

The Trial of Jack the Ripper

The Fourth and final Day of Trial

March 19, 1903

[Podcast Part 4]

Developed by R. Michael Gordon

April 2021

The Fourth and final Day of Trial - March 19, 1903

The courtroom is filled with people.
The jury is already in the box.
Klosowski is in the box heavily guarded.



Court Reporter Michael Gosling

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “Good Morning. I’m Michael Gosling. We are back again at the Old Bailey for what could be the final day of this trial. The letter which was delivered to the authorities yesterday and signed Jack the Ripper will not, we are told, have any effect on this trial. The police have indicated that it did not come from the killer and is therefore of no importance to this case. The matter will be allowed to rest there for the time being as this trial continues into the poisoning death of Maud Marsh. This is the case of the Borough Poisoner.”

“The prosecution team has stated that they will finish up early this morning and we are told that the defense will call only one witness. As we watched the accused enter the courtroom this morning, for the first time the prisoner appeared to realize his terrible position and abandoned his attitude of passiveness, he displayed a keen, indeed a feverish, interest in the proceedings. When he entered the dock he was ghastly pale, and even the dim light of the court failed to hide the heightened pallor of the face. The restless movements of the hands, the twitchings of the mouth, all betrayed the emotion which he would fain conceal. We can also report that the accused has received more death threats so security outside and in this courtroom remains tight.”

“Once again the London Press has made themselves known in this case. From the *Pall Mall Gazette* the headline reads ‘The Chapman - Ripper Theory. Fresh statement from an Authority.’ Certainly there is a lively debate on whether Klosowski was also Jack the Ripper.”

Pall Mall Gazette

“THE CHAPMAN/RIPPER THEORY/FRESH STATEMENT FROM AN AUTHORITY - It is interesting to note how many amateur criminologists have come forward with statements to the effect that it is useless to attempt to link Chapman with the Whitechapel atrocities. Others disagree and say it is very possible.”

The Clerk of Arraigns - “Dr. Thomas Stevenson.”



Dr. Thomas Stevenson

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “I see Dr. Stevenson is in the box and is ready to testify. Let’s listen in and hear what the doctor has to say.”

Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “I was at Lynn Churchyard, Cheshire on 22 November, 1902, and I saw Bessie Taylor’s coffin taken from the grave. It had a plate on it, ‘Bessie Chapman, died 13th February, 1901, aged 36 years. The body was covered with a moldy growth, but otherwise was fresh. I made an examination of the various organs. I removed the stomach, bowels, liver, spleen, kidneys, heart, brain, and lungs, and subjected them all to analysis and examination. The analysis showed that antimony was present in all those parts. There was no other poison.”

Mr. Charles Mathews - “How long had the woman been buried?”
Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “About twenty-one months.”
Mr. Charles Mathews - “How long had Isabella Spink been interred?”
Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “Practically five years.”
Mr. Charles Mathews - “And neither body was putrid?”
Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “No.”
Mr. Charles Mathews - “I have no further questions at this time my lord.”
Judge Justice Grantham - “Mr. Hutton?”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “Thank you my lord. Dr. Stevenson, how did you know it was the body of Bessie Taylor?”

Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “I compared Taylor’s features with a photograph which I was told was her, and I could recognize the general contour.”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “There had been a change in her?”

Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “Yes, there had been a change in her which was more remarkable than in the case of Spink, where there had been practically none. I think Taylor’s body contained more antimony than Spink.”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “Where does putrefaction generally begin?”

Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “Putrefaction generally begins through the nose, mouth, and anus, and spreads outwards.”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “Have you any reason to suppose that either of the bodies was not properly cleaned?”

Dr. Thomas Stevenson - “No.”

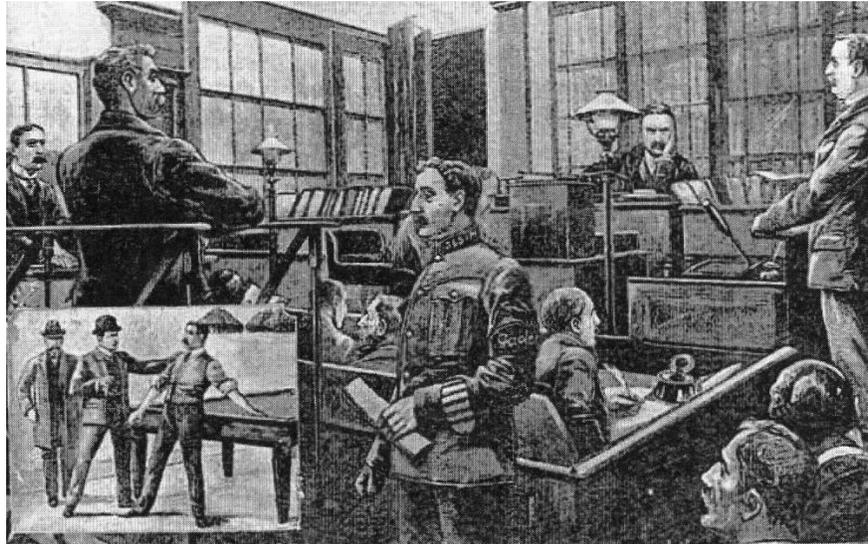
Mr. Arthur Hutton - “No further questions my lord.”

The Clerk of Arraignment - “Inspector George Godley.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “With Doctor Stevenson’s testimony we now have in evidence that all three of Klosowski’s wives were indeed confirmed to have been poisoned by antimony. It is going to be very difficult – if not impossible – for the defense to show that there was some other cause of death or in the case of murder, that any other possible suspect could have been involved.”

