



The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper

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This memoir was recently discovered and appears to have been written in the 1920s by someone who asserts that he was Jack the Ripper.

This person is James Carnac, this memoir written shortly before his death is an account of his entire life, including a few short months in 1888 when he became the murderer known to posterity as Jack the Ripper.

This book introduces a new suspect for the infamous murders in Whitechapel in 1888. There is information in this book that does not appear to be derived from contemporary newspapers or any other publications and the descriptions of Tottenham in the 1870s, the visits to performances of Jekyll and Hyde, the intricate geography of Whitechapel in 1888 are written with pin-point accuracy. There is also a credible motive given for James becoming the murderer Jack and also a reason for the end of the murders. Given the fact that the author also appears to have knowledge about aspects of the case not in the public arena at the time it could be that this actually *is* the autobiography of Jack the Ripper.

Ultimately it is up to the reader to decide if they believe the mystery has been solved at last but even if they end up deciding the account to be a work of fiction it would still be one of the very earliest imaginings of the Ripper case, written in the early years of the twentieth century, a fascinating piece of period writing and a worthy addition to the Ripper canon.

Whatever side they come down on there is no question that this book will be a source of much debate.

The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper Details

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Author : James Carnac

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From Reader Review The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper for online ebook

Lynne says

Final Verdict: Avoid this book. If you want facts read a book by someone who has conducted research, or if you want fiction about Jack the Ripper, read something else.

As someone who has made my life's work to study criminals, I have always been fascinated by Jack the Ripper. While I would not consider myself a true Ripperologist, I still read a lot about the famous Whitechapel murders. So when I saw a book about Jack the Ripper on Netgalley, I could not pass. It was with reserved excitement that I began the book.

*Note: I requested this book because I thought it was a fictional account, however it is being presented as if this manuscript was really found. From what I can find, it seems to be classified as non-fiction. That being said, I read it as if it was fiction, and am extremely skeptical of its "origins."

Unfortunately, I cannot give much more of a summary of this book than that it is the life of Jack the Ripper. "Jack" wrote out his memoirs many years after the famous murders and sent the pages to be published after his death. There is a little bit at the beginning to build the back-story about these papers having been passed from different people before someone believed the story enough to try and get it published.

I am not going to lie, this was painful for me to get through, and I really wanted to put it down pretty much the whole way through. With some shame, I will admit, that I really only skimmed the last 50 or so pages—the parts after the manuscript that are supposed to be the historical checking of the story (really just a re-hash of the 'memoir' with lots of family histories). Parts of this book really didn't work for me with my understanding of criminal psychology, and some of the experts' testimonies really bothered me. The main thing that upset me was a bit claiming that offender profiling hadn't been 'invented' when this was 'written'. Yet, profiling has been around in some form since the Romans, and it was attempted with Jack the Ripper (source David Canter, 2010).

The story itself is verbose and horribly paced. It is not until about the 28th page that we make it to the part written by James Carnac, the man claiming to be Jack the Ripper (or J.R. for short). The various letters and comments before that were boring when are trite if it is fiction, or boring if it is really a found manuscript. When Carnac starts writing, it is a long ramble musing about his impact as Jack the Ripper and the misconceptions, but also about what those who knew him would think to know it was him. However, what threw me the most while reading was that it was the recounting of an old man, so I knew going into the 'memoir' that he survived a long time after the murders. I will come back to this point later. Overall, Carnac just didn't fit with my personal view of who Jack was, and I never grew to care about any part of Carnac's story.

I will admit, one of the parts I was looking forward to was the actual murder spree. I was looking forward to reading about his feelings and emotions during this part, and I was completely disappointed. There was almost nothing more than a dry recounting of what happened, and even then without most of the details. The emotions in this part were almost completely missing; there is no talk of excitement or release after the murders, nothing really emotional at all. I was hoping for some sort of compulsion, but it was mostly about a need to see blood that then he never seems to notice during the killings. This may be in part due to the fact that the first man to read the 'manuscript' supposedly took out some disagreeable part, but really if this is

fiction it fell flat.

The most disappointing thing for me was the part after the murders. To my understanding, serial killers don't just stop killing, they will keep killing until they are caught, killed or incapacitated. However, Carnac is never caught or killed, but stops killing. It could be argued that he is incapacitated, but I would argue that he could easily have killed in his state. However, the most jarring part was that his urge to kill just seemed to fade. This just doesn't match with what forensic psychology says, and based on the absolute frenzy that was his last crime scene, this would not be the case.

Overall, I was bored and never connected to any part of the story. I feel that this has to be fiction, and was bored that it perpetuated old theories about Jack the Ripper and serial killers (that he had some medical knowledge, and that he came from a family of killers). I honestly could not wait to finish the book and clear it off my e-reader (which it caused to freeze several times...).

