During the late 1800’s in the Whitechapel District of London, one of the most infamous serial killers to ever be known committed their first murder. This figure would soon be dubbed “Jack the Ripper.” With five confirmed slayings of prostitutes by strangulation with bodily mutilations, the manhunt reached a new level of urgency. Through establishing a modus operandi, signature killing style, and by receiving two chilling letters from the killer, the police were taunted and led on a grand chase to try and apprehend the right suspect. Without modern conveniences such as using DNA to identify suspects, and using fingerprints to make matches, investigators had to rely on physical evidence, witnesses and theories. To this day researchers and historians have not been able to name the serial killer. One theory insists that the killer might have been a woman, while in the past the suspect had mostly been assumed to be a man. By sorting through the information and possibilities, only guesses with good data to back up a claim can be considered. With today’s modern capabilities, not everything will be made easier in crossing off suspects. Records were not well kept, and some were not even created. Historians and investigators have sought after the identity of the serial killer “Jack the Ripper” for over one hundred years, and the world may still never definitively know who he or she was. Recent research has settled on two likely suspects.
Robert D. Keppel, along with the other authors he worked with, wrote a very informative article about “Jack the Ripper,” which goes into crime statistics and the Ripper’s modus operandi. This source was the most valuable basis in the writing of my paper. It was called “The Jack the Ripper Murders: A Modus Operandi and Signature Analysis of the 1888-1891 Whitechapel Murders.” Keppel looked at how historical records in Whitechapel were misleading for lack of organization and correct record keeping from a variety of reasons. Then, the modus operandi and each slaying were looked at with detail. I agree with Keppel and the other authors who contributed. The authors stated that the modus operandi was extremely important in tracking down suspects, and recognizing that the murders were connected. It shows how the modus operandi can be valuable to investigators, and displayed the Ripper’s style. The authors also brought up how the Ripper compared to the other murders in Whitechapel. Murder did happen, yet having a serial killer in Whitechapel was new. It helped make the Ripper infamous. The authors approached the murders based on fact, statistics, and crime rates, and with information that cannot be challenged. The information they have is concrete, and forms the basis of the murder investigation. The article is one that is not so easy to agree or disagree on it. It is so concise and factual that all one can do is really analyze it. I found it extremely helpful in understanding the Ripper, and building the background for the case. I agree that the modus operandi is of the utmost importance, and the authors did a great job of displaying the evidence. Their view was simply about facts and looking at records.

John Morris wrote the mesmerizing book Jack the Riper: The Hand of a Woman. It was published by Seren, and is a new account of building the case for a female killer. It was the most important source for my paper for proving that a woman could have been the Ripper. Morris approaches the subject by making the case that the Ripper could have been a woman, and uses
past evidence to prove it. By using facts, witness statements such as from Caroline Maxwell, and other sources of information such as Inspector Abberline, Morris decides that “Lizzie” Williams was in fact the Ripper. Personally, I agree with Morris the most out of all the sources I have found and read. The way Morris builds the case against Lizzie is both intriguing and the most filled with motive I have come across. While Keppel and the other authors used information that was conclusive, Morris uses a mixture. Morris uses both facts and theory to make his case for Lizzie being the murderer. From what I have seen, most sources on the topic of the Ripper are a mixture of fact and theory. Morris goes into each of the five victims and explains why Lizzie killed each prostitute. It was all about killing Mary Kelly in the end, and Morris’ theory is quite plausible. Morris’ view is that Lizzie Williams was the killer, and that a woman could have been the Ripper.

The authors Paul Begg and Stewart Evans wrote the third and final major source. It was a periodical called “Jack the Ripper: Two Suspects ‘on Trial,’” and was published in 2002. The periodical focuses on the victims, letters from the detectives, and two suspects in the case. The suspect Doctor Francis Tumblety is highly convincing, and is the first suspect I look at in my research paper. First, the basic facts of the murders are laid out to the readers. Then, the two authors build a case for their first suspect, and finally move on to Tumblety. I agree with Begg and Evans that Tumblety could have very well been the Ripper. Tumblety had motive, the means to commit the murders, and the drive from his background. However, I also disagree at the same time. Tumblety did not have a strong enough motive when compared to Lizzie Williams. I believe that Morris was right, and that Lizzie was the legendary serial killer. Tumblety is a good option, and if Morris is wrong, I can let my mind rest easy with the second suspect, Tumblety.
being the Ripper. Begg and Evans’ view is that Tumblety was a good candidate for the murders, and that their case is sound.

Overall, all three sources drew on records, data, facts, letters and information gathered during the actual killings. By using primary sources each three secondary sources managed to create compelling cases for their stances, and to try and convince the reader that they are right. The most systematic and scientific source was Robert D. Keppel’s article on the modus operandi of the killer, while the other two sources were more historical and analytical of other kinds of information, such as letters and eyewitness accounts. Morris, and Begg and Stewart had their own theories, and created fantastic demonstrations as to why their theories were best. All of the sources were critical in the writing of my paper, and help to make the case that I am making a push for. These three articles had different approaches and views, yet they all helped convince me that Lizzie Williams was indeed “Jack the Ripper.”

