

# Shadow Of The Ripper



FEATURED NEWS

By Alexander Baron



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This [BBC TV programme](#) was first broadcast in 1988 – the centenary of the Jack The Ripper murders. It is currently back on iPlayer. There have been numerous documentaries on and other explorations of, the Whitechapel Murders, though this one takes a slightly off-beat approach, focusing not on Jack The Ripper himself – about whom is known next to nothing – but on the social construct he has become.

The name Jack The Ripper is attributed to the tabloid press of the day, something that may well be true, but it remains to be seen if this was merely another moral panic whipped up by the crusading editor [W.T. Stead](#), the man who more than any other was responsible for raising the age of consent

from thirteen to sixteen and thus protecting countless thousands of young girls from sexual predators, except in Rotherham.

The three most popular images of the Ripper are those of a doctor, a toff from the West End, and a demented foreigner – usually a Jew or sometimes a Russian doctor. This is attributed to the so-called fear of the other, but what appears to have been forgotten is that these were plausible hypotheses; the killer’s fiendish work may well have required some medical knowledge, a well-heeled individual would probably have been less suspicious than a shabbily dressed one, and one of the **few credible suspects** was a local Jew who went mad.

This documentary has no answers but it does provide what is often missing from the story, the social context of especially the victims and how they came to fall prey to the world’s most enigmatic anonymous psychopath.

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