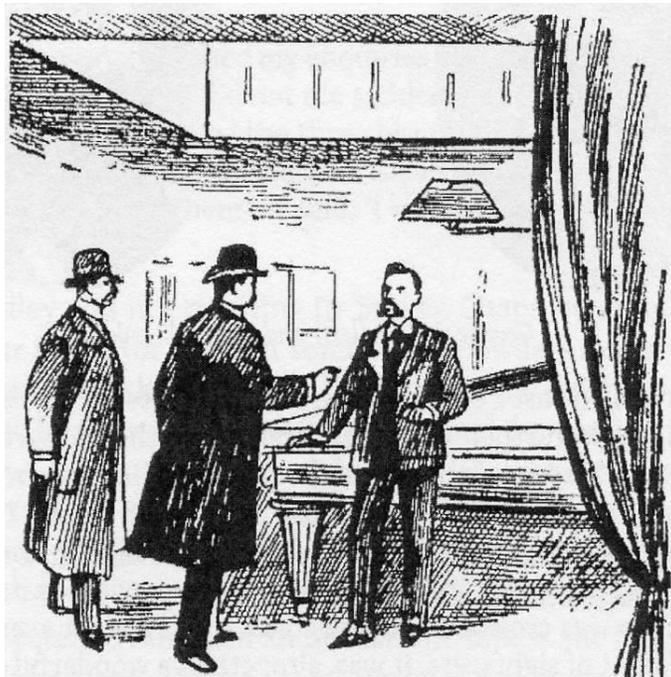
“Next up is the officer in charge of the case, the well-known and much respected Detective Inspector George Godley of Scotland Yard. He is

of course the officer who arrested the accused. History may well show that he was also the man to take Jack the Ripper into custody.”



Klosowski on the left, Inspector Godley on the right (court artist sketch)

Mr. Charles Mathews - “Inspector Godley how did you first hear of this poison situation and what did you do?”



“Are you Mr. Chapman?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “The first communication about this case was made to me through Dr. Stoker about midnight 25th October, 1902. At noon I went to the *Crown* and saw the accused. I said, ‘Are you Mr. Chapman?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘I wish to speak to you quietly. I am inspector of police for this district; Maud Marsh, who has been living with you as your wife, has been poisoned with arsenic, and from the surrounding circumstances I shall take you to the police station while I made inquires.’ He said, ‘I know nothing about it.’ I took the accused’s keys with me to the station with the accused where he was detained.”

[The arrest of Klosowski is shown to the Court.](#)

Detective Inspector George Godley - “I returned to the *Crown* about 4 p.m. In the bedroom I found three powders, which were produced yesterday, some syringes, medical books. I also found the little book in Polish, the papers in Russian, the will, an American revolver in a case, fully loaded, as well as a number of papers and documents. I also found the small poison label in one of his medical books.”

Mr. Charles Mathews - “And what was your next step?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “I saw the accused again at 10:15 p.m. and said, ‘It is now my duty to charge you with the willful murder of Maud Marsh by poisoning her with arsenic.’ He said ‘I am innocent; can I have bail?’ I said, ‘No.’”



Mr. Edward Carson - “No further questions my lord.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Mr. Hutton?”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “No questions my lord.”

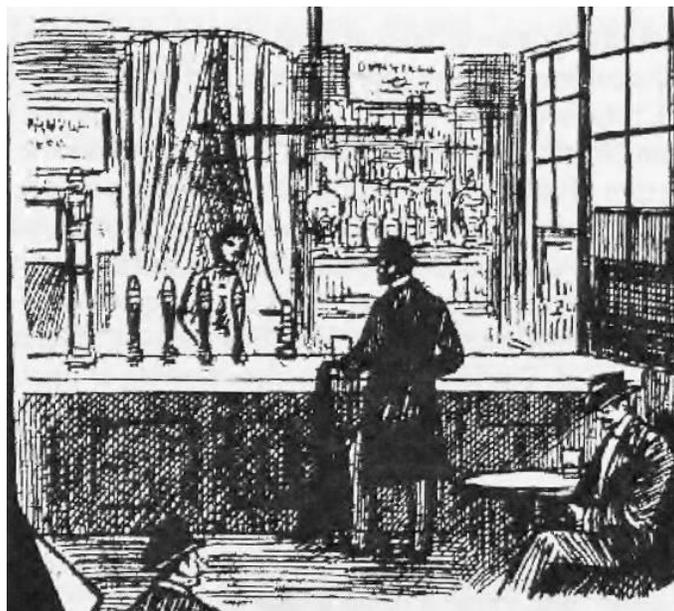
Judge Justice Grantham - “The witness is excused. Mr. Carson call your next witness.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “My lord, the prosecution rests.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Very well Mr. Carson; this court will take a brief recess while the defense prepares its witnesses.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “As you just heard the prosecution has finished up their case with Inspector Godley describing his arrest of Klosowski at the *Crown Public House*. His testimony earlier tied together most of the physical evidence found at the *Crown* to the accused.”

“While we wait for the defense to begin its case I have a note here passed to me earlier by the clerk, which informed me that the accused has received several more death threats. With this in mind the government has already added several more constables to this courtroom as well as outside of the Old Bailey as the crowd has grown. The extra officers will be used for crowd control outside, as there is a very large and noisy crowd outside of this building thought to be in the thousands, as well as extra men to guard the accused while he is in court.”



At the bar in the *Crown Public House*

Judge Justice Grantham - “The court will come to order. Mr. Elliott.”

Mr. George Elliott - “My lord the defense has but one witness and calls George Chapman to the witness box.”

The Clerk of Arraignment - “George Chapman.”

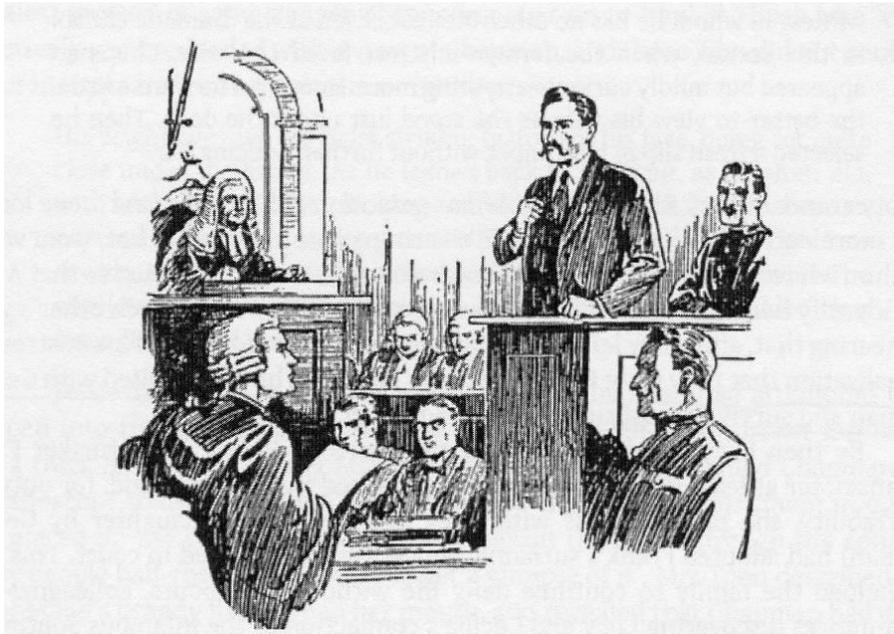
Klosowski is escorted to the box by two guards as the courtroom hears mumblings from the crowd who are very animated.