Building a case background is absolutely vital in any police investigation. Establishing one for the slayings by “Jack the Ripper” is just as critical to begin understanding the era of the murders; as well as how daily life was for the people living during the investigations. The murders took place in the Whitechapel District of London between 1888 and 1891.¹ The East End of London, where Whitechapel resided, has conflicting reports of crime. One report, from the “Annual Report of the Sanitary Conditions of Whitechapel”, listed seventy-one known deaths in the area from 1886 to 1887.² However, out of the seventy-one deaths that occurred only one was from an actual murder. The other seventy were from tragic accidents and two suicides. In the year following the first Ripper slaying, only one person was once again murdered. This data is striking. Detective and retired police officer Robert D. Keppel and others writes, “This suggests that while the Whitechapel area was crime laden, the occurrence of murder was rare.”³ It
suggests that Whitechapel was not a typical region of London for murder. Why would the Ripper strike in Whitechapel, if it were filled with petty crimes instead of violent ones?

In contrast, other researchers have found data and information that paints Whitechapel in a very different light. Analysts have stumbled upon the realization that murders were actually much more likely to occur in Whitechapel than in other parts of London. Whitechapel had higher crime rates in comparison to the rest of the city. Various reasons were the cause of this discrepancy. Without the modern conveniences of today, records and data were much harder to keep organized, and were much easier to lose. Sometimes records were lost or incorrectly filed out. Sometimes records were not even kept at all.

Record keeping was not systematic, the classification of cause of death was rudimentary, haphazard, and often inaccurate, the official residence of the victim had to be in Whitechapel to be counted, and the poverty of the residents and victims (referred to at the time as members of the ‘dangerous classes’) militated against any official legal action.

With a death of a person only counting if they lived in Whitechapel, data would be skewed. A victim of the Ripper, or any other murderer, may not make the records if they lived in another part of London. If the Ripper had murdered a woman from the Western side of London, while she had been visiting Whitechapel, historians and researchers of today may never know. It leaves out the possibility of outsider killings. Also, not as much time would be spent on the murder of a person living in poverty when compared to a person of great affluence. Most of the population during the 1800s living in the city was poor, immigrants, or both. Deaths occurred daily in London, and another poor foreigner would not be deemed as important as a rich businessman. Thus, the status one had in society would also distort the records, and possibly keep out pressing figures.
A key figure in death investigations is the coroner. Coroners deal with a body after death, and can help assist police in understanding how a person died. A compelling fact about coroners in London during the 1800s is that their records reveal how it was strange for them to rule any kind of homicide as murder. This was on account of the way coroners were paid. The Justice of Peace considered them an unnecessary expense. The Justice of Peace felt they could do just fine on their own. In fact, coroners did not even have an education, or true knowledge of medical practices until 1926. Without the medical background, not all coroners were reliable. If the death had in fact been a homicide, the coroner may not have been able to tell, or be able to explain how the death had truly happened. Lacking a true education, coroners were definitely an “unnecessary expense.” This information leads to the conclusion that not all historical data is accurate, or can be relied upon. Keppel continues, “Emmerich’s (2001) examination of hundreds of inquests performed in the nineteenth century in London indicates that the criminal homicide rate was much higher than reported in the sparse and unreliable documents of the time.”

Overall, analyst research provides the possibility that homicide was much more common than the “Annual Report of the Sanitary Conditions of Whitechapel” leads researchers to believe.

Prostitution during the 1800s was not illegal in London. In fact, it was a very common profession for a woman of the nineteenth century. Just like the homicide data in Whitechapel, sources are contradicting one another for the exact number of prostitutes in London during this time period. The police departments and “Society for the Suppression of Vice” vary their numbers greatly. The police believed in a measly 7,000 workers, while the Society believed there were 80,000 prostitutes at any given time. A third contradiction comes from a modern historian. Instead of focusing on just London, however, she looks at society as a whole during the 1800s. Professor and writer Christine Roth writes, “According to renowned historian Judity Walkowitz,
a 19th century city could commonly have 1 prostitute per 36 inhabitants, or 1 per 12 adult males, which would yield 55,000 prostitutes.\textsuperscript{10} With such drastically different numbers, historians and researchers may never know the exact amount of prostitutes in London during the 1800s. Nonetheless, the data gives way to certainty that prostitution was a valid and popular form of work for women in the era of “Jack the Ripper.”

