turns out to be a Kleenex.





Camden Town Murder / What Shall We Do for Rent? (1908)





La Hollandaise (1905)





**Putana a Casa (1904)**





Walter Sickert, selvportræt

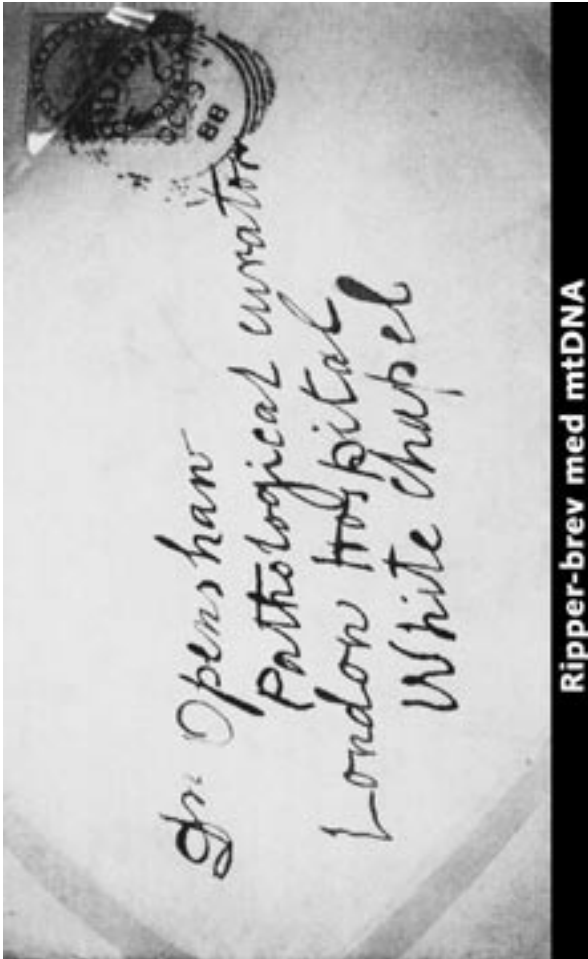




Fingeraftryk på Ripper-brev fra 1896



Tegning i Ripper-brev



Ripper-brev med mtDNA



Ripper-brev med reference til skæreinstrument

I shall need content  
do what you will  
you will never have

fact the Ripper

Watch P.C. Co. C. light  
moustache shaver shaver rather

Shaver - he can tell you  
almost as much as I can

- F.F.P.

F.P. Co. R. St. w

Ripper-brev underskrevet R. St. W.

Reasons for Supposing Jack  
the Ripper a tailor from his letters.  
first (Ripper) is a tailor word  
(Bubble) a tailor word.