This review was originally posted: <http://francesandlynne.wordpress.com/...>

Brenda Ayala says

This was totally entertaining. I had my qualms about it being nonfiction, and I still do. I think this is an ingenious piece of fiction that is very well-written and well done. The voice of the narrator was superb. An old man, in the twilight of his life, writes what his despicable acts were as a young man. And as that young man, he was known (indirectly) as Jack the Ripper. The story meandered a bit at times, which I loved in its accuracy. I've never met an elderly person who *didn't* meander when telling a story. Who didn't give me a ridiculously long set-up of events in order to tell me the actual thing they wanted to tell me.

And Jack (James Carnac) did precisely this. I found myself getting very antsy while reading Part 1 because I wanted to get to the murders themselves. However, Part 1 lays the groundwork beautifully for the rest of the novel--what triggered the impulses, why he chose the black coat, the knife. It gave a valid reason for why he had the impulses--at least a reason that he could use as a defense if he wanted to, although I don't mean in a court of law. Just defending his actions to me as the reader.

Part 2 was the beef of the novel. It was where the murders occurred, which the author did not go into detail about. I rather would have enjoyed if they had interwoven photos or details of the crimes within the pages, but I realize that not everyone has as grotesque interests as I. Although I'll argue that someone who doesn't wouldn't pick up this novel in the first place.

Part 3 is where the real genius is. I don't really want to reveal anything for those who don't want the surprise spoiled, but I do want to gush about it so I'll do this: (view spoiler) So, so good. The reign of Jack the Ripper has ended, finally and forever.

(I received this in a First Reads giveaway.)

Ozana says

There are many books written about Jack The Ripper, nick name of arhetype serial killer, cruel murderer. His true identity was never discovered, he was never caught or seen. He became urban legend, his name sinonim for serial killers throuoghout the history and unfortunately, today.

This is non-fictional book, biography type even auto bio. It is said that this is diary found by real Ripper Jack, but like supposed Hitlers diaries I am rather certain that is not real. Not cold enough, descriptive enough, like I imagine real cold hearted killer would write down every gruesome detail about murders.

Anyway, book is interesting enough, love that Victorian era and mystery around it. It is not diary of Jack The Ripper but it is good read if you love the theme.

Rebecca says

Best Audible selection EVER. Thank goodness I found it there. Super hard to find otherwise! I loved this book. I don't care if James Carnac was the real ripper or not -- I was fascinated by his story.

Ridiculously engrossing. I was all the more impressed with the length they went to in the appendices to hash out the logistics and facts of the events to evaluate whether or not James Carnac could have realistically been Jack the Ripper.

Beautifully sociopathic when appropriate, wholly explanatory. AWESOME.

Ninjakicalka says

Czy James Carnac to Kuba Rozpruwacz i po 40 latach postanowił napisać swoją autobiografię??

„Ta księga rzekomo jest historią Kuby Rozpruwacza.”

„Poniższa autobiografia wygląda raczej na utwór literacki, ale nic nie jest nigdy takie proste.”

+w środku znajduję się zdjęcia ofiar i miejsc zbrodni (jednak nie są one super tajne, ponieważ można znaleźć je także w Internecie)

+mapa

+fragmenty maszynopisu

+na końcu znajduję się podsumowanie (jednak trochę najwolniej i najciężej mi się czytało) +indeks, dzięki któremu można szybko poszukać interesującego nas wątku

-z księgi została podobno usunięta najobrzydliwsze fragmenty (szkoda :c)

-za krótka ;)

Księga została podzielona na 3 części - wydarzenia przed morderstwami, w trakcie, i po. Dla mnie najbardziej interesująca byłaby 2, jednak jeżeli ktoś się nastawia na rozbudowane opisy zabójstw, to można się lekko zawieść (być może warto nie to usunąć).

Alyssa says

Without a doubt a work of fiction. Not to be seen as anything else.

As a ripper enthusiast, I'd rather recommend a book like *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper - Case Closed* than this.

Ghadah says

Well, this is my first time reading an autobiography, which I believe explains why I felt this book was extremely different from anything I've ever read before.

I don't know if it's wrong to admit this, but I was really drawn to the author's way of thinking. He tackled many aspects of himself in regards of psychology and it was really eye-opening and mind-blowing. Many theories came out after the official publication of Carnac's autobiography, and some of which went against the fact of him being the Ripper. I, for one, truly want to believe that it was actually him. Regardless of the fact, I found this book intriguing on so many levels and I loved it.

Sharon Bolton says

I've long been fascinated by Jack the Ripper, and in preparation for writing *Now You See Me*, read widely around the Whitechapel Murders of 1888. Consequently, a book claiming to be a first-person, period account of the "Autumn of Terror" was always going to be appealing.

The memoir which comprises the main part of this book claims to have been recently discovered in the effects of Sydney George Hulme Beaman (writer, illustrator and creator of *Larry the Lamb*) and to have been written in the 1920s by Jack the Ripper himself.