The daily life of a prostitute fairs much better when compared to another woman of a different working occupation. When compared to other women, their health was better on average since they were not working in poor factory conditions, and did not have to work such long hours. Prostitutes were typically younger with no marital ties, and ranged in the ages of eighteen to twenty-two.\textsuperscript{11} Without being promised or married to someone else, the women were allowed to work as they pleased without the fear of backlash from their husbands. From not having to help support a family, prostitutes were typically better off than many people in their class. Roth continues, “They had a higher standard of living than others of a similar class background; they had money, clothing and could afford their own rooms.”\textsuperscript{12} Women could afford to take care of themselves since there was no one else they had to look after. They also received better pay, and made their own rules regarding their business. A woman was essentially her own boss, and had a decent amount of freedom in the workplace. Prostitution was the perfect job for a young woman who was looking to be independent, and to make enough money to support herself. With so many prostitutes having so much independence in a large city, and a never-ending pool of clients to select from, they could be easy targets for a crime, such as murder. The availability of prostitutes, and being alone with them made them perfect victims for the Ripper.
When detectives search for a murderer, they have to look for evidence and the modus operandi of the killer. “Modus Operandi,” or “MO,” in simple terms, is how a killer goes about completing a crime, and how he or she may act while doing so. What makes a crime, and how does it compare to others that have been committed? Modus Operandi involves the style of the killing, the environment, and the means it took to slay the victim.

Signature characteristics, or a killer’s calling card, are those actions that are unique to the offender and go beyond what is necessary to kill the victim… Although an offender’s signature may evolve, the core features of the signature will remain constant.13

Thus, police in the “Jack the Ripper” serial killings need to establish a “MO” to begin chasing down suspects and establishing who he or she may possibly be. When reviewing the facts of the five confirmed manslaughters, a modus operandi is easily identifiable with its many facets. The kinds of women the “Ripper” targeted were white, in the poorer class of society, and in the occupation of prostitution. They were also typically married in the past, with either being widows or separated from their husbands. There is evidence to suggest that while the prostitutes readied their clothing for their hired deed, the killer suddenly strangled them before slowly laying them on the ground. Their heads were pointed to the left, which was suggested by reports from coroners with a lack of bruising on that side.14 This is the beginning of establishing the “MO.” The kinds of targets were now identified, and what needed to be determined next is the rest of the killer’s actions.

Timing is everything when trying to get away with a crime, especially when one wants to commit the ultimate sin of murder. At the end of the week in Whitechapel while citizens were getting ready for the weekend, the murders occurred. When the streets turned dark on the east side of London opportunity became rampant. Whitechapel in the 1800s still would not have the
best lighting. Many streets were still lit with gas lamps, and were not as bright as electrical lights. It would be easier for a killer to hide in the shadows and wait for his next victim. The “Ripper” “preferred to commit his crime in the darkest hours, attacking his victims between midnight and 6:00 a.m.”\textsuperscript{15} It was less likely for people to catch the murderer in the six-hour window when most were in bed for the next day. Streets were not always safe; so many people were home already before midnight. Not only would the darkness help conceal the killer’s identity, but the lateness of the attacks would help guarantee that witnesses would not be so plenty.

The location of the murders became critical to the investigation. It gave investigators the idea that the murders were going to be confined to one part of London. Each murder took place within Whitechapel, and all of them occurred nearby each other.

The murders were located within a one-mile square area. Each successive murder from Smith to Kelly was less than a mile from the previous murder site, with the murders of Stride and Eddowes less than half a mile apart.\textsuperscript{16}

With the murders occurring within such close proximity to one another, it would be feasible to believe that if they were to continue, the killer would not change his or her location of choice. All women were all equally spread out from one another. This could be considered the style of the killer, and help establish where the next murder may materialize. What is even more fascinating is that none of the bodies were moved. Very common in murder cases bodies are moved to help try and throw off the police. The Ripper made a bold statement with their killings. The Ripper did not believe he or she was going to be caught. Instead, they left perfect crime scenes with untainted evidence to aid the investigations.

Determining the weapons used by a serial killer is pressing in any analysis. A long, sharpened knife was the weapon of choice for the Ripper. Thus, the knife was the source of the many gruesome cuttings and mutilations of the women following their initial death. After the
recipients of the strangulations were killed and rested on the ground, the knife came into play. Keppel writes, “The women’s throats were cut from the left side while they were on the ground rather than standing.” The coroner believes this to be the case since there was a lack of blood on the clothing of the women. If the women had been alive and standing when their throats had been slit, then blood would have soiled their clothing. However, while lying on the ground with a heart that is no longer pumping blood through their veins, bloodstains would not be possible. With such a way to kill someone, the Ripper’s signature modus operandi has now been established. While the Ripper did not sexually attack his or her victims before or after death, the styles of the killings are related to power, and obtaining what the killer searched for.

It is likely that Jack the Ripper utilized the violence of stabbing and slashing his victims with a knife as methods for exerting his power and control over the victim. He used a knife to penetrate the victim, and satisfied himself through the eroticized power of violence, the domination of the victim, and the mutilation and bleeding of the victim, rather than sexual intercourse.

