

## JACK THE RIPPER AND THE LUSK LETTER

The best candidates for being Ripper letters are the Dear Boss letters (and postcard) and the Lusk letter.

Scholarly analysis has decided that the infamous Lusk Letter which claimed to be from the killer could well have been really his work. It has the strongest provenance of any letter. Mr George Lusk of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, which patrolled the streets trying to capture the Ripper, got a parcel in the post containing half a human kidney. There was a letter in the parcel.

From hell.  
 Mr Lusk,  
 Sor  
 I send you half the Kidne I took from one woman and prasarved it for you tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise. I may send you the bloody knif that took it out if you only wate a whil longer  
 signed  
 Catch me when you can Mishter Lusk

Let's examine this curiosity.

The letter sought to give the impression that the kidney piece came from Catherine Eddowes. Upon examination it was thought it could indeed have come from Eddowes. This of course could not be proved. The kidney part carried signs of Bright's Disease – and Catherine Eddowes had Bright's Disease. Dr Openshaw stated that the kidney belonged to a woman of Catherine Eddowes' age and was in a similar diseased state to the remaining kidney. Major Smith of the City Police said that two inches of renal artery were left in Eddowes when her kidney was removed and the kidney portion received by Lusk still had one inch left on it as if it would fit in her body. Some doubt the declarations at the time that the kidney was indeed human. It was preserved for several days before it was sent raising the question of why the killer or the sender took so long to send it. To many, the reason would be that he wanted to think carefully and took his time to think and be sure he wasn't leaving a trail to himself. He believed that what he was sending should convict him as the killer should he be found to be the sender of the parcel.

The killer disguised his writing and wrote to give the false impression of being very illiterate. The spelling is mostly good and easy words are misspelled – he obviously misspelled on purpose. Why spell hell right and spell nice wrong? Nice is a more commonly known and used word than hell. Again you have the strange capitalisations that took place with the Goulston Street message. It is interesting that the only three words relevant to a butcher, kidney, preserved and knife are spelt wrongly. The writer was trying to hide his occupation. He tried too hard and gave himself away! From hell may indicate a religious interest.

The Ripper appeared attached to his knife like it was his friend. That he said he might send it if Lusk could wait a while shows that he planned to stop killing soon. This turned out to be true. The killer killed Kelly and there were no more murders. He writes as if he planned to keep the knife to kill one more woman and then think about posting the knife to Lusk. The killer may even have used a kidney from a butcher's shop to post to Lusk.

If the Ripper indeed ate a diseased piece of kidney then was it because he didn't care for he was already diseased like a syphilitic?

The letter was not written to the police or the papers to keep the papers and the world blazing with speculation and to create a big sensation. It was sent to Lusk to create a Whitechapel-confined mystery. The killer was a local man. The absence of effort to make publicity with this letter lends support to its authenticity. Lusk was targeted as a taunt - he had his men hiding everywhere and the Ripper was still able to walk past them undetected.



