

HOW DID THE YORKSHIRE RIPPER REMAIN AT LARGE FOR SO LONG? TWO SOURCES SAY WEST YORKSHIRE CONSTABULARY KNOW MORE THAN THEY'RE WILLING TO ADMIT ABOUT THE SERIAL KILLER'S TRUE TALLY OF VICTIMS

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

PETER SUTCLIFFE

t present, Peter Sutcliffe, dubbed by the media as 'The Yorkshire Ripper' sits in HMP Frankland in Durham. northeast England. The 71-year-old serial slayer, who is serving 20 concurrent life sentences, will never be released. Sutcliffe claims his crimes, so atrocious they struck fear into the heart of every resident in West Yorkshire during the 1970s, were the result of "voices from God" calling on him to rid the streets of prostitutes. But despite the defence's argument that Sutcliffe was - according to four psychiatrists - a paranoid schizophrenic, and should be charged with manslaughter on the grounds of "diminished responsibility", the jury found him guilty of cold-blooded murder in 1981. West Yorkshire Police's most fundamental mistakes in the case, which allowed Sutcliffe to continue his reign of terror were later highlighted. But now, 36-years since his capture, the Yorkshire Ripper continues to be questioned on a string of homicides across the UK dating back to almost a decade prior to his first confirmed murder. He is also being investigated over two homicides in Sweden in 1980. Real Crime spoke to veteran journalist Tim Tate and former East Anglia police officer Chris Clark, authors of Yorkshire Ripper: The Secret Murders, who claim the police knew decades ago that Sutcliffe had more victims. Tate and Clark allege that not only has Sutcliffe manipulated the criminal justice system, but that members of West Yorkshire Police have covered up

YORKSHIRE'S SEEDY UNDERBELLY

their inadequacies secret.

Sutcliffe was born on 2 June 1946 in Bradford, West Yorkshire. One of six siblings, he grew up in a middle class Catholic family. Unlike most serial killers, Sutcliffe's

the true extent of his atrocities in a bid to keep the extent of

childhood was relatively normal and without any traumatic experiences. As a young man, he was regarded as shy, quiet and introverted with an interest in sport. When he left school at the age of 15, he worked menial jobs, including two stints as a gravedigger in a local cemetery. When he was 24 he took a job on a factory packaging line, before moving on to work as a lorry driver.

For much of his young life, Sutcliffe was particularly timid around girls, but by his early 20s, he had married his sweetheart of seven years, Sonia Szurma. But when Sutcliffe suspected she had been unfaithful in the summer of 1969, he turned to using prostitutes to 'even the score' and began visiting Bradford's thriving red light district regularly. Sutcliffe suffered a particularly humiliating experience when a prostitute and her pimp conned him out of £5, laughing in his face and scaring him away when he confronted them. It is this incident that Sutcliffe originally claimed caused his malevolence towards prostitutes to brew beneath the surface of the quiet Yorkshire Dales, and eventually boil over.

Sutcliffe's first confirmed attack was on a prostitute a couple of months after his miserable experience. He attacked the unsuspecting sex worker in broad daylight with a stone encased in a sock, attempting to strike her from behind as she walked down a side street in Bradford. But when the weight of the stone tore through the garment the victim was left with only minor injuries and Sutcliffe fled the scene. Although shaken she was able to note the registration number of the vehicle her attacker sped off in and reported it to West Yorkshire Police.

When traced and questioned about the attack, Sutcliffe did not deny it, but instead insisted to the officers that he had only struck the woman with his open palm. Fortunately for Sutcliffe, his victim's husband was currently in jail, and she did not want to draw attention to herself as working as NELOW Barbara Leach was a 20-year-old university student murdered in early September 1979. Sutcliffe used the same screwdriver he had used on Josephine Whitaker to stab her leaving her semi-naked body in a distorted jack-knife position



a prostitute, so she did not press charges. As Sutcliffe had no criminal record to speak of, he was only cautioned. But a few weeks later Sutcliffe was arrested when he was found crouching behind a privet bush armed with a hammer and, unbeknown to the police, a knife. "He was wrongly arrested for going equipped to burgle, and it's quite obvious he was waiting to pounce on a young lady at that time," said Clark, who spent nearly 30 years as a police officer. "They didn't search him at the scene and the knife he had hidden in his pocket, he was able to hide within the wheel arch of the police van that took him to the police station. When they put him through the books they made no mention of the hammer, so later on when they looked at intelligence reports there was nothing as a starting base to say in 1969 he was arrested and had a hammer having driven off from a red light district." The details of the crime, warped by Sutcliffe's lies about his intentions in the attacks, meant that when he attacked Olive Smelt in a similar way a few years later - struck over the head with a hammer from behind and mutilated with a knife, police did not connect the attack to Sutcliffe.