With the victims having the occupation of prostitution, it is logical to think that the killings would be fueled by sexual aggression and sexual acts. Yet, this is not the case with the Ripper. There was no evidence of sexual misconduct, or that anything physical other than an altercation happened between the two participants. Instead, the simple act of killing, and the rush of power that comes with it, derived all of the violence, aggression and pleasure the murderer had been seeking. The Ripper received what he or she wanted through strangulation and stabbing instead of sexual favors. Domination, fear and control were more enjoyable to the Ripper than copulation. This may further the idea that prostitutes were easy targets since their line of work involved being alone with strange figures and their availability. What can be confirmed is that the murders were premeditated since the Ripper brought the murder weapon with him or her.
Numerous letters were written and sent to police detectives during the case of Jack the Ripper. Out of all the letters sent, many were proven to be hoaxes. However, two letters are believed to be real by many specialists on the Ripper. Researchers may never know for certain, yet they are still deemed very useful. If they are authentic, the letters are a direct line to the killer and his or her mind. The letters were the “Dear Boss” and “From Hell” letters. The first was the “Dear Boss” letter, and it was written on September 25, 1888. There is no information given regarding the title of this mail, yet the recipient of the post being called “Boss” is intriguing enough. In the letter, the Ripper speaks of how the police believe he has been caught; yet it is not the truth. The letter is taunting the recipient by mentioning how the police believe they are on the right track, and instead they are wrong. The struggling of the investigators is amusing to the serial killer. The Ripper writes about loving their work, and how he or she cannot wait to kill again. The most haunting line involves what the letter is written in. “I saved some of the proper red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I can’t use it.” Obviously, the Ripper is speaking about blood. Instead of being able to send his correspondence in blood of a victim, he or she is forced to use red ink as a replacement. This allows researches to get into the mind of Jack the Ripper.

The Ripper is continuously planning to kill, and deciding how to commit the murders. In the “Dear Boss” letter, he or she admits that they are going to save the ears from the next woman and send them to the police as another taunt. At the end of the letter, the killer even signs it as “Jack the Ripper.” The first letter reveals much of the type of mindset the Ripper has. Just as the red ink reveals premeditation and planning, the taunting reveals that the Ripper is enjoying his work as much as possible. To he or she, this has become a game of “cat and mouse” between them and the police. Sending the ears is both a threat and a promise of more to come. By signing
in the name the public has given the Ripper, he or she is letting the police know that they are
staying caught up on all the available information. The Ripper is aware of their every move, and
is planning to stay ahead of them at all times.

The second letter sent by Jack the Ripper was entitled “From Hell.” It was received on
October 16, 1888, and composed the day before on the fifteenth. The recipient was one George
Lusk, who happened to be the president of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee at the time. In
the mail along with the letter, he also acquired a small box. When Lusk opened the box, he found
preserved in wine, was a human kidney that was not whole. Upon the coroner looking over the
kidney, it was found that it was just like the other kidney removed from one of the other victims
of Jack the Ripper. The letter this time was not as well composed, and it had many spelling
errors. The letter was sent “from hell,” thus the title the letter has now been given.

The Ripper admits to sending the kidney with the letter, and taking the time to preserve it
for the recipient. The fact that the Ripper took such time to care for the kidney suggests, again,
that the Ripper had a plan with his or her murders. The kidney is another taunt at the
investigators. Now body parts that were missing from victims were being sent to them from the
killer by post. How was the murderer not being caught? What happened to the rest of the kidney
was also revealed. “…toher 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.” What seems to be obvious from this letter is that
the killer is becoming more crazed and is losing his or her sanity. The letter is composed vastly
different from the original letter, and the spelling mistakes suggest that he or she is not in the
right frame of mind. Possibly the killer is going insane, revealing the true set of their mind, or is
still in the mindset of when they commit murders. Could the Ripper possibly have multiple sides
to he or she? Eating a human kidney is not something a normal, sane person would do, let alone
send it by the postal service with a letter attached. What is most important about the two most confirmed letters is that they are a primary source from the time period of the murders, and help today’s researchers understand the Ripper more.

The news of the letter and kidney attached with it made such an impression that one of the local London newspapers wrote about it. In the *East End London Observer*, on October 20, 1888, an article titled “The Whitechapel Horrors. Another Series of Atrocities. Is the Murderer a Cannibal? Shocking Revelations” was published. In the article the events of receiving the letter and kidney, as well as the reaction are displayed. Most importantly the article reveals information about the kidney.

He was further of the opinion that it was the organ of a woman of about 45 years of age, and that it had been taken from the body within the last three weeks. It will be within public recollection that the left kidney was missing from the woman Eddowes, who was murdered and mutilated in Mitre-square.²⁵

The news article reveals that the kidney belongs to one of the victims from the information of a doctor, and only adds to the fear and craze the Ripper is placing upon the citizens of Whitechapel. This newspaper shows that the public knows exactly what is going on, and is staying up to date with the serial killer. The Ripper is gaining the kind of attention, which would later make them infamous. Newspapers were important to the daily public to keep up on events, and the shock of the Ripper investigation was a hot topic for the press. Various newspaper articles were written in the years of the killings.

