

Jack the Ripper – did he use Middlesex Street as a base during the murders?

In 1888, the most infamous murders of all time took place in London's East End. Five prostitutes, destitute women who knew of no other way to survive, were slaughtered and mutilated by a supposedly unknown killer who bears the nickname Jack the Ripper.

The victims are listed below:

Martha Tabram who was stabbed and had some cuts attacking her private parts in George's Yard should be on the list but the canonical victims follow,

Mary Ann Nichols, Friday 31st August which took place Buck's Row and looks like the killer just got lucky for he slew her on the street.

Annie Chapman, Saturday 8th September in the highly risky backyard of 29 Hanbury Street where homeless sometimes slept - did the killer take the risk for he had been there before? Sleeping there would explain why he seemed to know he would not be disturbed.

Elizabeth Stride, Sunday 30 September Berner Street in the highly risky Dutfield's Yard and as people had seen Stride being attacked and could send the police he had to be fast about it

Catherine Eddowes, Sunday 30 September at Mitre Square which was private except for the police beat being a risk

Mary Jane Kelly, Friday 9th November of Miller's Court Spitalfields the most private and safest yet where the worst mutilations took place.

Possible other victims include Frances Coles had been in Middlesex Street the day she died. She was found with her throat cut in 1891. Alice McKenzie was found with mutilations that a doctor said were the same as the other victims but that assertion proved controversial. For our suspect to be her killer, he would need to be out of the asylum on the day she died and the mutilations seemed less frenzied than the other murders but that could be down the fact that the suspect would not have been in a very good physical condition then.

RIPPER STREET?

Somebody who seems to have used Aldgate as base was Jack the Ripper. The Ripper planned at least some of his killings in advance for he knew when to clear off before he was found by policemen on their beat. Only a man living in Whitechapel could have been the murderer.

We know the police kept an eye on a good suspect at Aldgate.

Detective Constable Robert Sagar stated, 'We [the City Police] had good reason to suspect a man who worked in Butcher's Row, Aldgate. We watched him carefully, there is no doubt that this man was insane, and after a time his friends thought it advisable to have him removed to a private asylum. After he was removed, there were no more Ripper atrocities'. What should we make of that? Indications are that Middlesex Street is a good gamble.

This admittedly is hard to line up with how a major suspect had not worked for years.

DAILY NEWS 19 OCTOBER 1888

The main details in the Daily News of Friday 19th October 1888 are as follows. A John Lardy with two friends followed a strange looking man from near the London Hospital on the 18th October who didn't like them following him. He hid in a doorway at the Pavilion theatre and came out when he thought they had gone. He seemed to be keeping his right hand in his coat pocket as if holding something very important there. He bought a newspaper and read the notices in a shop window very carefully. He then went to the Aldgate direction. He got to the corner of Duke Street which leads to Mitre Square. Then he turned when he noticed they were still following him. He walked back to Lemn Street and then he reached Royal Mint Street and into a house on King Street. He came out in disguise and looked to be about forty to forty-five years old and looked like an American and was wearing a false moustache and had long black hair and was about five foot eleven. The article stated that the man may have been the one arrested at Bermondsey.

If the man was disguising himself so not to be paid to his appearance. The right boots could make him taller too. And it is only assumed that he was the same man arrested later on.

The man was intending to go to Aldgate and because he was being followed he went somewhere else. He didn't go up Middlesex Street in case he was being followed but went on further just in case. Then near where Eddowes was killed he turned and went in a completely different direction. There can be no doubt that Aldgate was his real direction.

Was this the Ripper? Possibly.

STRIDE'S MURDERER FLED TO ALDGATE

The killer cut Elizabeth's Stride's throat and then fled to Aldgate. The Ripper would have taken the direct route of Commercial Road and keeping west and then walked left to enter Aldgate High Street. Ten or fifteen minutes would have got him to the next crime scene, Mitre Square, where he killed Eddowes. Now her death took place only maybe 45 minutes after that of Stride. He had to be there fast.

If you draw a straight line from the Stride murder site to that of Eddowes you can work out the quickest way from the first to the second. The killer passed Middlesex Street.

The knife Stride was killed with was a shorter knife than that used on any of the others. It may be that he didn't mutilate Stride because he didn't have the right knife. Did he go to Middlesex Street to get his knife for it seems he may not have had his knife when he killed Stride? It was a good place to keep the knives. That done did he then kill Eddowes after taking just a short walk from Middlesex Street?

He was carrying a bloody knife and needed to get to his lair or get rid of it fast in case he was searched.

In the last hour of Elizabeth Stride, the Ripper seems to have let his knife be seen by Israel Schwartz. Schwartz either saw nothing odd about the knife or in the panic he didn't notice if there was. He knew from the police reports published in the papers about what kind of big scary knife they associated with the Ripper and what he was holding up was not it. It is safe to assume what was seen was an ordinary knife so the Ripper probably did use a different knife on Stride.