FATAL MISTAKES

Policing in the 1960s and 1970s, often described as "backwards" at the time of Sutcliffe's sprees, meant that he had ample opportunities to slip through the police's net. For a start, the late-1960s were the days before the Police National Computer, which was not introduced until 1974. At the time everything was stored on index cards. In years to come once Sutcliffe was arrested, the archaic system of handwritten notes and the chaotic vortex of index cards building in the incident room, would be heavily critiqued.

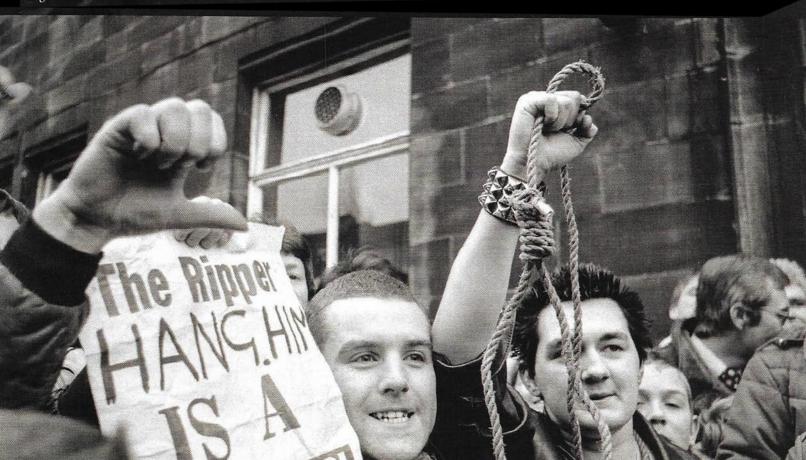
Clark says that an ill-timed merger of forces prior to the height of Sutcliffe's reign of terror was partly to blame for

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how information, on what was to be one of Britain's most infamous serial killers, was handled. "Back in the 1970s police forces didn't talk within their neighbouring divisions, let alone an outside police force." This attitude meant that information on the man terrorising their streets wasn't passed across the invisible boundary of West Yorkshire. "In 1974 there was a police amalgamation throughout the country and the original force of West Yorkshire Police," said Clark. "They brought in Leeds City and Bradford City in 1974 with the local authority boundary changes, so you suddenly had Leeds detectives and Bradford detectives in the same force. Several months prior to Sutcliffe starting they were separate police forces and there was a lot of hostility and fighting within the detective branches. People wouldn't work with their new colleagues so that was where it went wrong." Clark told us that as a result of the amalgamation, "there was quite a lot of bitterness" between officers from once neighbouring forces who now had to work together to find a dangerous killer.

On 5 July 1975, Anna Rogulskyj, a 36-year-old divorcee was on her way to see her boyfriend in Keighley in the early hours of the morning. Sutcliffe bludgeoned her with a ballpeen hammer as he lurked in a doorway. With his victim stunned, he set to work mutilating her genitals and stomach with a knife. When an unsuspecting neighbour disturbed the attack having heard a ruckus outside, Sutcliffe was forced to abandon his macabre plans. Rogulskyj survived but was left incredibly shaken. In August, Olive Smelt and Tracy Brown met a similar fate, each surviving the vicious attacks, but

BELOW Sutcliffe's 1981 trial lasted just two weeks. Much of the evidence against Sutcliffe went uncontested meaning that few witnesses were called to testify against Sutcliffe and little chance given to explore the full potential of the devastation caused by the serial killer



BELOW For decades, the revelations in the Ripper case have dominated the front pages of every major newspaper in



police were unable to find a link between the attempts on their lives. Based on his several years of surveying Sutcliffe's crimes, Clark estimated that the distance between Brown's and Rogulskyj's attacks was only a matter of five kilometres, with Smelt's attack happening a further 13 kilometres away. "They were all very parochial based hammer attacks in July and August of 1975. It would have been quite easy to form an incident room on those three cases and then look at the local records, produce Sutcliffe's file had they filed it properly at that time, and had a result before he had the chance to murder Wilma McCann."