Doctor Francis Tumblety, an Irish-American doctor, is a confirmed suspect from the Jack the Ripper slayings. Tumblety seems to be the most believable choice out of many possible men. The background of Tumblety’s life, criminal record and personal views builds an extremely convincing case against him. Born in Ireland, Tumblety was the youngest of eleven siblings, and
the entire family soon settled in New York while he was still a young boy. After spending his youth selling pornographic books and papers, he learned the medical trade at Doctor Lispenard’s Hospital in Rochester, New York. At a young age he was already exposed to pornographic works, which usually tend to degrade women. Pornography can shape feelings and ideals towards women in society. Already, Tumblety is gaining knowledge on the human body and medical practices. Lispenard’s Hospital “specialized in treating ailments ‘peculiar to women,’ performing hysterectomies, and treating the ‘problems of youths’.”27 With half of Tumblety’s job focusing on and dealing with women, the fact that all of Jack the Ripper’s victims being women makes logical sense. Tumblety would have helped assist Doctor Lispenard with the patients, and would have learned the female anatomy. From there, Tumblety would then be able to mutilate the female form, hitting the points of the body as he wished.

Once moving on from Doctor Lispenard’s practice, Tumblety settled down in Canada. Tumblety set up his own practice and became exceedingly successful. Yet not everything went smoothly in his career. Researchers and writers Paul Begg and Stewart Evans write, “In 1857 he had been arrested by Detective Simard of the Montreal Police for attempting to perform an abortion on a 17-year-old prostitute, Philomene Dumas.”28 Again, Tumblety’s past would have flagged any detective that was searching for the real Jack the Ripper. Tumblety was performing abortions, which were illegal, and confirmed that he knew a great deal about the internal structure of women. Also, Tumblety had a past with prostitutes and would continue to serve them in his line of work. In the investigation of Annie Chapman and Catherine Eddowes’ murder, an attack on female organs is apparent. Most of the womb was gone, and had been taken out of the body. It had left with the culprit.29 Like other victims, body parts only found in women were mutilated or had disappeared. By heavily attacking the womb and vagina, both dealt with in
abortions, Tumblety becomes a likely suspect. However, in the case with the seventeen-year-old prostitute, Tumblety was eventually released from custody.

After returning from Canada the doctor set up a new practice in Washington D.C. during the time of the Civil War. During his stay in D.C., Tumblety threw a party for men of high stature and importance in society. Amongst them was Colonel C.A. Dunham, whom later became a lawyer. Dunham noticed something peculiar about the party. No women were present. Upon inquiring about this atypical guest list, Dunham received a startling response. “…Tumblety launched into a homily against womankind, ‘especially fallen women.’ He then showed his guests a collection of anatomical specimens, which included about a dozen jars containing the wombs ‘of every class of women.’”30 Tumblety’s hatred of women was now confirmed by his own words. Women and men alike were both typically invited to parties. Dunham was in the right about this party being strange. Not only did Tumblety speak badly of women, but also he then showed his guests a collection of wombs. It was extremely barbaric, and poses the questions on how and when he got the wombs of women. Tumblety believed that prostitutes were disgraces, as confirmed by the party Dunham attended, and he then later found out that his wife was doubling as a working girl after catching her flirting with another man. This caused him to denounce women altogether. Begg and Evans continue, “This, together with the abortion case in Montreal, provides a motive for Tumblety's hatred of women, especially prostitutes.”31 Thus, it is highly probable that Doctor Francis Tumblety is Whitechapel’s infamous Ripper.

From Washington D.C. Tumblety moved to London, England. In fact, Tumblety had settled in the famous city just a month before the first prostitute, Mary Ann Nichols was slaughtered.32 Having already practiced in London in the past, and having an office in the city, he knew the city well. Having prior knowledge of the streets and buildings would give a killer an
advantage in their surroundings. Soon after the killings started taking place newspapers began to suggest that the identity of the serial killer could be found in an American doctor. The doctor had left his lodgings when his landlady found incriminating evidence against him. The landlady had found blood on his shirt. This doctor was indeed Doctor Francis Tumblety. To get Tumblety into the hands of the law, police charged him with four counts of indecency with another man, and brought him to court. Of course, these counts were true, yet they were not enough to hold him in jail. There was no real evidence pointing to Tumblety to connect him to the murders of the poor prostitutes. After being released on bail, detectives followed him all the way over to America. Once in New York, Tumblety soon disappeared from their trace, and the detectives failed to pin him to the crime. Tumblety stayed in hiding for years, and eventually died of heart failure in 1903.

Chief Inspector John George Littlechild was working the case while the killings happened. Years passed, and later on, in a letter from September 23, 1913, Littlechild writes of Tumblety. Littlechild’s letter continues to confirm the suspicions of others, and the peculiarities of the doctor.

Amongst the suspects, and to my mind a very likely one, was a Dr. T…. 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 the police, there being a large dossier concerning him at Scotland Yard.