THE LAIR

Middlesex Street is in Aldgate but more about it later. The night Catherine Eddowes was murdered was a very wet night and yet she went towards Aldgate instead of trying to go home or to find a friend to take her in. When Elizabeth Stride's body was found some time before, she was found to have been soaked to the skin.

Why did Eddowes hang around so much at Aldgate and close to it as her time on earth drew to a close? The killer seemed to lurk at Aldgate. It looks as if she intended to meet him. At 8.30 pm she caused a drunken disturbance outside number 29 at Aldgate High Street. She was held in a Police Station until 1.00 am. Instead of turning right to go home she went back to Aldgate. She was slain in Mitre Square and last seen by the three witnesses including Joseph Levy who had been drinking in the imperial Club, 16-17 Dukes Place Aldgate.

Did Eddowes intend to meet a man from Aldgate who had a house there who she thought could give her a roof over her head? She would have known about the empty houses in Mitre Square that they could use or shelter in. She believed he lived nearby and trusted him especially when she would have heard the whistles and cries of murder in the street after the discovery of Stride's body. She may have thought he lived in or very close to the Square. The Ripper may not have asked Eddowes to turn her back to him to lift her skirt for sex so that he could grab her round the throat from behind. He may have just grabbed her once she went in front. She was taken by surprise so how did he earn her trust? I think it is because he was seen as a local as in living in Mitre Square or adjacent to it.

We know that Catherine Eddowes behaved strangely the night of her murder. Despite the murder of Elizabeth Stride which she must have heard about she still went with a client. She knew the man or did he come across as a man of faith? A man of some respectability? Did she feel safe for he was close to his lodgings in Middlesex Street? Had the man been from anywhere else it would have been strange if he had agreed to meet her in Aldgate.

There is reason to think the Ripper was religious. What may have given her additional assurance was seeing that passerbys Joseph Levy and possibly the two men with him may have seemed to know the man. Some feel Levy always knew more about the killer than he let on the papers highlighted that. And the men were Jews and if the man she was with a Jew and made no effort to give her any warning she could have felt safer.

She believed she knew the Whitechapel killer. She said that but that was more likely than not to be just drunken talk. She

didn't know him when she went into that corner of Mitre Square with him to meet her death.

The Ripper's lair could have been one of the cheap lodging houses even though they were all searched by police. Two hundred of them at least were searched following the killing of Annie Chapman (page 58, *The Lodger*). The ideal lair would be a house with a butcher's shop attached or a butchers shop. Then the killer could hide the stolen organs among the meats.

Middlesex Street was a knives and butcher paradise and so central to the murder locations.

PROXIMITY

Eddowes which was the worst murder in terms of mutilation in a public place was nearest Middlesex Street. It was also the worst in risk for the police were scouring the streets for Elizabeth Stride had been found dead.

Chapman's the second most violent was the second nearest. It showed huge risk too.

The Ripper didn't even wash at the tap where there was a butcher's leather apron. So he refused to do what he needed to do. Why? To get away fast?

Some say that the Ripper didn't want anybody to think the apron may have been his. If it were splattered with blood or bloody water people might jump to that conclusion and think he may even have put it on while butchering Chapman. If so then it may indicate that his workplace or home wasn't very far away.

The Ripper seems to have killed Stride and went to his lair to get his regular knife and went out and dispatched Catherine Eddowes and then returned to it. And then he left it again to plant a false trail – he planted a piece of her apron in Goulston Street. Middlesex Street would be perfect for that.

The false trail away from Middlesex Street makes sense. It was necessary to plant the apron rag in Goulston Street to make it seem that the Ripper fled in a different direction to the direction he really used.

He must have got to his lair and cleaned up and then back out again to plant the rag. He could not draw attention to himself by going about in filthy clothes who in clothes that witnesses may have seen him in. The lair being a short distance away is the only explanation.

It gets better. The Street connecting Middlesex Street and Goulston Street was a smaller street called New Goulston Street. The apron piece was found just three doors away from where you leave New Goulston Street into Goulston Street. The small side street New Goulston Street was the route the Ripper took from his lair in Middlesex Street because the other routes Wentworth Street and Whitechapel High Street were simply too well lit and swarming with police for they were major streets. Goulston Street itself was a major Street so the Ripper didn't want to stay on it too long. He didn't have far to go to plant his fake evidence and that was how he planned it. To get out of Goulston Street again the Ripper had to return to Middlesex Street through New Goulston Street. It was the only way to avoid the busier and more important roads.

If the Ripper didn't have any big link with Middlesex Street that would be surprising.

WHY THE SEASIDE HOME?

The Ripper was identified by a fellow Jew.

The Jew was not witness, Israel Schwartz for he did not see the murderer taking Stride to her death.

Joseph Lawende, Joseph Hyam Levy and Harry Harris saw Eddowes with the killer just before she was murdered. It was not Lawende who denied he could identify. It was not Harry Harris who paid too little attention. It was Joseph Hyam Levy. Levy was possibly related to one suspect, Jacob Levy and would have known him and acted very strangely. The papers knew he knew more than he would say.