Judge Justice Grantham - “There will be order in this court. We will maintain order or I will empty the gallery.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “We see that Mr. Elliot has decided to call Severin Klosowski to the stand. His testimony should be most interesting to say the least. I’m certain you can hear the moans from the gallery as the much hated Pole is brought over to the witness box.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Mr. Elliott you may precede.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Thank you my lord. What is your name sir?”



Klosowski in the dock questioned by Mr. George Elliott (court artist sketch)

Severin Klosowski - “My name is George Chapman.”

Mr. George Elliott - “What is your father’s name?”

Severin Klosowski - “My father was Alfred Chapman, a carpenter, who went to New York when I was still a baby.”

Mr. George Elliott - “How long were you in New York with your father?”

Severin Klosowski - “My father died when I was seven years old, and I had to earn my way as an errand boy in a grocery store in New York City. When I was 12 or 13 years of age I took employment with a man who dealt in horses and lived in Jersey City Heights. I do not remember his name. I then worked in a hairdressing business in a shop on Ninth Avenue, New York City.”

Mr. George Elliott - “What was the name of the shop owner?”

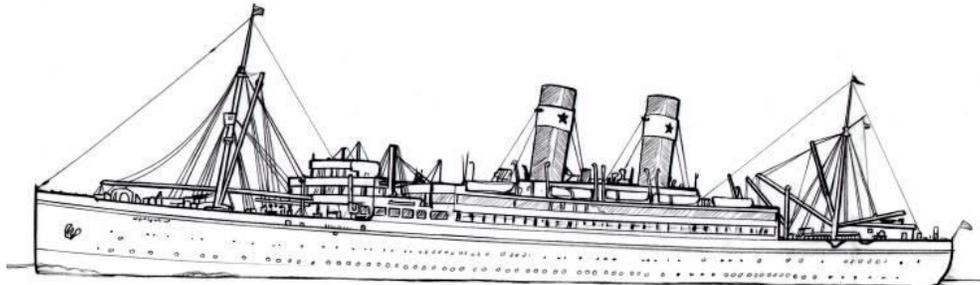
Severin Klosowski - “The shop was owned by a German, whose Christian name was Fredrick. That is all I can recall. In addition to my work as a barber I sold such articles which pertained to the hairdresser’s business, and made extra money.”

Mr. George Elliott - “You were able to save some money then?”

Severin Klosowski - “I was economical, and saved all I could, and my expenses were of the lowest.”

Mr. George Elliott - “When did you come to England?”

Severin Klosowski - “In 1893, having gathered together some £300 I decided to come to England. I crossed the Atlantic in a cattle-boat - the *Westerland* I think her name was. I paid £2 and did some odd work for my passage.”



S.S. Westerland

Mr. George Elliott - “You understand that should you be found guilty of the commission of any crime in England the fact that you state you were born in the United States and are therefore an American citizen would have no effect whatever upon the course of justice?”

Severin Klosowski - “I do sir.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Please tell the Court what did you mean when you told Louisa Marsh, ‘I could give her a bit of like that’ – snapping your fingers - ‘and fifty doctors could not find out?’”

Severin Klosowski - “I meant that the doctors were incompetent and did not know what they were doing.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Is that what you meant when you told Mr. Marsh that, ‘If one doctor cannot cure her, fifty cannot?’”

Severin Klosowski - “Yes. They only wanted to mess with her.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Did Miss Marsh give you any trouble?”

Severin Klosowski - “There was some jealousy lately. She said to me, ‘I have been with you now twelve or thirteen months, and have not had a baby yet; If I do not have one, you won’t have me with you long.’ Her sister would bring her baby with her sometimes, and after she had gone Maud would sit and cry for a long time.”

Mr. George Elliott - “When you told Maud she would not live to see 28 years, what did you mean?”

Severin Klosowski - “Only that she had been sick before and it did not look good for her at that time.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Have you seen anyone else like Maud Marsh before she died?”

Severin Klosowski - “Yes, my other wife was much the same.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Mr. Chapman, what do you want this court to remember about yourself?”

Severin Klosowski - “One thing I wish to be remembered is that I am an American orphaned of good family and I left my foster father, against his wish. I took to earning my own living at age of ten. And since that time I worked the best I could.”

Mr. George Elliott - “What can you say about Bessie Taylor?”

Severin Klosowski - “I have never been so unlucky since I lost that poor Bessie Taylor and therefore I regretted that day, ever since I have stopped in this country. Believe me; be careful in your life of dangers of other enemies whom are unknown to you.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Are you sorry about anything you stand accused of?”

Severin Klosowski - *[In a loud voice]* “Believe me I am very grievously sorry, but it could not help now. You can see I am not believed. Therefore you see where there is justice.”

Mr. George Elliott - “No further questions my lord.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Thank you Mr. Elliott. Mr. Carson?”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Thank you my lord. Your real name is Severino Klosowski, is it not?”

Severin Klosowski - “I do not know anything about that other name. Who is that other fellow?”

Mr. Edward Carson - “That is you - we call you Klosowski.”

Severin Klosowski - “I am George Chapman. I have informed the American Council in London that I am George Chapman from America. I am an American citizen.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “How do you account for the documents found at your home referencing one Severino Klosowski?”

