

## Jack the Ripper: Letters from Hell

Stewart P. Evans, Keith Skinner



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Between August and November 1888 six women were found murdered and mutilated in London's East End and Aldgate. All were prostitutes; one was found on a common landing, one in the street, one in a backyard, one in an entry, one in a public square and the sixth in a house. The murders provoked massive interest in the press and dozens of letters quickly appeared, claiming to have been written by the killer. The origin of the name Jack the Ripper itself was a letter, famously written to 'Dear Boss,' the head of the Central News Agency.

Certain letters have been reproduced or quoted in previous books but Stewart Evans and Keith Skinner are the first to have read and examined every one. This book reproduces and transcribes all the letters, including the 'Dear Boss' correspondence and the horrific letter sent to the chairman of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee together with a piece of human kidney. The authors relate the letters to the complete story of the Whitechapel murders, tracing the hysteria and misconceptions that dogged both the police and Fleet Street during 1888-9 and providing revealing insights into the Victorian psyche.

For the first time the cases of three people arrested by the police for sending 'Jack the Ripper' letters are explored, including that of Maria Coroner, the attractive 21-year-old Bradford girl. Evans and Skinner also examine the letters of seven suspects, including Dr. Roslyn D'Onston Stephenson and Nikaner Benelius. The story of the Ripper letters ends by posing a controversial question: was Jack the Ripper merely a press invention?



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