You might Levy had no reason to cover for a tramp like Aaron Kosminski but why not?

Kosminski was identified as the Ripper at the Seaside Home in Brighton. This does not mean that the Ripper was committed there only that he was brought there.

Swanson wrote that there was difficulty with getting the suspect there. Evidently the difficulties were not in restraining him if insane or transporting him there. If he had been that awkward he would have been committed in which case there would have been no point in trying to get him identified. It must have had to do with different police jurisdictions and the red tape. It has been pointed out that Joseph Hyam Levy lived at a point near Middlesex Street probably on the boundary between the City Police and the Metropolitan jurisdictions. Jurisdiction problems could have come up if he was the identification witness. But Swanson says the difficulties were to do with the suspect. It was not that the suspect didn't want to go for he wouldn't have known who the witness was going to be.

The answer is simple. The killer lived in Middlesex Street. One half of the street was City Police jurisdiction and the other

was Metropolitan.

Jacob Levy is the only possible Ripper suspect to have lived there. Sion Square where Aaron Kosminski lived couldn't have had this problem. Perhaps Jacob Levy was Jack the Ripper.

Joseph Levy abandoned his butchering trade in 1891. He left the place where he lived. He left Hutchinson Street and the Middlesex Street vicinity. He ran a loan office with a partner at Mansell Street, Aldgate. It looks like he was advised by the police to do this. This is consistent with him having revealed, we think during an identification, who the Ripper was.

When did the witness who had to have been Joseph Levy identify the killer at the Seaside Home? Nobody knows. The Seaside Home opened at Brighton in March 1890.

Jacob Levy was committed in August 1890 to the asylum. If he was the killer then he was identified before he was put in an asylum. Thus the identification took place between March 1890 and August 1890, when Levy was committed.

Now why did the identification take place at the Seaside Home in Brighton? This was very far away from London. Joseph Levy moved to Brighton and he travelled to Brighton a lot before the move. The killer was taken to the Seaside Home to be identified by Joseph Levy because Joseph Levy was associated with Brighton. It is said that the killer was taken there to avoid press sensationalism and to keep the affair quiet. But they didn't have to go so far away. And the affair wasn't intended to be kept quiet, they wanted to reveal the Ripper to the world. They couldn't stop the witness from speaking out – he did make an identification but not a sworn one.

If the witness lived near the killer's family or if he was related to the killer an identification far far away would be in order. In fact a Jewish witness would have been in trouble with everybody in his community had he told on a fellow Jew at all. And when the police went to all that trouble it proves they knew that the witness was worth taking seriously. They had other reasons for believing what he said apart from any testimony he would have given.

The identification was some several months after the killing of Mary Kelly in November 1888. So the witness took a long time to come forward or perhaps he did before that but owing to one delay and another and to police red tape it didn't happen sooner. It proves then that the witness did more than just see the killer but he knew the killer personally. How else could he remember him so well? Under no other circumstances would the police accept the testimony of a witness identifying a person some time after the event. So the witness knew the killer and red tape did delay the identification.

Did the identification take place before or after the suspect was committed to an asylum? The sources disagree but it probably took place before. A lunatic couldn't be identified as a killer unless the doctors had reason to think the man was insane all the time.

Swanson said that the killer was taken to the Seaside Home for identification and then back to his brother's house at Whitechapel. This would be Aaron Kosminski.

Then the house was watched by the police day and night. This shows that the killer was sick. How do we know? If he had still been dangerous he would have been taken to an asylum soon after the identification. It would have been cheaper to do that than watch the house.

According to Swanson, the killer went to Stepney Workhouse Infirmary. Jacob Levy was sick from syphilis. Aaron Kosminski had problems with food so he could have been there. The record is definite that Kosminski though it does not call him Aaron was there.

Swanson wrote that there were difficulties getting the suspect to the Seaside Home. This suggests they had a reason for taking him there. He talks as if the difficulties could have been averted had he been taken somewhere else. Taking him there had something to do with the witness. Maybe the witness was unwell so the killer had to be brought to him and not the witness to the killer. But why did nobody say that? The real reason was the safety of the witness. Joseph Levy had to be the witness and afraid of the Levy family of whom Jacob, the Ripper, was a member. He did go on record saying he feared for his family at the hands of the killer.

Middlesex Street is tempting as a base for the Ripper when you consider the Tabram, Chapman, Stride and Kelly murder sites plus where the apron piece was dumped. The apron piece seems to be about trying to get the police to search in the opposite direction to Middlesex Street. But it can be said that if the killer was ducking in Goulston Street and dropped it by accident then his direction could be Sion Square where Kosminski was known to be. But why were organs not in the piece? It was no accident. The Nichols and Stride murders were opportunistic so their distant location is no threat to our suggestions about the importance of Middlesex St.