Severin Klosowski - “I do not account for them. I do not know about them. I have not been there long. The police must have placed them there. You know how these people hate foreigners.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “How do you explain the several witnesses who have positively identified you as Severino Klosowski or other aliases in London in 1888 and 1889 during and after the Whitechapel murders in the East End?”

Severin Klosowski - “They are mistaken. It is some other fellow.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Are you aware that you match the description of the killer in those and other murderous crimes?”

Severin Klosowski - “It is of no consequence. Many men look like that.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “When did you leave Poland?”

Severin Klosowski - “I have never been to Poland. I was born in the State of Michigan.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Can you tell the court the names of anyone in America who can verify your stay in that country?”

Severin Klosowski - “I do not remember any names from my time in America, but I am confident that if my story is given sufficiently wide publicity some of the people who knew me in America will come forward and prove its truth.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Are you aware that the name Severin Klosowski has been found on the passenger list of the *Westerland* which arrived in New York City on April 23, 1891, forty-eight hours before American Ripper victim Carrie Brown was murdered in that city only three blocks from the docks?”



Carrie Brown

Severin Klosowski - “I do not know that man. I know nothing about it.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Are you aware that Lucy Klosowski, who is in this courtroom today and has identified you as her husband, has stated that you did indeed arrive in New York City from England in 1891, and that you threatened her with a large knife after moving to New Jersey?”

Severin Klosowski - “I do not know this woman. Who is she?”

Lucy jumps up and yells at Klosowski.

Lucy Klosowski *[Yelling]* - “Oh, Severino, don’t sat that. You remember the time you nearly killed me in Jersey City!”

Severin Klosowski - *[Yelling]* “I tell you I do not know this woman!”

Judge Justice Grantham - *[Yelling]* “Order in this courtroom. Order. Sheriff remove that woman. We will have order in this court. The defendant will sit down”

The crowd in the room reacts as they watch the action as order is restored.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Mr. Carson you may continue with your examination.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Thank you my lord. Maud Marsh, who has been living with you as your wife has been poisoned. What do you know about it?”

Severin Klosowski - “I know nothing about it. I don’t know how she got the poison. She has been in Guy’s Hospital for some sort of sickness. Perhaps it was a bad rabbit.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “You never married Maud Marsh did you?”

Severin Klosowski - “No.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Or the other women you stand accused of killing did you?”

Severin Klosowski - “No. I am innocent.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “You lied, did you not, about being married to these women?”

Severin Klosowski - “Yes.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “When Inspector Godley informed you that you were being charged with murder you stated, ‘By what means, stabbing, shooting, or what?’ What did you mean by that statement?”

Severin Klosowski - “I do not know what I meant.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “I would submit that you were remembering the Ripper murders when you were asked about the stabbings and the American murders with a revolver!”

Severin Klosowski - “No. I know nothing about them.”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “My lord I must object to this line of questioning.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Sustained.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Perhaps you were recalling the 4th murder committed by the Ripper in America when the victim was shot in the back?”

Severin Klosowski - “No!”

Mr. Arthur Hutton - “My lord I must object once again to this whole line of questioning.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Sustained. Mr. Carson you will confine your questions to this case and this case only.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Yes my lord. Is it not true that a fully loaded 32 cal. American pistol owned by you was found at the *Crown Public House*?”

Severin Klosowski - “Yes.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “And you deny using it to kill anyone in America?”

Severin Klosowski - “No, I mean yes, I deny it!”

Mr. Edward Carson - “What did you mean when you told Florence Rayner, ‘If I give her ‘that’ she would be no more Mrs. Chapman’?”

Severin Klosowski - “I meant nothing by it. It was a joke.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Were you planning another trip to America late last year?”

Severin Klosowski - “I had no plans. I simply discussed it.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Why then did you tell Florence Rayner you would send her to America and then follow?”

Severin Klosowski - “She is mistaken. She drinks too much.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Did you kill Maud Marsh Mr. Klosowski?”

Severin Klosowski - [\[In a loud voice\]](#) “No! I would not hurt her for the world. I am George Chapman.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “There have been other deaths have there not?”

Severin Klosowski - “Yes. I have had a lot of trouble with my barmaids, but I took a great fancy to this one.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “And when you take a fancy to one you kill them. Don’t you?”

Severin Klosowski - [\[In a loud voice\]](#) “No!”

Mr. Edward Carson - “When you told Inspector Godley, ‘She did not die suddenly; if she had been poisoned she would have done. How would you know and what did you mean?’”

Severin Klosowski - “Poison kills quickly. Maud had been ill for some time. She had been in Guy’s Hospital.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “Did you kill any of these women, Mr. Klosowski?”

Severin Klosowski - “It is no good to me to deny. If I was guilty I would say. But as I am not therefore I must insist upon to my last as I cannot accuse myself of which I am innocent of. [\[Yelling\]](#) “My name is Chapman.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “How shall you answer if you are convicted?”

Severin Klosowski - [\[In a loud voice\]](#) “They can take my life, but they cannot kill my soul and take it from me. God is my judge and I pray to have mercy on my soul, for my sins which I have done during my life.”

[Klosowski jumps up and shouts. His guards move very close to Klosowski.](#)

Severin Klosowski - “As to crime I am innocent and I have clear conscience of it!”

[Crowd in the court starts making noise.](#)

Judge Justice Grantham - “Order in this court. The defendant will sit down. [Pause] Mr. Carson do you have any further questions of this witness.”

Mr. Edward Carson - “My lord, the Crown has no further questions of this [Pause] witness.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Mr. Elliott?”

Mr. George Elliott - [Standing to speak] “Your Honor, the defense rests.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Very well. This court is in recess for ten minutes, after which will hear closing arguments.”

[Klosowski is escorted to a side room followed by Mr. Elliott.](#)

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “A dramatic end to be sure. As you can see before making his closing arguments Mr. Elliott has gone to a room adjoining this Court, we can expect to confer with the accused and one of the doctors in the case presumably for the purpose of obtaining something upon which to form his plea.”

