



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

What Tumblety said of himself

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?



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Case Issues

Introduction

We often assume that a suspected person must have been bad one way or the other.

And begin to pile up facts, assumptions, perceptions turning them into arguments, hypotheses and theories allowing us to come to a quick and familiar conclusion known in the JTR world as 'case closed, next case'



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Case

Issues

Introduction

We are the product of our environment covering all its dimensions, family, society, culture, etc., the resulting mindset becomes our basic framework, even if we try to keep an open mind.

This individual template becomes the basic tool hidden behind the way we interact with the world.



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Introduction

Don't ask:

- Am I biased?
- Is this source biased?

But do ask:

- What personal bias am I introducing?
- What is this source's bias?

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How should we interpret sources?



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The first step : conventional meaning.

What one reads means what it says, nothing more than what a common understanding of a group of words, a sentence, for example, at a specific time, in a specific culture may mean.

Knowing the literal meaning of each word at the time they were written is required.

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The second step : contextual meaning

The context of what is read or, to be more precise, the remaining portion of the text where the words were taken from.

The circumstances which may cause a text to be written in a certain way at a certain time are also part of the notion of contextual meaning.



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The third step : The author

What we know of the author of the text

In the case of a quote within a text, what we know about who is quoted.

One of the challenges then becomes interpreting what he said or wrote and what he actually meant.



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety and the Whitechapel murders

New York World news cable dispatch dated
November 17 1888

- The main topic of the article was the arrest of Sir George Arthur who was wandering in Whitechapel wearing a slouch hat, the kind often described in the Whitechapel inquiries.



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety and the Whitechapel murders

New York World news cable dispatch dated
November 17 1888

- Absence of any form of editing or transformation
made to the original source

Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety and the Whitechapel murders

New York World news cable dispatch dated
November 17 1888

Coincidence?: Article landed where Tumblety was better known: San Francisco, New York, Boston and Ottawa bringing back the name of the 'bad guy' many didn't really appreciate.



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety and the Whitechapel murders

Second article dispatched by the New York World Cable Service on November 17 published the following day by the New York World.

More precise description of Sir George. Arthur's arrest and most likely also Tumblety's occurred a week before the dispatch was released, a time reference not provided by the San Francisco Chronicle.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety and the Whitechapel murders

What could have been the author's intention?

What was the reliable foundation of the suspicion against Tumblety?

More research should provide better reasons to grant it a high reliability.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

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- Tumblety and the Whitechapel murders

Courts would have only accepted the use of such an article as a proof of Tumblety being known, nothing more and refused any inference resulting from it.

Headline seemed to have escaped ripperologists: *Gossip of London*, meaning news not confirmed to be true and in doing so determines its low reliability.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

Very thin line between quacks, physicians and surgeons,
Quacks did not have a license or a medical school diploma.

Quacks would do alone and without a license what physicians would do with the help of apothecaries.



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

During the second half of the 19th century, the majority of immigrants came from the continental Europe.

Absence of physicians.

Traditional methods for curing diseases were mostly composed of plants.

Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

Tumblety simply reached out toward them as many other quacks did.

Directly or through mail orders.

Which resulted in him making a fortune.



Francis Tumblety Case Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

James Portman Case

- New Brunswick carpenter who had kidney and bladder problems and occurred in September 1860.
- That Francis Tumblety on the 25th day of September did feloniously kill and slay one James Portmore.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

James Portman Case

Although no evidence proving leeches were used by Humphrey, bloodletting, either with medicinal leeches or lancets, was such a common medical procedure used until World War I in a rather wide variety of cases, it could deem to have been true. So, seemingly, leeches won over herbs! Such was the usual fight between the two professions.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

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- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

Many barbers as well as butchers were called upon during the 19th century wars to perform amputations and cauterizations.

Civil war: Beginning: Union Army : 98 medical officers,
Confederacy: 24. 1865: Union Army : 13,000.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

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- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

Only 85 medical schools in the USA⁽⁶⁾ at the beginning of the civil war including 19 from the Confederate States who couldn't deliver more than 700 or 800 physicians per year?

Medical cadets were hired under the August 3, 1861 act, entitled 'An act for the better organization of the military establishment'.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- The Indian Herb Doctor and Prince of quacks

Should we still consider Tumblety as a fraud because he claimed to be a physician?

Should Tumblety's quackery be used as one of the many arguments making him a bad guy an evil person and potentially a murderer?

The historical context suggests the contrary.



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives

A good and diversified set of knives presented to a regiment commander could easily turn a quack or a barber into a surgeon or assistant surgeon.

Surgeons hired by the army either had to provide their own instruments (complete sets of amputation, trephining and pocket instruments) or the cost of the set provided by the army would have been deducted from their pay.

