

JACK THE RIPPER



130TH ANNIVERSARY

DREW GRAY

FAKE NEWS FROM WHITECHAPEL?
RIPPEROLOGY AND THE ACADEME



THE
EAST END
CONFERENCE
2018

‘There’s something inherently seedy and salacious in continually picking the scabs off these crimes, peering at mutilated bodies, listing the undergarments, trekking over the tainted ground in quest of some long-delayed occult frisson’.

Iain Sinclair, *White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings* (1987)

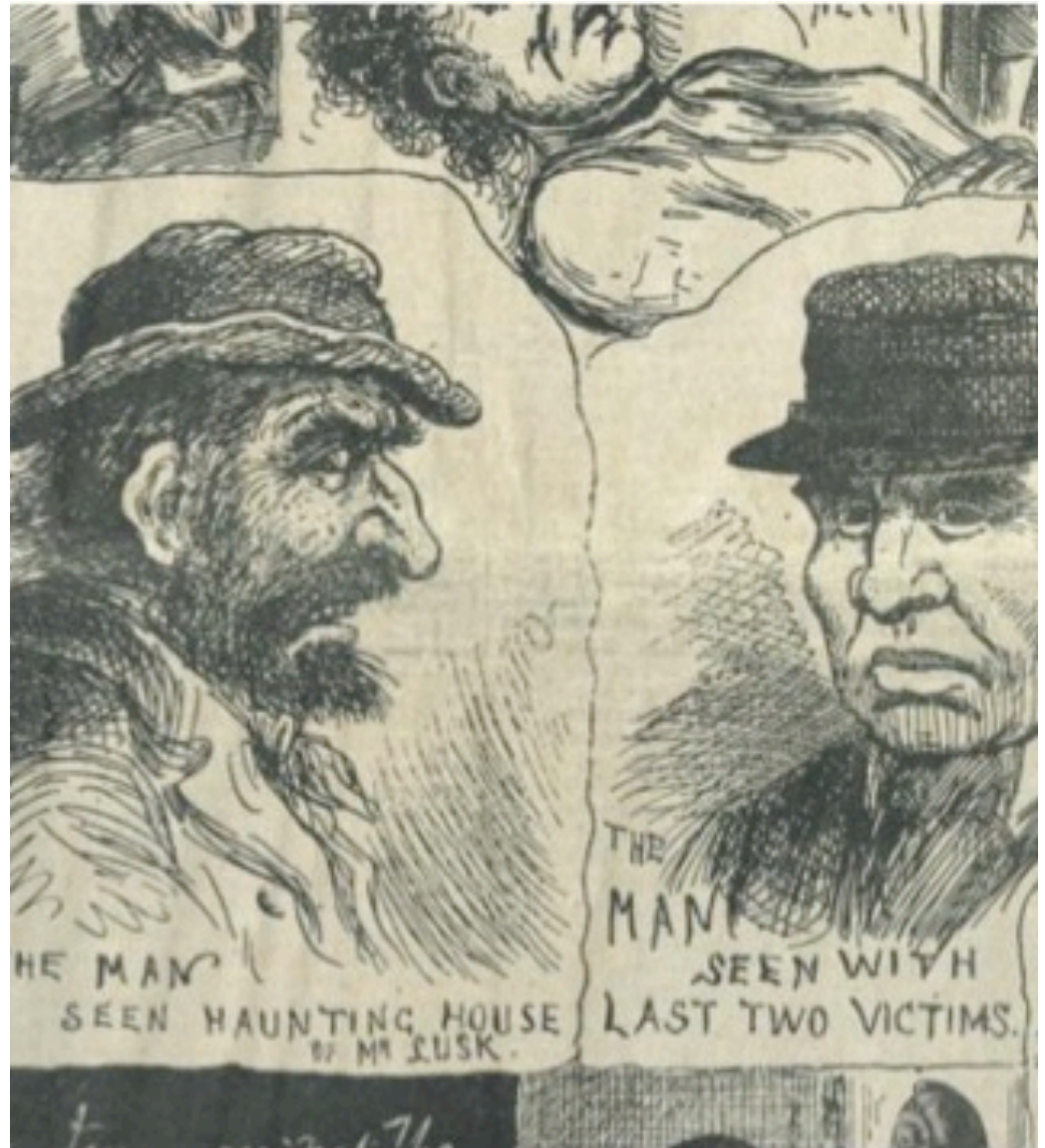


- ‘The fact that such films invoke the Ripper’s name to communicate graphic violence and titillation only reinforces the notion that the Ripper figure is in danger of becoming trivialized for shock value’.
- Matthew Thompson, ‘Shadow of the Ripper’, PhD Thesis (2017)