“It must be said however, that in almost every trial for murder there exists until the end of the proceedings a strong element of doubt as to the ultimate issue; but from the beginning of Klosowski’s trial there does not appear to be any shadow of doubt as to how the matter will eventually end. Mr. Elliott certainly has a monumental task before him as he faces the men of the jury who have been grim to say the very least.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “This court is called to order. Mr. Elliott you may precede.”

Mr. George Elliott - “Thank you my lord. Gentlemen of the jury, I fully admit the magnitude of the task before me, especially as the Solicitor-General, by virtue of his position as an officer of the Crown, has the right of reply. The case, unfortunately, has been surrounded by a storm of prejudice which in any other country might have imperiled the calm administration of justice. There is also the fact that the accused is an alien, and we all know the feelings which at the present time are entertained generally against the immigration of aliens into this country. Thus, in addition to the prejudice I have referred to, I have the great difficulty of the accused’s nationality to deal with.”

[Elliott faces the jury of 12 directly.](#)

Mr. George Elliott - “The accused undoubtedly stands before you under circumstances most lamentable. His is a crime, if guilty he be which has ever been regarded with the utmost horror, and no doubt, gentlemen, during the four days you have been occupied upon this case, you have been wondering what could have been the accused’s motive. There are not the usual inducements present in cases of this kind. There was no necessity for the accused to resort to any act of this sort to free himself from the one woman so that he might live with another. None of the women appears to have thrown any difficulty in the way of living with the accused, so that of any adequate motive for the crime there was none. I would ask you, gentlemen, to remember that I am not here to prove the accused’s innocence. I am here to refute the proofs of guilt put forward by the Crown, and unless you are satisfied beyond all human doubt that this hideous charge has been substantiated against the accused – if I can show that the Crown have not proved their case – I feel sure it will be your duty and your pleasure to free yourselves from the responsibility of having to send to his doom a fellow-creature, however loathsome and revolting you might in other respects regard him.”

[Mr. Elliott motions to several exhibits.](#)

Mr. George Elliott - “The purchase of the tartar-emetic at Hastings is undoubtedly a most important incident, but I cannot help thinking that Mr. Davidson, the chemist, was singularly accessible in the easy sale of poisons, and that his memory must be somewhat defective. You have heard throughout that the accused had no objection to the free access of doctors to the deceased persons. Nor did he in any way attempt to disguise his movements. Indeed, when he was arrested he was in possession of a list of the houses he had kept and the dates he had occupied them. Again, none of the women appeared to have any serious complaint of the accused’s conduct towards them. Indeed, some of the witnesses had spoken strongly of his affection for the women and the solicitude he always showed for their recovery. He did not even select for himself the doctors called in to attend the women.”

[Mr. Elliott pauses to dramatic effect.](#)

Mr. George Elliott - “In the case of Maud Marsh it had been suggested he had deliberately murdered her to marry Florence Rayner, but

why should he have done this? He had but to tell Maud Marsh to go and she must have left, as she had no claim upon him. Or he might have gone away himself, as he suggested to Florence Rayner he was willing to do, to America. The illness of Maud Marsh had in truth nothing to do with the appearance on the scene of Florence Rayner. In Dr. Stevenson's evidence I admit I have an overwhelming case to meet, but I think you will pause before you condemn a man merely upon the scientific evidence of a gentleman, however eminent he may be, without strong corroboration."

Klosowski bursts into tears and covers his face with his handkerchief.

Mr. George Elliott - "In conclusion, gentlemen, I would remind you that if you condemn the accused by your verdict it will be impossible to repair the mistake, if mistake has been made. Your verdict will be irrevocable, and I beg you to pause long before finding the accused guilty. The accused is a hated alien, and has all the prejudice against him which lies in that term, but I confidently appeal to you to exercise that wise and prudent consideration which always in this Court holds the balance between right and wrong."

Judge Justice Grantham - "Thank you Mr. Elliott."

Mr. Carson stands to speak.

Judge Justice Grantham - "One moment Mr. Carson."

Clerk goes to the bench to hand the judge a note who then reads it to himself
- reporter makes a few comments.

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - "While his counsel was speaking we could see the prisoner swaying backwards and forwards, pendulum-like, in his chair. If he diverted his gaze from Mr. Elliott it was to shoot a penetrating glance at the jury, trusting one would think to detect some gleam of hope there, or some sign that the impassioned appeal of counsel was making an impression upon their minds. I may say to you now that there was not a scrap of evidence directing favorable to the prisoner."

Judge Justice Grantham - "Mr. Carson you may precede."

Mr. Edward Carson - “Thank you my lord. I have to congratulate my learned friend, Mr. Elliott, upon his able defense. In this Court we know no difference between the alien and the stranger and a citizen of this country. It is our proud boast that here, at all events, whatever it may be in other countries, it matters not to us who is the person on his trial, as all are entitled to the same law and the same justice.”

Pausing to look squarely at jury,
Carson continues to address the court.

Mr. Edward Carson - “Learned counsel has commented upon the absence of motive, but what is the use of seeking for motive when we have the actual fact of the murder? In this instance there was the most ample motive, for the prisoner’s was a history of unbridled, heartless, and cruel lust. The case does not rest merely upon scientific evidence. There is the most ample corroboration. It is the prisoner who has been shown to have purchased a large quantity of antimony – we have the very label – and the poison is the poison which was common to all the persons whose deaths we are inquiring into. There is the same hand in each of the poisonings, and the little risk he ran in calling in the doctors is shown by the number of surgeons who were actually called in, and all of whom were deceived as to what these women suffered from. The prisoner’s skill in medicine showed how far he could go. The doctors thought they were dealing with a respectable man, and hence they were deceived into giving certificates of death.”

“It is a most serious thing for a doctor to throw suspicion upon a household, and the prisoner in his statements showed conclusively how accurate he was in his power to deceive the doctors, and if from some cause or other Dr. Stoker had not desired further explanation and had given the prisoner a certificate of death in the case of Maud Marsh, it is shocking to contemplate what might still be going on at the *Crown*. The attentions paid by the prisoner to these women were the necessary mask for all that foul plot. We have now to do justice in the matter, and the exigencies of public justice and public law require you to do your duty like men.”