Wilma 'hotpants' McCann was the first fatality in October 1975. The Scottish mother of four from Leeds had picked Sutcliffe up as a customer, but when she supposedly sneered at Sutcliffe's inability to perform, Sutcliffe struck her over the head twice with a hammer and stabbed her 15 times in her neck, chest and abdomen. Months later in January 1976, 42-year-old Emily Jackson was using the family van to tout for business in the form of sexual favours when she was killed. Using his preferred method of killing, Sutcliffe hammered on her skull and stabbed her more than 50 times with a Phillips screwdriver in her neck, chest and abdomen. Her assailant left a size seven boot print on her thigh.

Police linked the two murders, which had happened 11-weeks apart and came to the conclusion that the killer's motive was a hatred of prostitutes, a move criticised by journalist Tim Tate, who moved to West Yorkshire on New Year's Eve 1978 to work on a local newspaper. "If you start with a set of assumptions and everything has to fit those assumptions, then in any investigation, I think the likelihood is that you'll screw up at some point along the line," said Tate. "The first big assumption was that he was targeting prostitutes because the first murder victims they knew about were prostitutes. But that ruled out the ones before that which they also knew about, and which matched the MO, and weren't prostitutes and in some cases weren't even women. I think that was where the investigation was misdirected from the start because it ruled out other cases that should have been ruled in. If they had ruled them in they would have stood a better chance of catching him sooner."

Tate described the atmosphere in the town plagued by random attacks as "one of real fear". He said: "Women did not go out happily at night, certainly not on their own because their fear was that he would attack. Families worried about their husband, brothers, uncles and sons, if they had suspicions they worried if they should tell the police - it was a really frightening time."

THE MAN, THE MYTH

The killer's MO became a distinctive pattern, attacking his victims from behind, mutilating their bodies with a knife and in some cases, although not all, semen was found on or near the bodies. In 1977, West Yorkshire Detective Constable Andy Laptew, having interviewed Sutcliffe during one of nine occasions when police questioned him, suspected that Sutcliffe might be the Ripper. "He went to Detective Superintendent Dick Holland and said 'I think this is the man' and he (Holland) basically ripped the file up or got rid of it," said Clark, who told us that at the time of the Ripper investigations, "the cream did not necessarily rise to the top" in the force and that often lower ranking officers were overlooked by their superiors regardless of their credentials.

Luckily for Sutcliffe, a major distraction was about to come cascading through the force. In March 1978, West



ABOVE A search of one of the Yorkshire Ripper's crime scenes. West Yorkshire Police missed a number of opportunities to put an end to Peter Sutcliffe's killing spree before his eventual arrest in 1981

Yorkshire Police's Assistant Chief Constable George Oldfield received a letter. Postmarked from Sunderland, the author of the note claimed he was the killer. For 18 months, Oldfield and the force were taunted relentlessly by a total of three letters detailing the crimes, and an audio tape. The man, who spoke with a Geordie accent said: "I see you are still having no luck catching me. I have the greatest respect for you George, but Lord! You are no nearer catching me now than four years ago when I started. I reckon your boys are letting you down, George. They can't be much good, can they?" The content of the letters and tape confirmed the force's suspicions that the motive was a hatred of prostitutes.

Investigators focused on the Geordie accent as a prime clue, discarding any of the information passed on by surviving victims about the man who had tried to kill them. Many of the victims, when questioned by police about the man who had attacked them, had insisted the culprit had not had a Geordie accent. Unfortunately for Oldfield and the force, it had all been a hoax. Jack Humble was arrested in 2005 when DNA from the letters revealed him to be the author of the letters and the voice behind the tape.

But Sutcliffe's luck ran out on 2 January 1981. He was arrested in a chance encounter with police as he attempted to murder 24-year-old Olivia Reivers. When police noticed the fake licence plates and the fake name given by its driver, Sutcliffe, they took him in for questioning. Blood samples showed he was the same blood type as the killer. He also closely resembled the multiple E-fits police had of the attacker. He was questioned yet again on the string of unsolved murders plaguing their county. After hours

SUTCLIFFE'S LUCK RAN OUT IN 1981. HE WAS ARRESTED AS HE ATTEMPTED TO MURDER 24-YEAR-OLD OLIVIA REIVERS 22

of intense scrutiny, Sutcliffe surprised everyone when he admitted to being the Yorkshire Ripper and gave a detailed confession of his crimes. According to West Yorkshire Police, Sutcliffe claimed 13 lives. A further seven women had been lucky enough to survive his ferocious and frenzied attacks. But another surprise was in store for the people of West Yorkshire when, at Sutcliffe's trial, the prosecution declined to prosecute.