Francis Tumblety Case Issues



What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives



Francis Tumblety Case Issues



What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives





Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives

It wouldn't be unrealistic, although no evidence proves it, to have Tumblety well prepare the meeting he mentioned he had with General McClellan, his officers and staff by owning his personal set of medical instruments, even if he didn't know how to use them.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives

In 1905, Richard Norris testified in Tumblety's will probate that he owned many knives, seemingly a claim none else came up with.

Were they surgical knives, dissection instruments, physician instruments, which were extremely limited or the kind of knives Tumblety could have theoretically owned before?



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives

It would tend to explain the possibility of Tumblety having a set at the time he met McClellan.

No evidence of any sort, no primary source demonstrating that Tumblety had a set of knives while he was in London.



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's knives

Any inference made as a consequence of any anterior possession of knives by Tumblety suggesting he had the means to commit the Whichapel murder is uncorroborated speculation.

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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's anatomical knowledge

No clear consensus on what anatomical knowledge consisted of back then.

Did Jack the Ripper have sufficient anatomical knowledge allowing him to extract a kidney or a uterus in just a few minutes?



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Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's anatomical knowledge

Dr. George Bagster Phillips and Dr. Thomas Bond had two opposite opinions, Bond stating that death was caused "*...by a person who had no scientific nor anatomical knowledge.*"



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's anatomical knowledge

Medical schools acceptance requirements:

Competence in English, literature, math, Latin, Greek, physics, logic, and a foreign language, the reason being the elimination of uncultured men. A

Acceptance exams by the Civil war Federal Navy: *describe the muscles, arteries and nerves of the hand.*

Physical or, to be more precise, external signs would determine the appropriate treatment.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's anatomical knowledge

Dr J. H. Ziegler, a witness in his probate case, clearly established he had more than a minimal knowledge of the diagnosis methods used back then.



Francis Tumblety

Case Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's anatomical knowledge

Beyond the debate on whether Tumblety was right or not in his understanding of the state of the medical profession, two points remain to be stressed upon:

- The undefined concept of anatomical knowledge he could have possessed, which is an invalidated hypothesis.
- Ziegler's unquestioned testimonial evidence related to extent of his surgical skills.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

Chief Inspector John Littlechild he stated in his letter to Geroge Sims

- Tumblety was a '*Sycopathia Sexualis*' subject, meaning a homosexual.
- Jack the Ripper was a sadist, *although a 'Sycopathia Sexualis'* Tumblety wasn't a sadist.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

Affirming whatever kind of personality disorder the Ripper was suffering from is more than speculation. It's an unsupported affirmation that only considers certain distant symptoms, many of them overlapping specific behavior deficiencies.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

Sociopathy and psychopathy:

- Are not official psycho-pathological diagnoses.
- Are no longer part of the American Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV and 5).
Are patterns of antisocial behaviour and attitudes and do not necessarily result in someone becoming a serial killer.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

Narcissistic personality disorder

- Made of a constellation of maladaptive personality traits which does not allow for a definite diagnosis based only on the observation of certain attitudes or behaviours.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

Narcissistic personality disorder

- Self-reports using such tools as Hare's Psychopathy checklist are even less reliable.
- Willem H. J. Martens explained his conclusion in his article '*The problem with Robert Hare's psychopathy checklist: incorrect conclusions, high risk of misuse, and lack of reliability*'.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

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- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

To make a diagnosis of PD, a thorough and detailed symptomatological evaluation is necessary. The complete life history of the individuals examined is investigated in order to determine whether or not the lifetime pattern of behavior is abnormal. Self-administered instruments have proven inefficient in identifying these disorders... No reliable instrument has yet been created for the diagnosis of PD (Personality Disorder).



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Narcissistic personality disorder, psychopath or sociopath?

Given the nature of the wounds on the victims such as violent stabbing, slashing, picquerism and mutilation with a knife and putting aside any suspect, it can only be suggested that Jack the Ripper's signature was that of a lust and/or sadistic murderer.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens

Charles A. Dunham who claimed he owned the matrices of every class of women during the Civil War period.

No corroboration at all.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens

On Sunday November 25, 1888, the Sun reported that An American doctor named Twombly is now held because he is an erratic character, and because one theory is that some American medical institution wants specimens of the female uterus.

No evidence supporting this hypothesis was provided by The Sun.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens

On December 4, 1888, the New York Tribune wrote in an article that Tumblety 'has been charged with a fondness for collecting anatomical specimens, and this has made his connection with the Whitechapel atrocities appear probable'.

