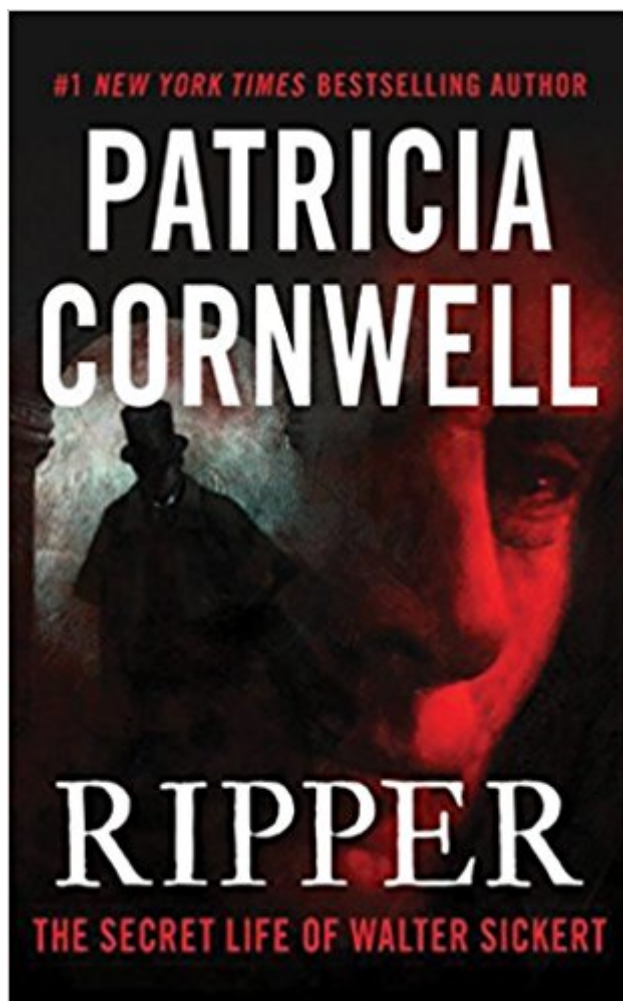


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# Ripper: The Secret Life Of Walter Sickert



## Synopsis

From New York Times bestselling author Patricia Cornwell comes *Ripper: The Secret Life of Walter Sickert*, a comprehensive and intriguing exposé of one of the world's most chilling cases of serial murder—and the police force that failed to solve it. Vain and charismatic Walter Sickert made a name for himself as a painter in Victorian London. But the ghoulish nature of his art—as well as extensive evidence—points to another name, one that's left its bloody mark on the pages of history: Jack the Ripper. Cornwell has collected never-before-seen archival material—including a rare mortuary photo, personal correspondence and a will with a mysterious autopsy clause—and applied cutting-edge forensic science to open an old crime to new scrutiny. Incorporating material from *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper—Case Closed*, this new edition has been revised and expanded to include eight new chapters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An **Best Book of the Month: History** —A groundbreaking revisitation of one of history's most notorious and hotly debated unsolved mysteries. Patricia Cornwell's knowledge of criminology and forensics is near unrivaled, and her passionate and informed narration—told with unwavering conviction—may just tip the scales of justice once and for all. • **Criminal Element** —A highly readable exposé of perhaps the world's most famously chilling case of serial murder; the vain efforts of the police to solve the crimes; and the compelling revelations [Patricia's] exhaustive research has unearthed. • **The Huffington Post** --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Patricia Cornwell was born in Florida and raised in North Carolina. She sold her first novel, *Postmortem*, while working as a computer analyst at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Richmond, Virginia. *Postmortem* was her first bona fide forensic thriller, and it would go on to win the Edgar, Creasey, Anthony and Macavity awards as well as the French Prix du roman d'â™aventures. Since then, sheâ™s authored twenty-nine New York Times bestsellers and won the Sherlock Award, the Gold Dagger Award, the RBA Thriller Award and the Medal of Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters for her contributions to literary and artistic development. To date, Cornwellâ™s books have sold over 100 million copies in 36 languages in over 120 countries. She now lives in Boston, where she tirelessly researches advanced forensic techniques to include in her work.