Again, Tumblety’s practice as being a doctor and feelings towards women are observed. A letter from a Chief Inspector is an invaluable source, since they investigated the person at the time of the inexcusable acts of murder. Multiple sources, such as Dunham and now Littlechild is much more credible than only one in writing. Not only was Tumblety a strange man in private, he was also a strange man in the public eye. It was enough to attract police attention,
and for them to believe he was a likely suspect. What helps the case against Doctor Tumblety is that once he fled from London, the killings stopped, and never started again.\textsuperscript{37} Across the board, Doctor Francis Tumblety is a well-reasoned suspect for not only his background in dealing with serving women medically and aiding prostitutes with abortions, but for also his own personal biases. Tumblety made his view on women clear at his parties and the way he spoke out against them. His own wife being a prostitute furthered his hate, and created complete contempt for all members of the opposite sex. With anger towards women, the mutilations of female genitalia, the bias towards prostitutes, and Tumblety’s landlady finding a bloody shirt and his fleeing, all suggests a man with probable cause to become London’s most infamous serial killer to date.

The idea that the infamous London serial killer could be a woman has become both an intriguing and popular topic to debate as of late. In the late 1800s, it was an absurd idea for most of the population to believe that a woman could be behind such monstrous acts. As historians work their way through facts, records and accounts, new information is making its way to the surface that now counteracts this belief. The beginning of the possibility that the Ripper could be a woman occurred on Friday, November 9, 1888.\textsuperscript{38} This was the date of the final slaying when Mary Kelly’s murder took place. Mrs. Caroline Maxwell, a housewife that lived nearby where Kelly was lodging, claimed to have seen Kelly after the TOD, or “time of death.” Even though the weather and well-known city pollution of the damp morning kept Maxwell from seeing distinct characteristics, the housewife continued to swear it was not only a woman, but Kelly as well. Researcher and author John Morris writes, “Maxwell could see the brightly coloured clothes she was wearing: a green bodice, a brown linsey skirt and a red knitted crossover shawl.”\textsuperscript{39} These were the exact clothes that Kelly had been seen wearing the day before. Maxwell claimed that the wearer of the clothes had stopped upon being called to by the name of
“Mary”, chatted for a bit in the rain with her Welsh accent, and even went so far as to claim that she had the “horrors of the drink” upon her because she had been “drinking for some days past.” Just a few hours after this sighting with Maxwell, the rent collector at Kelly’s lodgings found the body when he went to collect the shillings. When the police arrived and processed the scene, Maxwell’s statement was taken. How could Kelly have been murdered, when Maxwell had seen her only a couple hours before, and heading in the opposite direction? The answer was found in the grate of the fireplace in Kelly’s room.

Inspector Abberline of Scotland Yard examined the fireplace and found traces of the killer burning evidence. Not only was the remaining wire of a hat pulled from the ashes, black velvet from a cape and dark brown fabric from a skirt was also pulled. All of these clothing items were from a woman, and did not belong to the victim. Most intriguing, was the fact that Kelly’s own clothes were gone. All that had been left behind was her undergarments. With Maxwell’s stubborn confession, Abberline concluded that the woman she had seen had been escaping from the scene of the crime. Morris continues, “But if the clothes that had been burned in the fire—a woman’s felt hat, a dark brown skirt and a black velvet cape—were not Mary Kelly’s clothes, and Kelly was not known to own a hat, they could have been the blood-stained clothes of the murderer.” From the details of Kelly’s murder, it had been gory and the room had been drenched in blood. The killer could not be seen wandering the streets in bloody clothing. The Ripper had fled in Kelly’s clothes to escape without being caught. Thus, the killer both managed to burn evidence pinning them to the crime, and got away even under the eyes of the neighbors.

The most plausible woman suspect with real motive to murder five prostitutes is the wife of Doctor John Williams. Mary Elizabeth Ann Williams, affectionately known as “Lizzie,”
possesses the elements needed to be a murderer. First, the marriage between John and Lizzie Williams was not a peaceful one. The two were grossly unhappy, and the marriage was stressed by infertility.43 Doctor Williams longed for a child of his own, and continued to blame Lizzie for their shortcomings. During the age of the Ripper, not much was known about fertility, and women were always blamed as the source of the problem.44 The continuous failure to get pregnant would cause home life to be unbearable for the married couple. Second, Doctor Williams was a well-known womanizer. Three women he knew became targets of the Ripper, one who happened to be his mistress. Morris writes, “We now knew that Doctor John Williams had a direct connection with three of the Ripper’s victims: Mary Ann Nichols perhaps, and Catherine Eddowes, who were his patients, and Mary Kelly, who was his mistress.”45 Prostitutes were usual clients to doctors for checkups, abortions and help after clients abused them. The fact that Lizzie knew about her husband’s adultery, and that she knew who the woman was, leads research to suspect her of the crime. Lizzie would have seen Kelly as a reason for her unhappy marriage, and if she became pregnant, Lizzie would be disgraced. Reputation and love are two major grounds for murder.