When the defence put forward their argument that Sutcliffe was mentally ill at Leeds Crown Court in May 1981, the prosecution, led by Attorney General Michael Havers. were - without question - prepared to accept the explanation and offer no evidence against the argument. But Mr Justice Boreham, unsatisfied by Havers' unwillingness to prosecute the defendant, instructed him to proceed with the trial. "But there was still this fatal flaw at the heart of their strategy, which was they had been prepared to accept he was mentally ill and that was how the whole myth, and it is a myth, of Sutcliffe being mentally ill, hearing voices from God and being on a mission to clear the streets of prostitutes began," said Tate, who added: "The final big myth is that he attacked only women. Well he didn't, he murdered one man and left another for dead. All of that, if you look at all the evidence, helps you understand why he killed and that's simply because he got a sexual charge out of killing."

The jury ruled in the majority that Sutcliffe was guilty and he was sentenced to life in prison, serving a minimum of 30 years. In 1991, Sutcliffe was transferred from Parkhurst prison to Broadmoor psychiatric hospital under the Mental Health Act where he remained for over two decades. Tate argues that Sutcliffe manipulated the system into thinking he was mad to avoid taking responsibility for his crimes. "That confession took 17 hours to dictate: nowhere in that does he make a mention of targeting prostitutes, or hearing voices from God, or much less from behind the gravestone telling him to do that." He also pointed out that while awaiting trial

LEFT 20 women were recognised as victims of the Yorkshire Ripper, but evidence suggests there are more faces to add to the collection from across Britain

EFT Following the capture

of the Yorkshire Ripper, the

olice gave a press conference

o deliver the good news. But

pirits were dampened when

omeone in the crowd inquired

vhether or not the man they'd

aught had a Geordie accent,

ke the police had speculated

Sutcliffe told his wife: "I'm going to go away for a long time unless I can convince them I'm mad, in which case I'll do ten years in the loony bin."

Tate said that disproving Sutcliffe's purported mental illness opens up a whole new question. "If Sutcliffe wasn't mad, and he wasn't, if Sutcliffe was not hearing voices from God, and he wasn't, if he wasn't on a mission to clear the streets of prostitutes, and he wasn't, then why did he attack both men and women? What was the motive? And that's where I found it became particularly interesting." He goes on to describe Sutcliffe as a classic necrophile.

THE YORKSHIRE RIPPER | VICTIMS' CLUB

"There's no doubt in my mind that Sutcliffe should be prosecuted for most, possibly even all of the cases that West Yorkshire have the evidence on and that our book details," said Tate, who told us that the biggest misconception people have about the Yorkshire Ripper begins with his name. "The fact is that he killed all over the country, he didn't confine himself to Yorkshire and Manchester." While Sutcliffe sat in Broadmoor Hospital, West Yorkshire's Chief Constable Keith Hellawell devoted ten years and 30 visits trying to get the killer to confess to a list of ten other attacks in the Yorkshire area that he suspected to be related to Sutcliffe. One of the names Hellawell focused on was 24-year-old Barbara Mayo who was found strangled in Ault Hucknall, Derbyshire in 1970. Others included the murder of 43-year-old Yorkshire prostitute Mary Judge, who was discovered on 26 February 1968. Sutcliffe confessed to Tracy Browne's attack and the 1979 attack on Ann Rooney. But the Director of Public Prosecution said it "wasn't in the public interest" to charge and put Sutcliffe on trial again, a decision that Tate and Clark say angered the surviving victims and the families of those who suspect Sutcliffe killed their relatives.

Hellawell's investigations originally identified 78 more potential victims, whose murders or attempted murders bore a similar if not exact MO to Sutcliffe's confirmed tally. He eventually whittled it down to a likely 22 other victims and 13 others who had been attacked but survived: 12 of the murders and attempted murders had been in the force's jurisdiction, but that left 23 other attacks to be answered for elsewhere. "The facts show that he killed in London, in the Midlands and yes, he killed in Yorkshire and Manchester but the very title 'The Yorkshire Ripper' is misleading because he killed all over the country," said Tate. After reading Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son by the late Gordon Brun, Clark says, "I was able to put Sutcliffe in various places including London and the Midlands around the material time that these unsolved murders I had found were committed."