Cornwell here restates her highly speculative assertion (as previously presented in her *PORTRAIT OF A KILLER* and *CHASING THE RIPPER*) that Walter Sickert, a famous painter, was also the infamous Jack-the-Ripper. While she succeeds in demonstrating that Sickert was eccentric (but which truly great artist isn't to some extent?) she does NOT succeed in proving -- at least to MY satisfaction -- that he was a murderer, let alone that he was the Ripper. Yes, there is typical (and quite interesting, though questionable) Cornwellian forensic "evidence" presented, but even that cannot overcome other factors that would tend to preclude him as a viable suspect. Much of this book is thus sheer conjecture and innuendo -- but making the same argument over and over again doesn't necessarily make it any truer with each repetition. I have read numerous other books about the Ripper murders over a long lifetime, more than a few of which claimed to identify the "real" Jack; some of them actually made compelling arguments for THEIR (varied and different) candidates. Rather recently, Russell Edwards in *NAMING JACK THE RIPPER* used forensic DNA evidence to support HIS candidate; I distrust his overall methodology but tend to be more inclined to believe his choice of perpetrator (someone frequently identified in the past by others as well). But being "more inclined" doesn't mean I am in any way fully convinced. Cornwell's book, while it was fascinating to read, also left me unconvinced. Of course, YOU might decide otherwise, so give the book a try and make up your own mind. After all, it IS well-written, and whether she's right or wrong, or whether you agree with her or not, it's still an intriguing case to read about, ponder, and discuss. In so doing, however, you may also choose to read a more encyclopedic work (such as *THE COMPLETE JACK THE RIPPER* by Donald Rumbelow), one that provides objective, impartial information about ALL the possible Ripper suspects; you may be surprised at how your initial predilection for any one candidate (whether Sickert or someone else) might, ultimately, be swayed by examining other

strong contenders. ADDENDUM: If you are concerned about whether or not this book is worth purchasing in light of Cornwell's previous ones on the very same subject, remember this: If you purchase this as an ebook from the Kindle Store and read it within 7 days, and WITHIN THAT 7-DAY PERIOD decide it is not to your liking FOR ANY REASON, simply call customer support at 1-866-321-8851 (toll free) to return/remove it for a FULL REFUND. That way you cannot consider yourself gypped if you decide this was a less-than-honest effort to merely sell another book. I do, however, think you will be pleased enough by this book to keep it.

Well written, but a stretch that Sickert was the Ripper. Evidence such as his mentor believing he was in London during one of the Ripper murders smacks of trying to force unconfirmed suppositions to conform to the Ripper murders, and this is just one example. Another being paintings that supposedly depicted Ripper killings, and his attending shows at the dance hall that would have him walking the streets where some of the murders took place (not mentioning that other people were on the streets at the very same time (witnesses to the actual killings, others attending the shows, etc.)). The biggest problem I have though is that the monstrous fiend that committed the the butchery of the Mary Jeanette Kelly murder, was at this point totally out of control and probably would have escalated even further in future murders causing him to be eventually caught. The author tries to suggest that murders that happen after Mary Kelly's (which most seem to believe was the Ripper's last) and were more similar to earlier Ripper murders (indicating some deescalation on his part) could also have been done by Sickert, yet no strong evidence is really provided. I believe he wouldn't have stopped and would have most likely escalated where as Sickert seemed at this point not to be very strong on the authorities radar. This author's theory, seems very similar to the unbelievable American Ripper documentary series now On the History channel, which in my opinion, is also making vague suppositions to fit in as stated facts (i.e. H. H. Holmes may have been in London during the Ripper murder time frame because no documentation could be found during that time placing him in Chicago. They don't mention that this could apply to millions of others that also couldn't be proved not to be in London during the same time period). In closing this review, if you like conspiracy theories, then this book may be of interest.

This was an interesting theory on the Jack the Ripper murders. Cornwell used modern technology to analyze what evidence she could get, including DNA. I learned a good bit more about the culture of London and she put everything together nicely. Is it believable? It is tied up so perfectly that it seems almost too good to be true. Is it the true story? We will never really know. Like all theories on

the subject, we will never be able to completely prove or disprove it. I enjoyed her review of her process and I learned a lot, so it does well for me.

I've read all the major books on Jack the Ripper and their theories. They piqued my curiosity and seem plausible. Yet, Patricia Cornwell makes a good case with more research and facts that seem to fit the century old puzzle. Although many Walter Sickert art followers cannot believe he could be Jack the Ripper, Cornwell makes some very astute points which cause me to believe Walter Sickert may well have been the Ripper. (From his own letters and letters and interviews of his friends and family) after reading some of the findings, he also seems to fit the profile of a sociopath as seen through letters and interviews, with his egocentric attitude and behavior, intelligence, secret hideaways (studios), need to be known and given credit for his work through writing hundreds of letters to the papers (and police) and more. I found Cornwell's insight and faithful research intriguing and logical. I am an art follower but Sickert's art is dark and brooding. I've never liked it. When looking at his paintings through the lense of possible murder it seems to fit the Ripper profile. Although, the book is somewhat repetitive in places it is a logical progression of facts and some supposition based on research materials. A very interesting read and fascinating study from a scientific perspective. I doubt very much that the author purposely destroyed any of Sickert's paintings either. I've read Cornwell's other books and she is methodical and uses science to create a story and does not appear to be moved by emotional reaction.

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