Being a skillful actress helped Lizzie on the morning of Kelly’s murder. The Welsh accent Maxwell had heard a woman use would have been in Lizzie’s repertoire of skills for the stage.46 Lizzie would have known how Kelly’s accent sounded, and it would have been easy to reproduce. Another aspect of the importance of Lizzie’s skills as an actress is needed in relation to Abberline’s theory. Inspector Abberline was convinced that the murderer could have easily been a woman, and that women in the profession of midwifery would have made an excellent candidate for the Ripper. However, police were out canvassing for men, and men and women alone together. Morris continues, “A woman on her own would have been ignored by the police
hunting for the murderer. Perhaps Lizzie Williams had adopted the guise of a midwife.\textsuperscript{47} Lizzie
would have been able to act as a midwife with her background in acting, and traveling alone at
all hours of the day and night would not have been unusual for the midwifery profession. Thus,
Lizzie was able to make her way around Whitechapel and disappear with the utmost of ease.
Overall, the motive behind Lizzie’s murders is that since she was unable to conceive, she was
afraid that Kelly would become pregnant, and her husband would leave her. Such a blow to her
pride would not do, and she could not let it happen. Out of jealousy over her marriage, hatred
towards women with loose morals, and her own tense emotions, Lizzie could have easily been
provoked to murder Kelly.

With the bodies of all the prostitutes save one being torn and opened, the coroner
concluded that the acts had been done with a sharp knife. Lizzie would have had access to
surgical equipment, such as knives from her husband’s instruments. Having access to the knives
is just one step. Knowing how to use them is the most important. Lizzie would have seen her
husband perform surgeries, and he would have demonstrated to her how to go about these
surgeries to impress her, and demonstrate his skill set.\textsuperscript{48} Lizzie learned a lot from her doctor
husband, including the anatomy of the female body and the internal structures. Morris writes,
“She possessed a sufficient knowledge of anatomy and the requisite theoretical surgical skills
both to kill her victims and, when necessary, to extract the organ she wanted to possess—the
uterus.”\textsuperscript{49} It was most important to Lizzie to obtain the uterus of her victim, since that was the
major problem in her marriage. The fact that hers was infertile was destroying her life, and she
could not let the other women keep them even in death, specifically Mary Kelly. Multiple
doctors have confirmed that a woman could have committed the murders. One such doctor was
Doctor Llewellyn. In Llewellyn’s reports, he mentioned that the Ripper used knowledge of
anatomy in his slayings, and a large knife.\textsuperscript{50} The first Ripper murder had been easily accomplished for the woman, Nichols, had been drunk. Man or woman alike had enough strength to kill her. Also, the fact that there was no sexual assault suggests that a woman could have been behind the killings. Women were not so likely to drive sexual assaults, and it suggests that the murderer had no sexual interest in her.\textsuperscript{51} There would be no reason for an act of sexual aggression. All of these help point investigators to women, yet no one but Inspector Abberline was truly fighting for it.

Motive for killing Mary Kelly is apparent, while killing the other four prostitutes is not. There is a distinct connection between all the women and their murders. The night Catherine Eddowes was murdered, she had been detained by police for public drunkenness. When she was released hours later, she gave the name of “Mary Ann Kelly.”\textsuperscript{52} The reason for the different name was that Eddowes used it as an alias. Only a few of her close friends knew her real name. Thus, it is believed that Eddowes was mistakenly murdered from the continual use of her alias name. Morris writes, “The only reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that the death of one of the victims must have been a tragic case of mistaken identity.”\textsuperscript{53} Both were prostitutes living in Spitalfields, which was part of Whitechapel, and were murdered right after each other. This was more than coincidence. Without having seen the real Mary Kelly before, or having a description of her appearance, Lizzie would have only been able to know who her victim was by having an inside source. By using a confidant by offering money, she would gain information of who Kelly was. Morris writes, “What is certain is that, somehow, she chanced upon someone who said that she knew Mary Kelly, though, unbeknownst to them both, this acquaintance was in fact Catherine Eddowes.”\textsuperscript{54} This confidant had given Lizzie the wrong information about “Kelly” being released from jail, and once she found out, she would have to kill again to get the real
Kelly. Lizzie would once more have to ask around for her husband’s mistress, and be as discrete as possible. It is believed that Lizzie used her Welsh accent, to establish a more credible story that she knew her, and was only searching for her friend. This time, suspicion would not be raised as easily, and she could find the true Mary Kelly.

When Lizzie’s confidant would find out about “Kelly” being murdered, there was a possibility of Lizzie being caught. Lizzie’s informant might go to the police and ruin everything. Thereby, Lizzie needed to get rid of her source of information. Two women were murdered on September 30, and they were Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes. This leads to the conclusion that once Lizzie gained the knowledge of where “Kelly” was going to be, she killed her informant, Stride, and then went after Eddowes who was mistaken as her true target. Stride being murdered to keep her silence is obvious, for there were no mutilations on her body. With just her throat being cut, this suggests Lizzie was in a hurry and that she was confirming her secret would never be found out. There was no other motive behind Stride’s murder.