No such crime existed either in the UK or North America nor is there any evidence that Scotland Yard made such a connection.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens

This interpretation as well as newspaper articles totally ignore the existence of 'curiosity collections', which were very popular since the 17th century.

Michael Hawley gave a rather good explanation of the reasons why Tumblety would have had a collection of body parts. They would simply contribute to his credibility as a physician during the Civil war as would have had any set of medical instruments he could have owned.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens

Debating the existence of such a collection or the credibility of Dunham's statement, although quite interesting, seems to be irrelevant if we consider that any curiosity collection Tumblety could have owned wouldn't have been something unusual, quite to the contrary.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens

Using such evidence as a proof of any other form of personality disorder including anger-retaliation is another thing.

We are facing circumstantial evidence regarding his collection, the nature of which prevents us from formulating a reliable hypothesis defining Tumblety as a murderer.

Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

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Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

Some seven years ago, Wolf Vanderlinden made us understand that the term 'woman hater' means a homosexual.

It does not mean that Tumblety, or anyone else described with this expression, actually or literally, hated women to such a point they wanted to kill them.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

Tumblety said in one of his letters to his companion, Henry Hall Caine, in 1874 referring to Chinese women: *In morals and obscenity they are far below those of our most degraded prostitutes. Their women are bought and sold, for the usual purposes and they are used to decoy youths of the most tender age, into these dens, for the purpose of exhibiting their nude and disgusting person to the hitherto innocent youths of the cities.*



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

The industrial revolution was at its peak during the late Victorian era.

Widespread misogyny.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

Corroborating the testimony given by a person who knew Tumblety or heard of him being such a misogynist with other similar testimonies might provide some form of validation.

Examining it in its actual historical context suggests a rather frequent occurrence of the problem.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

Considering it to be one of a serial killer's motives would seemingly mean there would have been many other serial killers or at least multiple deaths of women caused by this problem back then which was not the case.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

'No, Colonel, I don't know any such cattle, and if I did I would, as your friend, sooner give you a dose of quick poison than take you into such danger.' He then broke into a homily on the sin and folly of dissipation, fiercely denounced all women and especially fallen women.

Non corroborated



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

The veteran clerk of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, William H Carr, who knew Tumblety for thirty years: "I heard several stories about that and the general impression among those who knew about his habits was that he avoided women. I never heard of his offering them any violence, and, indeed, he was the very last man I would think likely to be guilty of such crimes as those in Whitechapel."



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

James Pryor, the detective of the Fifth Avenue Hotel who had known him for twenty years: "I certainly do not. If I were to search New York for a man less likely to be guilty than the 'doctor' I wouldn't find him. Why, he hasn't the nerve of a chicken. He just had enough nerve to put some molasses and water together and label it a medicine - the biggest nerve being in the label - and sell it.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

...He said the trouble with young men are those cigarettes, and those confounded Street Walkers. He said, if he had his way they would all be disemboweled.

The purpose of Norris' testimony was figuring out if Tumblety was sane or not. However, for any other purposes, it should command a minimal caution.



Francis Tumblety Case Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety the women hater

We need to understand that there is no evidence whatsoever to this day showing Tumblety as having been a physically aggressive woman-hater.

An easily dismissible hearsay by courts is what we have been presented.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety Littlechild's suspect

I never heard of a Dr D. in connection with the Whitechapel murders but amongst the suspects, and to my mind a very likely one, was a Dr. T. (which sounds much like D.) He was an American quack named Tumblety and was at one time a frequent visitor to London and on these occasions constantly brought under the notice of police, there being a large dossier concerning him at Scotland Yard. Although a 'Sycopathia Sexualis' subject he was not known as a 'Sadist' (which the murderer unquestionably was) but his feelings toward women were remarkable and bitter in the extreme, a fact on record.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety Littlechild's suspect

Either you are telling us something obviously contradictory or you are dismissing him as being Jack the Ripper. How could Tumblety be at the same time a very likely suspect but not the murderer, him not being the unquestionable sadist you say the murderer was? Which one of the two I just gave you should we consider? I myself am about to ask the court to dismiss this confusing part of your testimony.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety Littlechild's suspect

When did Littlechild come to such a conclusion?

When asked by Simms or when he was at Scotland Yard?

Was it based on his personal exam of Tumblety's Scotland Yard record or was he expressing his general understanding the JTR case?

Could simply have derived it from being aware of Tumblety's mention of his own arrest in 1889?