Attacks include the famous London slayings of playboy bunny girl Eve Stratford on 18 March 1975, and the murder of Lynne Weedon on 10 September the same year. Stratford had been strangled while Weedon had been hit over the head, in typical Ripper fashion, as she made her way home. In 2007, DNA evidence showed that the same person had committed the murders but so far no link to Sutcliffe has been made. Tate said that it is misleading to believe Sutcliffe to only be

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a prostitute killer, "even by the official tally of his victims, at least half had absolutely no connection to sex work."

Maureen 'Mo' Lea was 20 years old and an art student at the University of Leeds in 1980 when a stranger, who she later identified as Sutcliffe struck up a conversation near the campus grounds. Lea, concerned for the conspicuous bulge in the stranger's coat tried to run but her attacker caught up with her. All the elements of her attempted murder resembled those favoured by Sutcliffe, but for approximately three decades, police refused to admit their elusive Yorkshire Ripper had attacked her. However, in 2002, West Yorkshire

WRONGLY CONVICTED

THREE MEN WERE SENT TO PRISON FOR CRIMES POTENTIALLY LINKED TO SUTCLIFFE AND REMAINED IN PRISON FOR DECADES BECAUSE OF POLICE MISTAKES

ANDREW EVANS An English soldier, Andrew Evans was sentenced to life in prison, after being wrongly convicted of the murder of 14-year-old Tamworth school girl Judith Roberts in 1972. Judith was dragged from her bicycle as she rode from her home. She was battered to death. Her body was discovered under a pile of hedge clippings and plastic fertiliser bags having been stripped and posed as Sutcliffe did with many of his victims. Evans confessed to the murder after having a dream in which he saw a "hazy combination of women's faces" which convinced the nervous 17 year old that he was the killer. Evans served 25 years before his case became the focus of the British media in 1994. His conviction was finally overturned by the court of appeals in 1997.

STEPHEN DOWNING Downing spent 27 years behind bars after a jury unanimously found him guilty of the murder of 32-year-old legal secretary Wendy Sewell in 1973. The victim was hit over the head, strangled with a ligature and had her dead body posed in the Derbyshire graveyard Downing tended to as a council worker. At his trial, Downing denied the murder but a medical expert testified that the blood found on Downing's clothes could have only been there as a result of him murdering Wendy Sewell. A newspaper campaign in 1997 prompted his conviction to be overturned in 2002. Police also suspected that the body had been disturbed after her death.

ANTHONY STEEL Carol Wilkinson was discovered dead in 1977 in a field at the back of the bakery where she worked in Bradford, West Yorkshire. Steel, who had been a council gardener in the estate where the victim lived, became a suspect 18 months after Wilkinson's murder. His mother-inlaw handed police a fish key ring that was supposedly taken from the victim's handbag after she was murdered. The key ring had been given to her daughter by Steel around the time of the murder. Found guilty of homicide, Steel spent 25 years in prison before he was released in February 2003 after new evidence from both defence and Crown consultant psychologists showed that Steel "is and was mentally handicapped and at the borderline of abnormal suggestibility and compliability. He was therefore a significantly more vulnerable interviewee than could be appreciated at the time of the trial."

Police announced that they had sufficient evidence to charge Sutcliffe with Lea's attack and Debra Schlesinger's 1977 murder but that "it was not in the public interest" to do so.

According to Tate, after speaking with Lea about her ordeal, she told him "no one wants to be a member of the Yorkshire Ripper Victims' Club, but if you are it hurts and is unpleasant when it's officially denied when they know that you were." Clark, who went to great lengths to interview some of the surviving victims and the victims' families, despite being allegedly discouraged by the police says, "most of them are very angry and very bitter" after the way they have been treated. "Particularly Maureen 'Mo' Lea. She got over Sutcliffe, but it was the police denying her case and trying to cover it up that really took its toll over the 36 years since she was attacked. It's far more destructive than what Sutcliffe did to her." Another supposed victim who contacted Clark after the book was published told him that Holland

tried to rubbish her claims that she had been attacked by the Yorkshire Ripper after she was struck over the head on a night out. She told him that the second in command had tried to insist that she had drunk too much and been involved in a domestic incident. When she recognised Sutcliffe after his arrest, she too was dismissed as a potential victim. Clark claims that it was only after the book was published that West Yorkshire Police were forced to visit the surviving victims. "The only reason they have been to interview Sutcliffe twice since he was released from Broadmoor to prison, was because of our initiative and pressure on trying to get the Byford report pages that were withheld into the public domain and recognition for these surviving victims. The West Yorkshire Police are still trying to cover up their previous mistakes made."

much evidence to suggest Sutcliffe was mobile during his escapades. However, much secrecy surrounds each report. Pages of the Byford Report were not published or made public until 2006. To this day the pages titled 'Description of suspects, photofits and other assaults' remain top secret and censored by the Home Office. Hellawell's report remains under lock and key in West Yorkshire Police headquarters. Clark and Tate claim that when they tried to access the reports in their entirety under the Freedom of Information Act for their book, their requests were denied on the grounds that to locate the files would cost too much, and exceed the specified allotted time of 18 hours.