Three of the murders are now understood with the motive behind them. All three were linked to each other in the search for one woman, which eventually Lizzie found and finished her revenge upon. Morris writes, “Now we were certain why Lizzie Williams had murdered three of her victims: Mary Kelly because she feared the woman would destroy her marriage, and might bear her husband the child for which he craved; Catherine Eddowes, in the mistaken belief that she was Mary Kelly; and Elizabeth Stride, merely to silence her and to prevent her from giving Lizzie Williams away to the police.” This leaves the first two victims, Mary Ann Nichols and Annie Chapman, to make sense of. Lizzie used Nichols and Chapman as mere experiments. Lizzie needed to know if she would be able to murder Kelly when it came time, both physically and mentally. To get Nichols and Chapman alone, Lizzie would need to convince them that it
was worth their while somehow. Morris continues, “Without suggesting for one moment that Lizzie Williams was anything other than heterosexual we believe that she could have portrayed herself to her victims as a lesbian seeking their sexual services for payment, in order to lure them to their deaths.” By convincing the women to work for her, Lizzie would have them alone with no witnesses. Nichols and Chapman were both found on their backs, which would make it easier for the killer to overpower them, and their skirts being up with no sexual acts having taken place suggests that the women were readying themselves for a job before they were killed. This explains the lack of sexual activity found, no signs of struggle from the victims, and why they were murdered with mutilations to their wombs and genitalia. Nichols and Chapman were murdered out of the necessity to practice another crime.

All in all, Lizzie Williams is most likely to be “Jack the Ripper” with the amount of evidence piled up against her. Lizzie had the motive, knowledge and means to do so. Mary Kelly was ruining her life with both the seducing of her husband, as well as the possibility she may bear him the heir Doctor John Williams so desperately sought after. By murdering her, her marriage would no longer be threatened from an outside source. Having access to surgical knives and learning from her husband, Lizzie would know the female internal structure and the best way to go about killing someone. The coroners confirmed that it would not take a great amount of strength in the Ripper killings, and that even a woman could have done so. Female clothing was found in Kelly’s fireplace that did not belong to the victim, Kelly’s clothes were missing, and a witness said they spoke to Kelly after her murder. Lizzie had acting skills for both the Welsh accent and to pose as a midwife to get around Whitechapel with ease. Nichols and Chapman were practice kills, Stride was her first informant, and Eddowes was the recipient of death by confusion of identity. Mary Kelly was her first and final target. Jealousy, love and personal
reputation are all motives for murder. All of this was at stake for Lizzie Williams, and she could secure a better life for herself by ensuring her husband would never see Kelly again. Whereas Doctor Francis Tumblety had the knowledge, tools, hatred of women and the knowledge that his wife had once been a prostitute, Lizzie’s case is much more likely to be the truth. Lizzie’s life was connected to Mary Kelly, while Tumblety would have gone after Kelly randomly or from knowing her as a patient. The theory of Lizzie Williams being the Ripper makes a stronger case than does Tumblety.

Doctor Francis Tumblety and “Lizzie” Williams are two suspects in the “Jack the Ripper” slayings, and up-to-date research has made a strong case for both of them. Identifying the notorious serial killer from London has eluded historians and researchers for over a century, and the identity of the real killer may never be revealed. Five canonical killings of prostitutes are the work of the Ripper, and are still widely popular research topics today. Letters from the supposed killer and newspaper articles from the late 1800s helps to get into the killer’s mind and sense the atmosphere of Whitechapel. Police were taunted by the killer, and chased after multitudes of suspects, all of whom were men. Inspector Abberline entertained the idea of the Ripper being a woman, yet no women were questioned but as witnesses. Establishing the modus operandi and signature killing style helped the police connect the victims to the same killer, and what kind of person they were looking for. Tumblety and Lizzie both held medical knowledge and had access to surgical knives. They each also had a sense of hatred towards women, yet Lizzie seems to have the most grounds for slaying the prostitutes. In conclusion, “Jack the Ripper” might have been a woman, and the evidence strongly suggests that she was. The world may never know Lizzie Williams’ entire story. However, being the Ripper might not be a secret she will be able to keep after all.
Notes


2 Ibid., 2.

3 Ibid., 2.

4 Ibid., 2.

5 Ibid., 2.

6 Ibid., 2.

7 Ibid., 2.

8 Ibid., 2.


10 Ibid., 1.

11 Ibid., 1.

12 Ibid., 1.


14 Ibid., 14.

15 Ibid., 15.
16 Ibid., 15.
17 Ibid., 15.
18 Ibid., 15.
20 Ibid., 1.
21 Ibid., 1-2.
24 Ripper, the Jack. “From Hell.” 1.
27 Ibid., 1.
28 Ibid., 1.
31 Ibid., 1.
32 Ibid., 1.
33 Ibid., 1.
34 Ibid., 1.


39 Ibid., 23.

40 Ibid., 23.

41 Ibid., 26.

42 Ibid., 28-29.

43 Ibid., 46.

44 Ibid., 46.

45 Ibid., 46.

46 Ibid., 47.

47 Ibid., 49.

48 Ibid., 59.

49 Ibid., 188.

50 Ibid., 74.

51 Ibid., 74-75.

52 Ibid., 118.

53 Ibid., 128.

54 Ibid., 129.

55 Ibid., 169.

56 Ibid., 133.
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