Again Klosowski bursts into tears and covers his face and shakes his head.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Gentlemen of the jury, after the two eloquent addresses you have heard, I am sure it is unnecessary for me to remind you of the gravity of the task on which you are engaged, or do more than remind you that the issue is one on which the life of the prisoner

depends, and that the unhappy girl Maud Marsh died from the administration of poison.”

The men of the jury are paying very close attention to the Judge.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Probably you know enough of criminal law – the basis of our law, and where it is different from that of other countries, that we strain every nerve to prevent the jury being aware of any bad antecedents of the prisoner, and of any previous convictions, and probably you were not surprised with the learned counsel, who has done everything he could for his client, when he objected to any evidence connected with the unhappy deaths of Mrs. Spink and Bessie Taylor. The evidence being admitted is inconsistent with the usual rule. Here all you have to do is to determine whether Maud Marsh died at the hands of the prisoner, and you have nothing to do with the question as to whether Mrs. Spink, Miss Taylor or anyone else died at his hands.”

“Gentlemen it is true the accused has studied in a medical school at Warsaw, and he has occupied the position of, shall I say, a superior dresser, a sort of junior surgeon, and in that way he has acquired a certain amount of medical skill.”

The jury members begin to look even grimmer than before.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Now, we have first of all the case of Mrs. Spink as long ago as 1897. We do not know so much about it, for the reason that we are not trying him on that murder. I am only referring to it to show the effect of his conduct, and to show he was completely enabled to baffle the skilled medical man, Dr. Rogers.”

“Then after 1897 you find another woman who fell a victim to his lust, Bessie Taylor, taken ill in the same way. Dr. Stoker is called in. It is certainly unfortunate that his memory should be such a blank as to what he did in this case, but I know the position that doctors of that position are placed in.”

Photos of the victims are displayed to the right of the jury box.

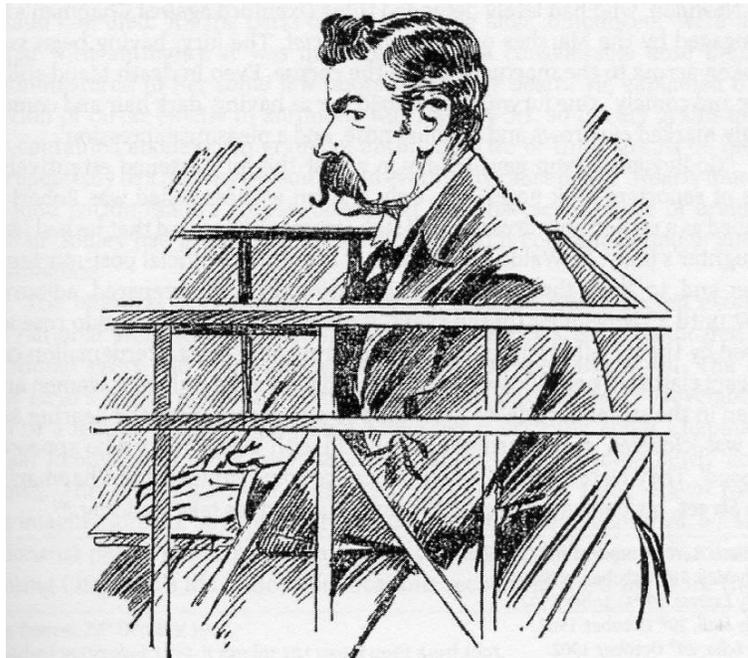
Judge Justice Grantham - “Now gentlemen, if you believe Dr. Stevenson, there can be no doubt that these poor women died of antimony. Antimony is a well-known poison, but, although in the pharmacopoeia, it is rarely used now; its effects are well known. By whom was it given? That is

the investigation to which your attention has been drawn and which you will have to determine by your verdict. Who had the opportunity of administering it? If the accused had the opportunity of administering the food and drink, he had the opportunity of administering antimony, and someone did administer it. Now, therefore, you have clearly one strong element in this case, namely, the possession of antimony by the prisoner. He is the only person in each of the three cases who had the opportunity of administering the poison.”

Pausing and looking very serious.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Gentlemen, my task is over. I was going to say your task begins, but the painful part of your duty will be to say what your verdict will be. Think over the evidence which has been given and come to a proper conclusion in the case, namely, a clear conclusion if you can one way or the other, is the prisoner guilty or not. If there is any doubt in your minds, by all means give the prisoner the benefit of it. If you have no doubt about it, then, gentlemen, you have one duty, a painful one it must be, in the verdict you must find.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “Gentlemen, will you consider your verdict?”



Klosowski in the dock (court artist sketch)

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “When his Lordship was summing up and Klosowski seems to have seen that his last hope had gone, we can see him sink back on his seat and his head dropped upon his breast. The prisoner had to be helped from the dock when the jury retired. It would appear that the Judge was so clearly influenced by what he feels is the obvious guilt of the accused that his speech became almost a continuation of counsel’s speech for the prosecution.”

The reporter and Inspector Godley are seated together.