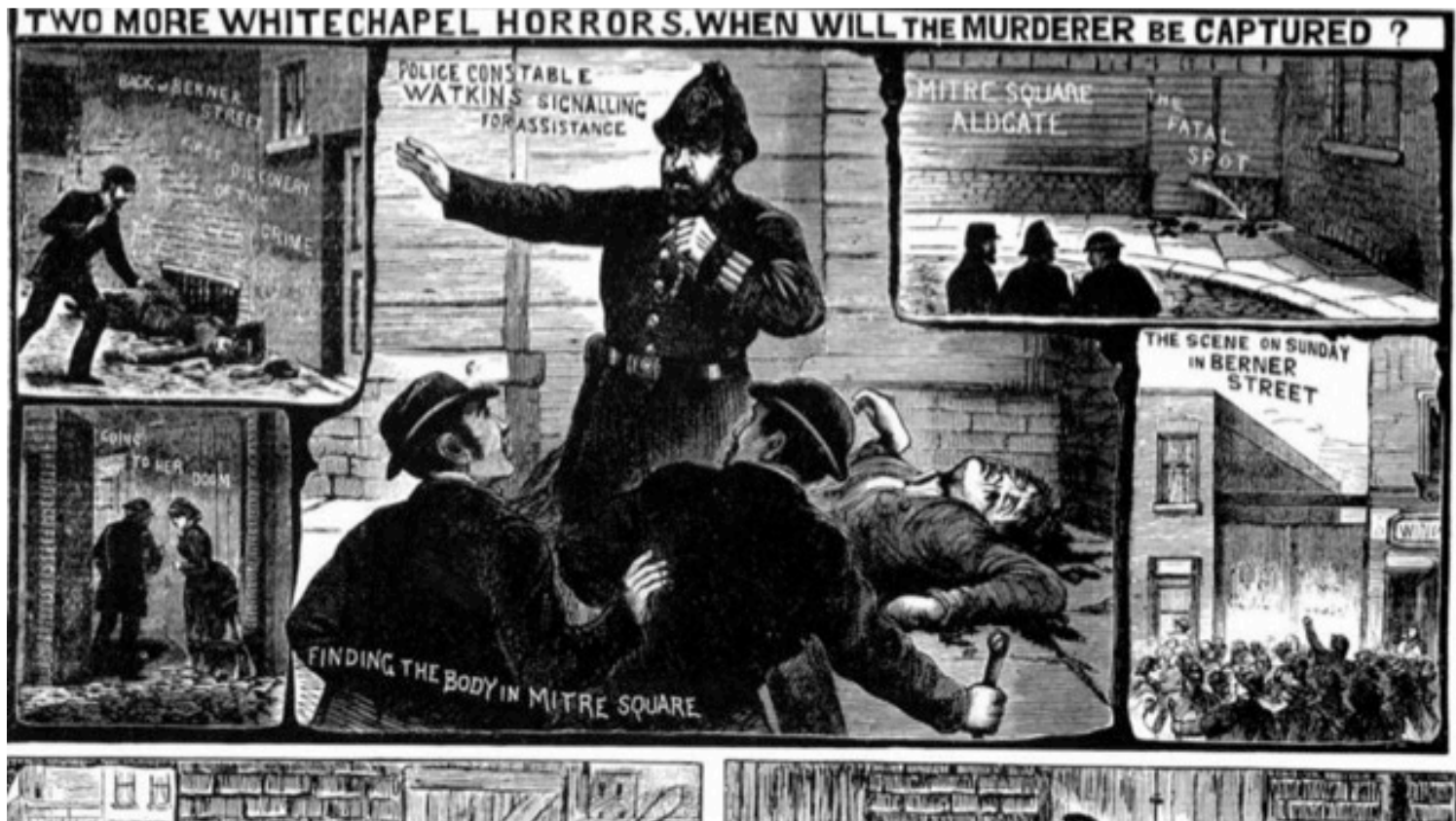


The Ripper phenomenon and the creation of a cultural monster

- 'Jack the Ripper has been thoroughly sanitized, turned into a folk-hero like Robin Hood. His story is packaged as a bit of