they went (via) five buttons

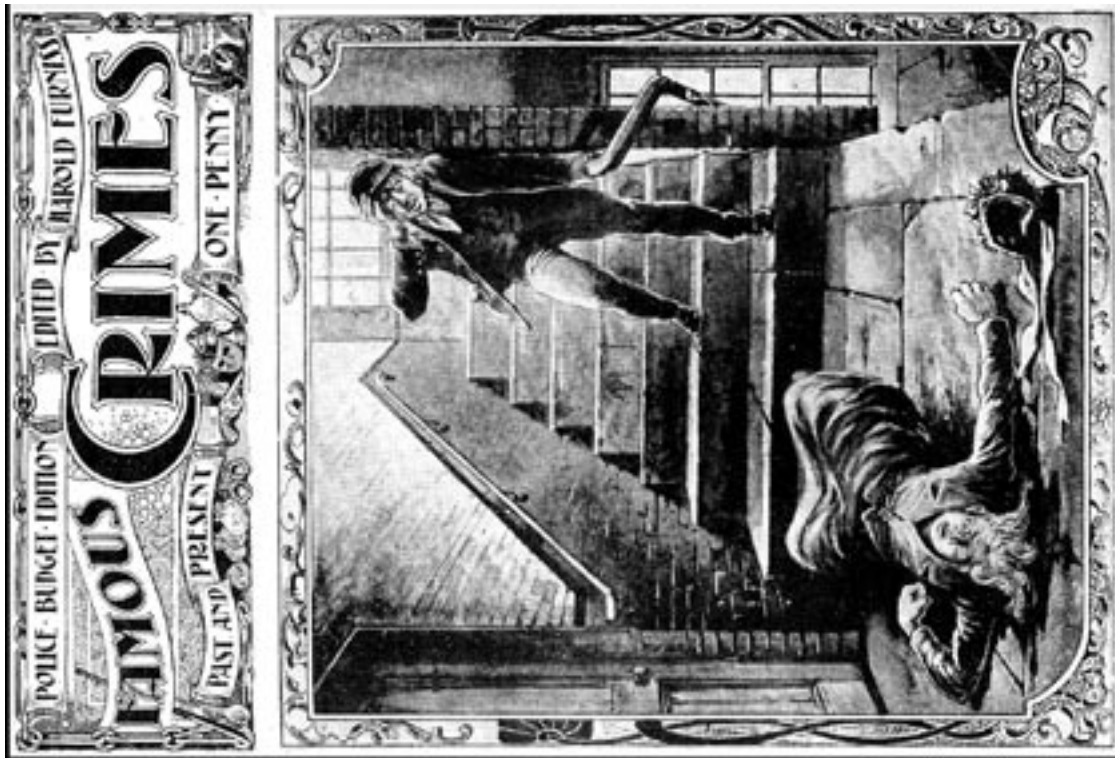
(Ripper red stuff) = army cloth  
(real fits) Tailor words - good fits  
Men generally use expressions  
borrowed from their trade

of this study  
Mathematics

Ripper-brev underskrevet "Mathematicus"







# POLICE NOTICE.

## TO THE OCCUPIER.

On the mornings of Friday, 31st August, Saturday 8th, and Sunday, 30th September, 1888, Women were murdered in or near Whitechapel, supposed by some one residing in the immediate neighbourhood. Should you know of any person to whom suspicion is attached, you are earnestly requested to communicate at once with the nearest Police Station.

Metropolitan Police Office,  
30th September, 1888.

Printed by N. & C. L. & Co., Limited, "The Arsenary," Southwark.



Camden Town Murder



Venetian Studies







Tegning af Eddows fra gerningsstedet



Catherine Eddows



Catherine Eddows

## Krimiforfatter løser mordgåde

Af Jan Hedegaard

Bogen er en sensation. Vor tids største kriminalforfatterinde, Patricia D. Cornwell, opklarer alle tiders største mordmysterium: Jack the Rippers identitet. Cornwell, der selv har en fortid som retsmediciner, fik sagen udpeget af en engelsk vicekriminalkommissær, og hun har effektivt brugt sin adgang til moderne retsvidenskab og sin egen formue på opklaringen. Resultatet er en mesterlig kombination af klinisk retsmedicin og victoriansk gys.

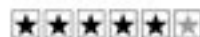
Morderens identitet afsløres allerede på omslaget, og det der driver læseren, er de lag af indier, der fremlægges. Jack the Ripper tilskrives syv mord på prostituerede i Londons Whitechapel-kvarter i efteråret 1888, men Cornwell peger på yderligere otte eller flere mord, der sandsynligvis også er begået af Jack the Ripper.

Morderen var en af tidens berømte malere, Walter Sickert, der bla. var af dansk afstamning, og hans tilståelse falder indirekte i de billeder, han lavede. Desuden påviser Cornwell både sammenfald af

den på to af de breve Jack the Ripper sendte til politi og presse, samt at Sickert og Ripper brugte samme typer brevpapir. Hun tegner en frysende psykologisk profil af Sickert som morder. Motivet var seksuelt, Sickert var påviselig psykopat, og fra barndommen udstyret med en vansiret penis, der betød, han ikke kunne få rejnsj. Sickert havde kun seksuel magt, når han kunne dominere og forårsage død.