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “While we wait for the jury to decide the fate of Severin Klosowski, we have the honor of speaking with the officer in charge of this case, Detective-Inspector George Godley. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us Inspector.”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “My pleasure Mr. Gosling.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “Inspector, how well were you able to search the *Crown Public House* for evidence in this case?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “I made a complete search all through the house, and dealt with everything that I considered relevant to this charge. It was a full search.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “We heard about the possibility that Klosowski may have killed for money. Was money ever an issue in the Maud Marsh murder?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “I made inquiries to find if Maud had been insured, but I could not find that she had. Money was clearly not the motive in this case.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “Inspector, turning to another issue presently in the public mind, were you ever able to prove that Klosowski lived in the building where the first Ripper murder occurred in 1888?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “Yes, Sir. We found that at the time of the first two Ripper murders Klosowski was undoubtedly occupying lodging in George Yard, Whitechapel Road, where the first murder was committed. Moreover, he occasionally carry a black bag and wore a ‘P and O’ cap. The man who was wanted in connection with the Whitechapel murders at times wore a ‘P and O’ cap and carried a black bag, according to the tale of some witnesses.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “What about his travels to America?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “In pursuing our investigation into the movements of Klosowski we found that he went to New Jersey City soon after the Ripper atrocities ceased, and opened a barber’s shop there. It will be remembered that soon after the murders ceased in London crimes of a similar character were committed in America.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “Inspector, there was one individual who did not testify at this trial because she could not be compelled to testify against her husband – Lucy Klosowski. Could you tell us what you learned, if anything from Mrs. Klosowski?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “Indeed, Klosowski’s real wife Lucy, who was present in the Central Criminal Court this week, had made a startling statement to the police as to what occurred in the New Jersey shop. She stated that on one occasion, when she had had a quarrel with her husband, he held her down on the bed, and pressed his face against her mouth to keep her from screaming. At that moment a customer entered the shop immediately in front of the room, and Klosowski got up to attend him.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “That must have been terrifying Inspector. What happened next?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “The woman chanced to see a handle protruding from underneath the pillow. She stated that she found, to her horror, that it was a sharp and formidable knife, which she promptly hid. Later, Klosowski deliberately told her that he meant to cut her head off, and pointed to a place in the room where he meant to have buried her.”

[With a shocked look on his face the reporter asks for details.](#)

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “What did she say to her husband?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “She said, ‘But the neighbors would have asked where I had gone to.’ Klosowski then calmly stated, ‘Oh, I should simply have told them that you had gone back to New York.’ It was shortly after that attempt that Mrs. Klosowski left her husband and fled back to England.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “Inspector, will we ever know the full story of Klosowski’s murderous career?”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “I have considerable doubt whether the full extent of the criminality of Klosowski has been nearly revealed by the recent investigation and trial, remarkable as they were in their extent.”

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “A remarkable story inspector. Thank you for your time sir. I see that the jury is already returning. I would guess that it has only been [Pause] 10 or 11 minutes. To be certain that is not normally a good sign for the defense.”

Background noise in court quiets down.

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - “I see that Klosowski is being helped once again back into the courtroom. He seems terrified, not unlike a trapped animal as we can see he now grips the bar with both hands.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “The court will come to order. I remind everyone that I will not tolerate any outbursts from anyone in this courtroom as the verdict is read. The Clerk of the Arraignment will question the jury.”

The Clerk of Arraignment - “Gentlemen of the jury. Have you agreed upon your verdict?”

The Jury Foreman - “We have sir. We find the prisoner guilty.”



The Jury Foreman

There are gasps in the courtroom as Klosowski slumps back into the chair - he covers his face and sobs.

The Judge puts on the black death cap.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Severin Klosowski, for I decline to call you by the English name you have assumed, the only satisfactory feature in the case we have just completed is that I am able to address you as a foreigner and not as an Englishman. The jury came to the only conclusion which I am sure everyone who has heard the case would have come to. It is not necessary for me to go through the harrowing details of the case, or refer again to the frightful cruelty you have been guilty of in murdering year by year women on whom you have gratified your vile lust. I have but one duty to perform – and it is not necessary for me to say more – it is the duty of sentencing you to death.”

Klosowski gasps and slumps to his seat as he sobs.

Judge Justice Grantham - “Sheriff take the condemned man to the holding cell.”

Judge Justice Grantham - “The jury is dismissed with the Court’s thanks for a job well done. Everyone will stay in their seats until the condemned man is removed. [Pause] This case is closed. We are adjourned.”

Klosowski is taken by guards and is half-dragged
to a holding cell as the public cheers.
He is visually shaking and sobbing.

Court Reporter Michael Gosling - [Speaks over the background noise in the court] “That does it for Klosowski. Terror seems to have rendered him speechless. Now condemned to death by Judge Grantham. As is custom there will be an automatic appeal to the Home Secretary, but it is not much more than an outside chance at best. It is very doubtful that the Home Secretary will make any motions on behalf of Severino Klosowski. If the appeal fails doubtless we will witness the execution of Klosowski at Wandsworth Prison sometime within the next three weeks. If and when that happens we will bring it to you live from the prison.”

“This is Michael Gosling reporting from the Old Bailey, London. Wishing you all a good evening.”

Inspector Abberline walks over to his old friend Inspector Godley.

Detective Inspector Frederick G. Abberline - “Congratulations my old friend. You’ve just got Jack the Ripper at last!”

Detective Inspector George Godley - “Thank you Fred. But I certainly didn’t get him on my own. But it does now seem that justice has been done for the women of Whitechapel.”

Detective Inspector Frederick G. Abberline - “Indeed it has my friend. Indeed it has.”

Klosowski is driven away through the crowd outside of the courtroom as they yell and hiss - some throwing food at the carriage - police push back the crowd as best they can.

The next day the people of London were informed by the Press.

March 20, 1903

The South London Press

THE SOUTHWARK POISONINGS

On Thursday, the fourth day of the trial at the Old Bailey, the cold-blooded murderer Severino Klosowski, the Russian Pole, who assumed the English name of George Chapman, was sentenced to death by Mr. Justice Grantham, who in passing judgment said, “The only satisfactory feature of the case just completed is that I have been able to address you as a foreigner and not as an Englishman.

NO POISON THAT CANNOT BE TRACED

The miscreant, Chapman, was only a clumsy poisoner after all. That snap of his thumb and finger and that statement of his to the sister of his last victim, Maud Marsh, that he could “give her a dose which sixty doctors could not discover,” exhibits the depth of his ignorance of modern scientific analysis, and the wantonness of his criminal folly. It forged an important link in the chain of evidence which hands over a depraved murderer to the common hangman. The truth is that there is no poison today the administration of which to a human subject cannot be traced, and in this fact lies the public safety.

XX

March 24, 1903

Pall Mall Gazette

**THE CHAPMAN-RIPPER THEORY.
INSPECTOR ABBERLINE INTERVIEWED.
A REMARKABLE STORY.**

[Special to the “Pall Mall Gazette”.]