harmless fun: only a spoilsport would be tactless enough to point out it is story of misogyny and sadism'. Deborah Cameron (1988)



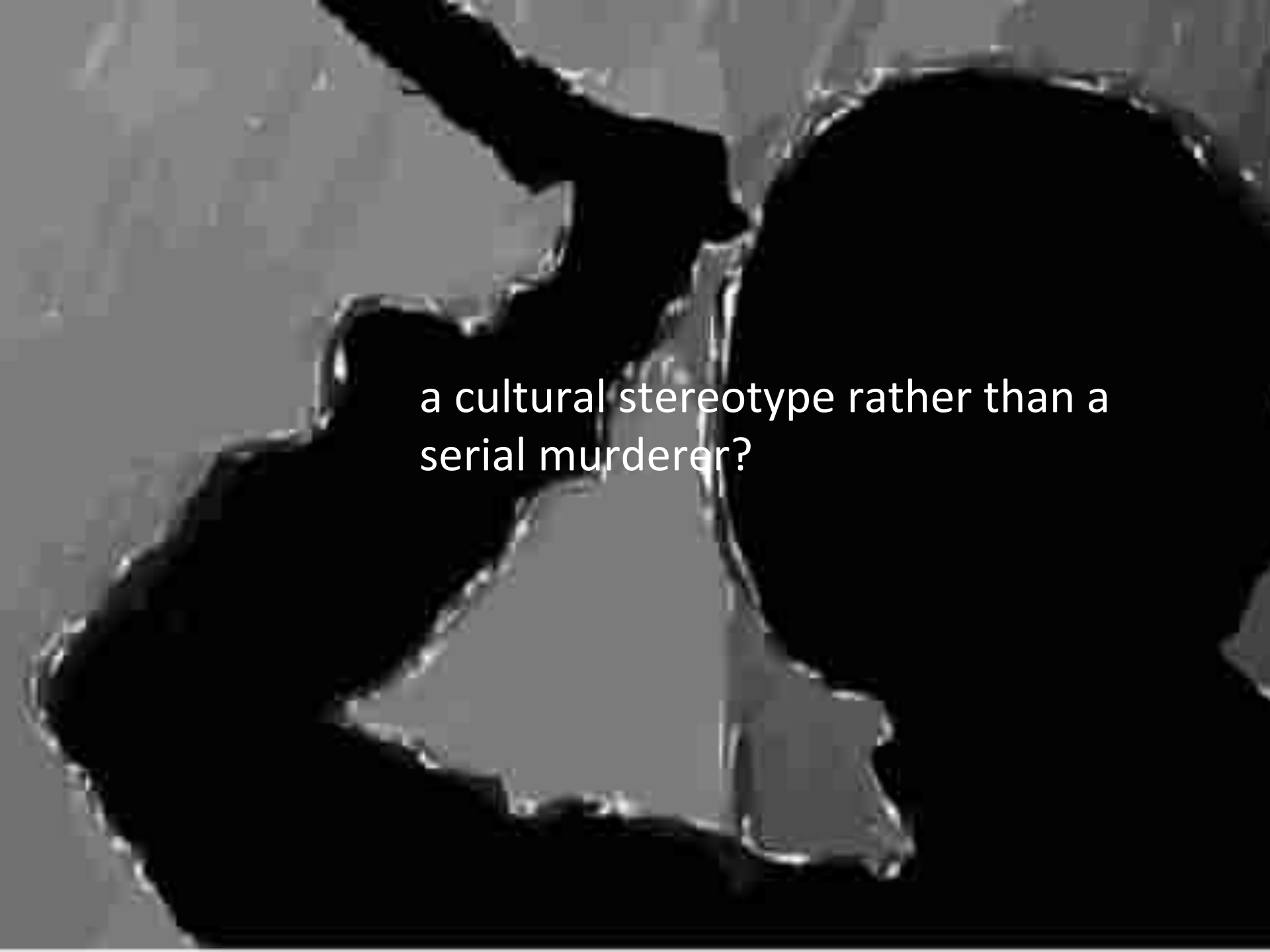
The 'greatest murder sensation of the Victorian era'