Ofrene fandt Sickert i den slamkiste af menneskelig fornedrelse, som Londons East End var på den tid. Her var

ofrene nemme, og kun fordi Jack the Ripper skrev hånlige breve til politi og presse, blev mordene kendt og husket – og netop brevene er samtidig årsag til, at han kan afsløres. På et af dem satte Ripper tilmed et fint fingeraftryk, og Cornwell leder stadig på Sickerts utallige malerier efter samme fingers aftryk. Hun siger at det er der et sted.



**Patricia Cornwell:** *Portræt af en morder. På dansk ved Jesper Sandvad. 380 sider. 299 kr. Forlag: Forum*



## Beskrivelse af liget og gerningsstedet

Den afdøde ligger midt i sengen med begge skuldre på madrassen, med kroppen hældende svagt mod venstre. Hovedet er drejet mod venstre og hviler på venstre kind. Venstre arm er placeret tæt ind mod kroppen, og underarmen bøjet mod højre, liggende hen over abdomen (underliv). Højre arm er abduceret (føre bort) en anelse fra kroppen hvilende på madrassen, albuen bøjet og hånden knyttet. Benene er vidt spredte, det venstre lår i ret vinkel fra kroppen og det højre i en stump vinkel fra nedre abdomen.

Overfladen af abdomen og lårene er fjernet og bughulen tømt for indre organer. Brysterne er skåret af, armene skamferet af flere stiksår, og ansigtet lemlæstet til ukendelighed. Væv omkring halsen er fjernet til benet.

Indvolde og de afskårne legemsdele er spredt på gerningsstedet: livmoderen, nyrerne og det ene bryst ligger under hovedet, det andet bryst ved den højre fod, leveren mellem fødderne, tarmene på højre side af kroppen og milten på venstre side. Huden fra abdomen og lårene ligger på bordet ved siden af sengen.

Sengetøjet i højre hjørne er gennemblødt af blod, og på gulvet under sengen er en blodpøl på omkring to fod i diameter. Væggen til højre er mærket med flere selvstændige stænk af blod.



## Obduktion

Ansigtet er flænget fra alle retninger. Næsen, kinderne, øjenbrynene og ørene er delvist fjernet. Læberne er blålige og skåret i stykker flere steder og sårene fortsætter i skæve vinkler over kinderne.

Halsen er skåret igennem til rygghvirvlen, og den femte og sjette hvirvel er tydeligt forskubbet. Huden omkring såret viser tydelige spor af blodudtrædninger.

Luftrøret er skåret over ved den nedre del af strubehovedet gennem ringbrusken. Begge bryster og musklerne ved ribbenene er fjernet ved mere eller mindre cirkelformede snit. Bindevævet mellem fjerde, femte og sjette ribben er perforeret og brystkassens indhold er synligt gennem åbningen.

Hud og væv fra abdomen og lår er fjernet i store stykker: Det højre lår er afklædt til benet, huden omkring vagina, de ydre skamlæber samt en del af højre balde mangler. Hud og muskler fra venstre ben er fjernet ned til knæet.

Et dybt snit gennem hud, væv og muskler løber langs læggen fra knæet til omkring fem tommer over anklen.

Begge arme og underarme er skadet af voldsomme snit og stik.

Den højre tommelfinger har et mindre, overfladisk snit på omtrent en tomme med blodudtrædning omkring huden. Der er flere hudafskrabninger på håndryggen med samme karakteristika.

Åbning af brystkassen afslører, at højre lunge er næsten skåret fri. Den nedre del af lungen mangler. Venstre lunge er intakt.

Pericardium (hjertesækken) er åben og hjertet mangler.

I bughulen er der rester af delvist fordøjet fisk, kartofler og lignende mad, hvilket svarer til indholdet af mavesækken.

From hell

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