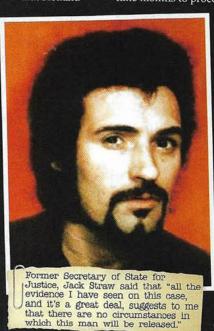
One report showed that by the end of 1980, the force was backlogged by 36,000 documents waiting to be filed. It was estimated that such a workload, had it been delegated efficiently by Oldfield would have taken the existing staff nine months to process (had there been no new crimes in

the meantime). The Byford Report accused the force of lacking "flexibility of the mind" to solve the case. Their "complete acceptance that the author [of the letters] was the killer was not justified by the evidence available at the time and should, in any case, have been tested by rigorous analysis," the report detailed. The decision to use the tape and letters as a basis of elimination of the suspects was apparently "indefensible".

Although Sutcliffe has apparently admitted to two attacks, his body count remains as it always has. Will Sutcliffe ever cooperate with West Yorkshire Police and admit to more offences? "I hope so," said Tate, "but that's more hope than expectation simply because it's an extraordinarily expensive thing to do and because Sutcliffe is not going to cooperate with them." Clark added that, "it depends

on who they appoint and if they have someone to look at it with a fresh look and uncorrupted attitude." But Tate argues that some of the original detectives working on the case are the unsung heroes along with the surviving victims. "A lot of the original detectives were the good guys. They worked incredibly hard. I knew some of them at the time, Chris knows some of them now and it ruined their lives. You imagine dealing with that and the pressure they were under, some of them did incredibly good work and were incredibly dedicated. If you want heroes – they're heroes."

For now West Yorkshire Police remain tight-lipped about what will happen next regarding Sutcliffe and his secret murders. "The Director of Public Prosecutions who made the decision back in the 1990s that it wasn't in the public interests isn't the same person now. Alison Saunders is the DPP now. On record she said that, albeit in a different context regarding historic sex abuse cases, that it is in the public interest to prosecute cold cases. So if you take that as a template then there is a good reason to prosecute."



THE ERRORS OF THEIR WAYS

Once Sutcliffe was incarcerated, attention turned to the force. How had they let Sutcliffe slip through the net all this time? "There were three reports," said Tate. "The Sampson Report, produced in 1981 was an internal inquiry of the West Yorkshire Police, the Byford Report, produced in 1982, by Sir Lawrence Byford from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, and a report written in 1995, by Hellawell that named the 22 other suspected victims. All of which said in unequivocal terms there were many more victims of the Yorkshire Ripper than he was prosecuted for."

As well as pointing out an "unexplainable" six-year lull between Sutcliffe's attacks in 1969 and 1975, the Byford Report says that the Yorkshire Ripper was likely to have struck "not only in the West Yorkshire and Manchester areas but also in other parts of the country." This finding, independent to Hellawell's theories, shows that there is

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LEFT Outside Leeds Crown

HIS MALE VICTIMS

WOMEN WERE REGARDED AS THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF SUTCLIFFE'S ATTACKS, SO WHAT ABOUT THE MEN TATE AND CLARK CLAIM TO BE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF A SERIAL KILLER?

Fred Cravern was a Bingley bookmaker murdered in April 1966. He had been battered over the head with an undisclosed blunt weapon. After he was murdered, the killer made off with £200. Cravern had lived only 100 yards from Sutcliffe in Bradford and like many of Sutcliffe's victims, was no stranger to him. Witnesses claimed to have seen a young man wearing a distinctive cap in the area at the time of the murder. It was confirmed that Sutcliffe as a teenager had a similar cap. Cravern is one of two men mentioned in Tate and Clark's book along with John Tomey, a taxi driver who survived after he was attacked with a ball-peen hammer while on the Moors near Bingley in March 1967. Having picked up a passenger who bore a similar resemblance to Sutcliffe, Tomey managed to lock his assailant out of the taxi and speed off. His attacker ploughed a hammer into the vehicle as he fled. Tomey later singled Sutcliffe out from a collection of mug shots shown to him by police but like with Cravern's case, no action has been taken and the attacks remain unsolved.