Should Klosowski, the wretched man now lying under sentence of death for wife-poisoning, go to the scaffold without a “last dying speech and

confession,” a great mystery may forever remain unsolved, but the conviction that “Chapman” and “Jack the Ripper” were one and the same person will not in the least be weakened in the mind of the man who is, perhaps, better qualified than anyone else in this country to express an opinion in the matter. We allude to Mr. F. G. Abberline, formerly Chief Detective-inspector of Scotland Yard; the official who had full charge of the criminal investigations at the time of the terrible murders in Whitechapel.

When a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette* called on Mr. Abberline yesterday and asked for his views on the startling theory set up by one of the morning papers, the retired detective said: “What an extraordinary thing it is that you should just have called upon me now. I had just commenced, not knowing anything about the report in the newspaper, to write to the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Macnaghten, to say how strongly I was impressed with the opinion that Chapman was also the author of the Whitechapel murders. Your appearance saves me the trouble. I intended to write on Friday, but a fall in the garden, injuring my hand and shoulder, prevented my doing so until to-day.

Mr. Abberline had already covered a page and a half of foolscap, and was surrounded with a sheaf of documents and newspaper cuttings dealing with the ghastly outrages of 1888.

XX

Pall Mall Gazette – March 31, 1903
THE CHAPMAN-RIPPER THEORY.
FRESH STATEMENT FROM AN AUTHORITY.

[Special to the “*Pall Mall Gazette*”.]

Since the *Pall Mall Gazette* a few days ago gave a series of coincidences supporting the theory that Klosowski, or Chapman, as he was for some time called, was the perpetrator of the “Jack the Ripper” murders in Whitechapel fifteen years ago, it has been interesting to note how many amateur criminologists have come forward with statements to the effect that it is useless to attempt to link Chapman with the Whitechapel atrocities. This cannot possibly be the same man, it is said, because, first of all, Chapman is not the miscreant who could have done the previous deeds, and, secondly, it is contended that the Whitechapel murderer has long been known to be beyond the reach of earthly justice.

In order, if possible, to clear the ground with respect to the latter statement particularly, a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette* again called on Mr. F. G. Abberline, formerly Chief Detective Inspector of Scotland Yard, yesterday, and elicited the following statement from him:-

“You can state most emphatically,” said Mr. Abberline, “that Scotland Yard is really no wiser on the subject than it was fifteen years

ago. It is simple nonsense to talk of the police having proof that the man is dead. I am, and always have been, in the closest touch with Scotland Yard, and it would have been next to impossible for me not to have known all about it. Besides, the authorities would have been only too glad to make an end of such a mystery, if only for their own credit.”

XX

Klosowski’s last letter from the Death Cell

It is no good to me Deny. If I was guilty I would say. But as I am not therefore I must insist upon to my Last as I cannot accused myself of which I am innocent of. One thing whod I wish is this to be Remembered as I am an American orphend of good family and I left my foster father, against his wish, and I took to ernaling my own living at age of ten. And since that time I worked the best I could get, and although I never been so unlucky since I lost that poor Bessie Taylor and Therefore I regretted that day ever since I have stoppped in this country. Believe me, be careful in your life of dangers of other enimis whom are unnow to you. I pray God for sinners who are suffering unjustly in this country. Believe me I am werry grievously sorry but it could not help now. You can see I am not believed.

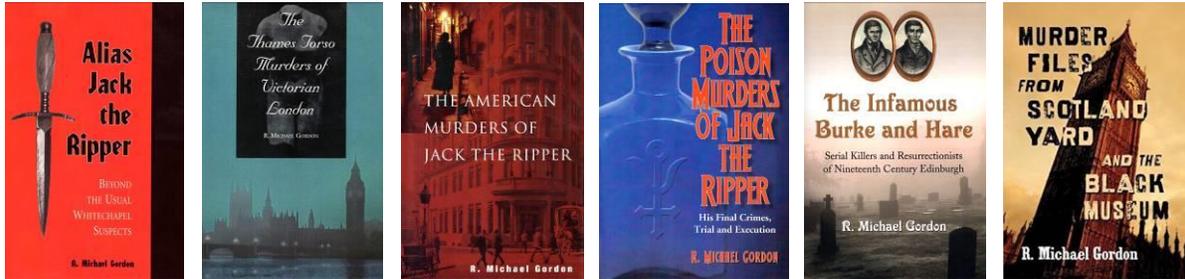
Therefore you see where there is Justice. They can take my life, but they cannot kil my soul, and tak it from me. God is my Judge and I Pray to have Mercy on my soul, for my sins which I have dun durin my life. But as to crime I am innocent and I have clear consciuous of it. Shall be now starting preparing for my Deth as it is past four o’clock afternoon. I enclose this letter with great sorrow, and I cannot express it any more. Therefore good-bye to you all from yours ever faithfully freent.

G. Chapman

Jack the Ripper

**The Trial of Jack the Ripper
by R. Michael Gordon**

Historic True Crime Books by R. Michael Gordon



R. Michael Gordon was born in Ontario, Canada, and lived in southern England during the 1960s, later moving to Los Angeles, California. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, in Geography and Earth Science at California State University at Dominguez Hills. Michael worked as an aerospace Illustrator and Art Supervisor for 25 years at aerospace subcontractor Subia Inc. and later Hughes Aircraft Company, working on Apollo, Skylab, Viking, Voyager and other spacecraft programs. He has maintained a personal library on the United States space program including folders on every American manned flight from Mercury to the Space Shuttle program for decades. Michael began writing full-time in 1998.

R. Michael Gordon podcast Interviews

A podcast interview with R. Michael Gordon on the subject of Jack the Ripper may be heard on Casebook.org “The Chapman Ripper Theory”.

A six part podcast interview with R. Michael Gordon may also be heard on the Wash Ripper + Jude website.

For an entirely different experience, we invite our readers to enjoy a science fiction book series in weekly podcast format titled, “The Aftermath: Of the War of the Worlds.” This 76 part series by R. Michael Gordon explores the aftermath of H. G. Wells’ classic tale of Martians invading the Earth and continues the story. This weekly science fiction series can be found on Mads&Tulle.com.