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety Littlechild's suspect

We must be careful when it comes to interpreting something other than a strict description or a series of facts contained in a primary source. Facts rely upon a different mindset than the one we would use for the interpretation of an opinion given at the time of an event in that same primary source. Although both being first-hand information, this kind of data should be considered differently, which is something rarely done with JTR suspects, facts and opinions often being given the same weight in primary sources.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety, a man too old to be a serial killer
- Tumblety, the man too tall for not having been noticed and caught
- Homosexual serial killers only kill males

The FBI's Behavioral Analysis Units consider that serial killers are not limited to any specific demographic group, such as their sex, age, race, or religion.



Francis Tumblety

Case Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety, Scotland Yard's choice?

None of the well known police officials ever agreed on any particular suspect. Frederick George Abberline preferred George Chapman, Melville Leslie Macnaghten, M J Druit and Donald Sutherland Swanson, Kosminski.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety, Scotland Yard's choice?

Anderson never mentioned Tumblety being a Whitechapel murder suspect having stated that the Ripper was a Polish Jew caged in an asylum. Anderson's words related to Tumblety were a response to P. Crowley, San Francisco's Chief of police who had offered him samples of Tumblety's handwriting.

Brooklyn Police Superintendent Cambell also received a similar invitation from Anderson to provide him with some information as to his life in Brooklyn without referring to the Whitechapel case.



Francis Tumblety

Case Issues

What was said of Tumblety

- Tumblety, Scotland Yard's choice?

Inspector First Class Criminal Investigation Division, Walter Andrews, made this statement to one of The Toronto World's journalist on Dec 12, 1888: "Do I know Dr. Tumblety, of course I do. But he is not the Whitechapel murderer. All the same we would like to interview him, for the last time we had him he jumped his bail. He is a bad lot."

The Yard most likely wanted to better prepare their evidence.



Francis Tumblety

Case Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Means, motives and opportunity

The basic problem with charging someone of having committed a crime based on a positive answer to each of these well known elements of a crime is that from the moment more than one person has similar means, motives or opportunities, a serious reasonable doubt is introduced.



Francis Tumblety

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Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Means, motives and opportunity

Why would Tumblety gather organs instead of what he had used all his life: plants?

Why would he opt for body parts from diseased, possibly contaminated older prostitutes instead of prepubescent virgin females?



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Circumstantial evidence

Contrary to what we frequently observe with Ripper suspects, a cluster of circumstantial evidence does not lead to a guilty verdict. Each one has to satisfy these three criteria: relevance, exclusivity and independence.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Circumstantial evidence

Relevant basically means that the evidence contributes to explain the motives, the means and the opportunity a suspect might have had.

The problem we often face is that Ripperology historians, as most historians do, rely upon a test we could define as the reasonable relevancy test while criminologists rely upon a test of relevancy that goes beyond a reasonable doubt.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Circumstantial evidence

Exclusivity means that the evidence presented applies only on the concerned suspect's case.

With most Ripper suspects, including Tumblety, this criteria is ignored.



Francis Tumblety

Case Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Circumstantial evidence

Independence means whether a source repeats or not information from another source or is inferred from an original source.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Hearsay

The general rule of English law is that hearsay evidence is not receivable. However, common-law courts have accepted a few exceptions to the rule such as reported testimony, statements against interest, statements of pedigree, written statements.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Character evidence

Common-law courts have considered this kind of evidence to be the most complicated areas of evidence and have set a sort of hierarchy of modes of proof, evidence of reputation to evidence of opinion, opinion evidence to evidence of specific conduct or habit.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

- Character evidence

The *Michelson v. U.S. Supreme Court* (late-Victorian British courts relied upon the same principle): When the defendant elects to initiate a character inquiry, another anomalous rule comes into play. Not only is he permitted to call witnesses to testify from hearsay, but indeed such a witness is not allowed to base his testimony on anything but hearsay. What commonly is called "character evidence" is only such when "character" is employed as a synonym for "reputation."



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

Tumblety has demonstrated specific instances of unappreciated conduct and caused some people to emit negative opinions about him at certain moments of his life. However, the current data available doesn't indicate it was an ongoing pattern nor continuous observations as the definition of reputation requires.



Francis Tumblety

Case

Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

Ripperology is a world of speculation, although some may consider it to be a playground, and Francis Tumblety offers more than sufficient terrain to accommodate reasonable hypotheses. Would a court convict him of the Whitechapel murders? To this day, the 'beyond a reasonable doubt' test does not seem to have been satisfied with most of the points mentioned above.



Francis Tumblety

Case Issues

What can we conclude about Francis Tumblety?

Whether we claim to be historians, criminologists or simply JTR enthusiasts, we are subject to certain basic rules enabling us to suggest a strong and valid conclusion regarding any suspect we decide to work on. Neglecting to do so by many authors has been quickly detected, and even if JTR community groups have clarified the situation, Ripperology has been affected in ways it does not deserve.