- what ‘transpired in London during the autumn of 1888 was not just a series of five sadistic murders but a serial story combining mystery and sensation-horror spread out over almost four months and cobbled together by a metropolitan press eager to boost sales’. Lee Perry Curtis

- ‘for far too long these myths have clouded our understanding of the character and background of the victim, the details of the crime, even the appearance of the murderer’. Philip Sugden

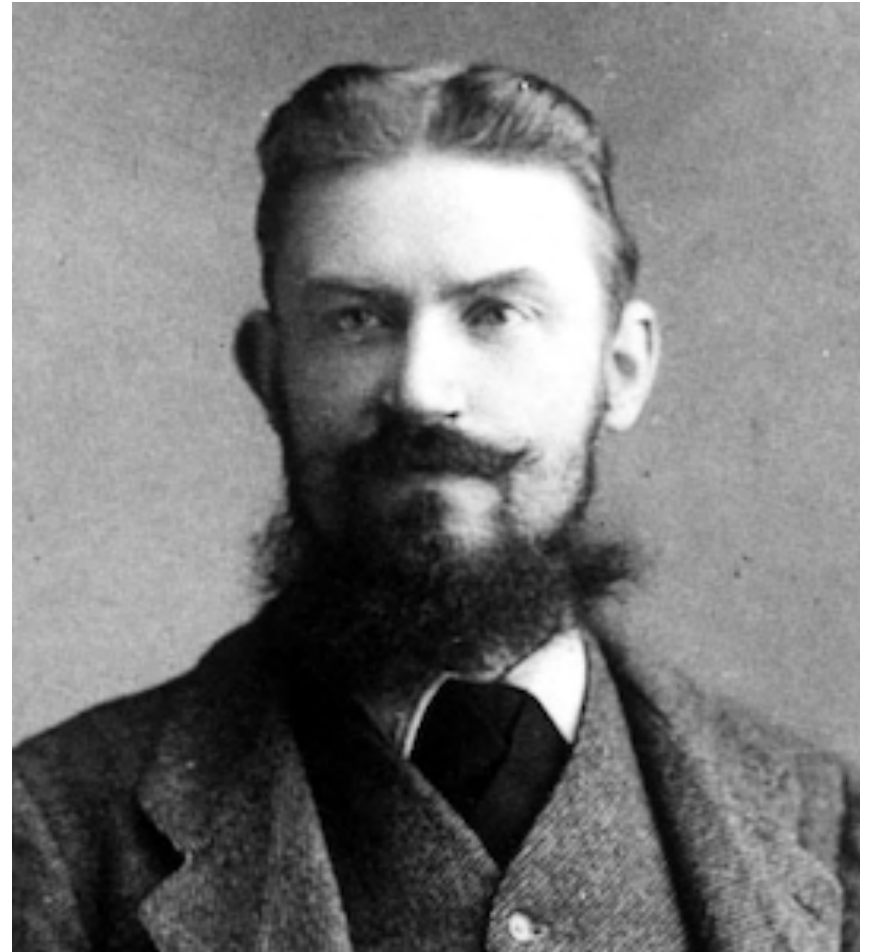


A high-contrast, black and white image of a person's profile, possibly a man, with the text "a cultural stereotype rather than a serial murderer?" overlaid. The image is heavily stylized, with the subject appearing as a dark silhouette against a lighter background. The text is centered and written in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

a cultural stereotype rather than a
serial murderer?

- ‘Whilst we conventional social democrats were wasting our time on education, agitation and organization, some independent genius has taken the matter in hand, and by simply murdering and disembowelling four women, converted the proprietary class to an inept form of communism’.

G. B. Shaw (1888)



Misrepresenting Whitechapel

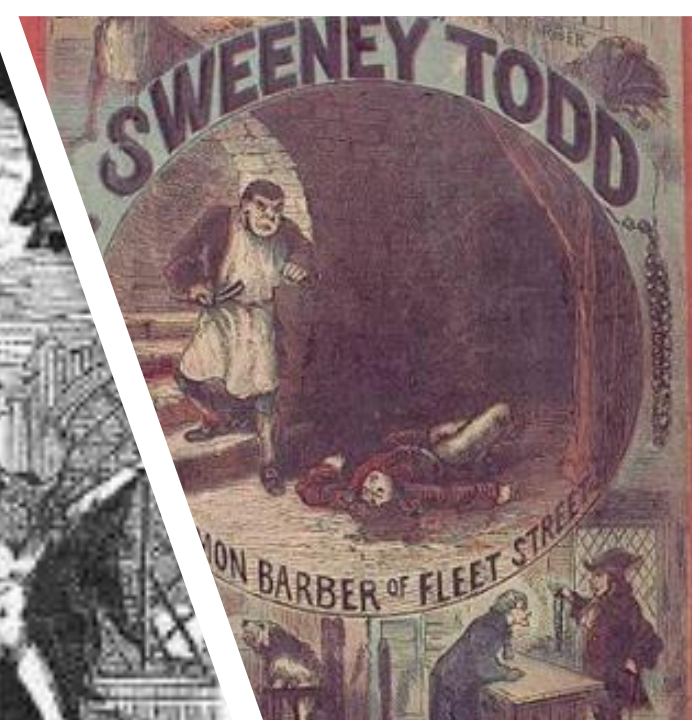


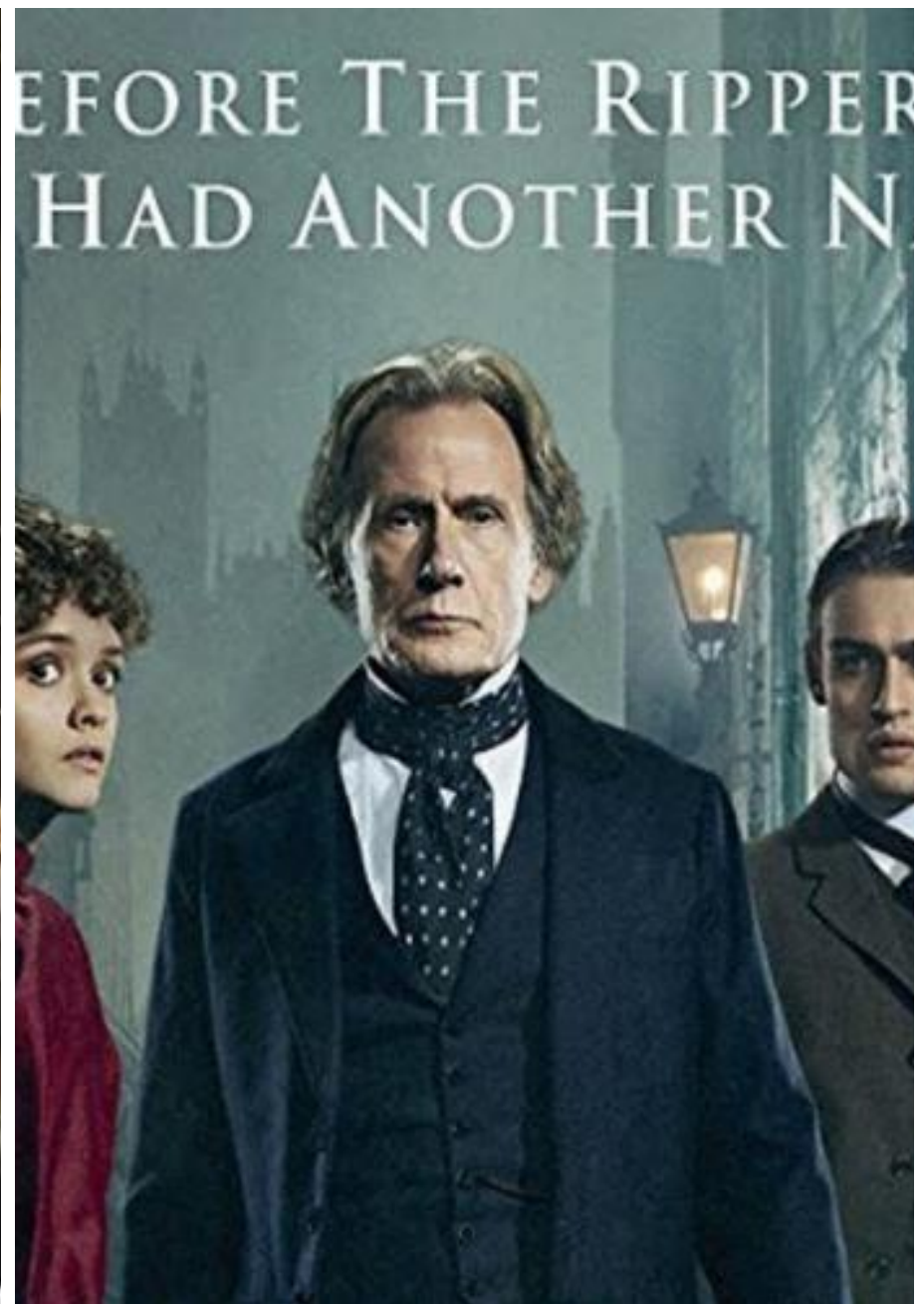


THE TERROR OF LONDON



Public Exhibition of the Body of Williams





Historians or sensationalists? Ripperology and its future

Bakerloo line → Hammer and

BAKER STREET Way out →

Will
JACK THE RIPPER
STRIKE AGAIN?

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Misogyny

‘Week by week and month by month, women are kicked, beaten, jumped on until they are crushed, chopped, stabbed, seamed with vitriol, bitten, eviscerated with red-hot pokers and deliberately set on fire – and this sort of outrage, if the woman dies, is called “manslaughter”: if she lives, it is common assault’.
Florence Fenwick Miller
(1888)

‘The Whitechapel murders have continued to provide a common vocabulary of male violence against women, a vocabulary now more than one hundred years old. Its persistence owes much to the mass media’s exploitation of Ripper iconography. Depictions of female mutilation in mainstream cinema, celebrations of the Ripper as a “hero” of crime, intensify fears of male violence and convince women that they are helpless victims’. Judith Walkowitz (2007)



‘the Ripper’s victims are themselves often reduced to “stage props” in discussions of these crimes, their lives “overshadowed by repeated exhibition of their bodies”
Kate Lonsdale (2002)

Thanks for listening

- *London Shadows* (Bloomsbury, 2010)
- Coming soon our new 'Ripper' book provisionally titled
- *Jack and the Thames Torso Murders: A New Ripper?* (Amberley, 2019)
- Read my blog :
- thepolicemagistrate.blog