The author calls himself James Willoughby Carnac, and the memoir, written shortly before his death, is an account of his entire life, including a few short months in 1888 when he became the murderer known to posterity as Jack the Ripper.

Well, we who love all things ripper-related are invariably excited about the prospect of new information!

A few chapters in, I knew I was going to be disappointed. The memoir adds nothing to the existing stock of ripper knowledge, the period detail appeared little more than careful historical research, the tone of the writing simply didn't convince as that of a psychopathic killer and there were a couple of important but too-convenient coincidences.

Significantly, no historical record of a James Willoughby Carnac ever existing can be found and this seems a major problem for anyone claiming the memoir is real. If Carnac died in the 1920s, as is claimed, there must be some record of his life. Conveniently, he had no brothers or sisters, never married and was the last of his family line. The book suggests Carnac might have been a pseudonym but this makes no sense to me. Why would Jack, at the close of this life and confident he'd escaped retribution, go to all the trouble of writing his memoir only to conceal his identity in the end?

Ironically, though, the author's biggest mistake and the one to ultimately convince me that this work is fake was the quality of the writing. Its penmanship is close to perfect, a skill that cannot be achieved, even by highly educated people, without years of practice. This memoir was written by a professional writer and I

simply cannot believe that Jack the Ripper, in addition to everything else claimed about him, was one of those.

The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper may, or may not, be a piece of period writing, one of the earliest known ripper-hoaxes; if it is, then it can confidently stake its claim for a place in Ripper-lore. What it does not do, as far as I'm concerned, is solve the mystery.

Michael says

This is the "autobiography" of James Carnac. A man claiming to be Jack the Ripper. Never does the book claim to be the definitive work of Jack the Ripper.(Despite the slightly misleading title) If you have a interest in Jack the Ripper, you should find this book entertaining enough to read. In my personal opinion, this man is NOT Jack the Ripper. My biggest disappointment with this work was that the original discoverer of this literature, edited out the parts he considered "gruesome" or "offensive" before it was originally attempted to be published.(If it was ever attempted before this book) This left me feeling kinda ripped off, since those details were probably the pieces that most people are unaware of. I have read a INCREDIBLE and extremely informative(and factual) book about Jack the Ripper, and as far as the crimes were concerned, I didn't learn much new info from this book. Even though I believe the book to be fiction, I feel that possibly the most interesting parts were removed. I have pretty good knowledge(I'm FAR from an expert)about Jack the Ripper, and just wasn't convinced this was the man. My 2 biggest disappointments was the editing of the original work and the fact that I feel James Carnac(which there is no evidence a man of that name ever existed)was telling a tale. I'm not upset that I don't believe him, but apparently he himself was no expert on "Ripperology", because he could have told a better lie.(In my opinion) I can see how some people would hate this book.... or how some may love it. Personally, I will say that if you enjoy mystery, true crime or "Ripperature", this book is worth the time to read. But not much more than that. It's not a waste of time, but I would suggest you don't get to excited about this book until you've read it and can make your own evaluation.

Amy Sturgis says

The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper is a maddeningly fascinating work. It was reportedly discovered in 2008 in the possessions left to his heirs by S.G. Hulme-Beaman, a children's author and illustrator best known as the creator of the Toytown stories and their characters (including Larry the Lamb) who died in 1932. The manuscript is attributed to "James Carnac," who professes to be the real Jack The Ripper writing about his gruesome exploits 40 years after the fact. The book is made up of four parts: 1) Introductory notes apparently made by S.G. Hulme-Beaman, which explain how he came upon the manuscript while acting as executor of Carnac's estate, but failed to follow Carnac's directions to send the manuscript to a publishing house due to its disturbing and distasteful subject matter; 2) the first two sections of the narrative, which relate the story of Carnac's young life (including his father's murder of his mother and subsequent suicide) and Whitechapel years (including the Ripper slayings); 3) the third section of the narrative, produced on a different typewriter than the first two sections and written in a different, more "fictional" voice, bringing Carnac's story to an all-too-neat end; and 4) commentary by Alan Hicken and respected Ripperologist Paul Begg.

What is this book, exactly? Several possibilities exist. It might represent Hulme-Beaman's attempt at a "true crime"-inspired novel, but this seems unlikely due to both the man's workload and his personality. It might be a novel by another author that came into the possession of Hulme-Beaman. (There is no record that James Carnac ever existed.) It might be a genuine autobiography of Jack the Ripper, and either the author's name is actually a pseudonym or somehow the historical James Carnac managed to live and die without creating a paper trail. Or perhaps it is a modern-day hoax purporting to be a manuscript from the late 1920s.

I went into this with the intention of reading it much like *The Lodger* (1913), an early twentieth-century novel by Marie Adelaide Belloc Lowndes, a woman who lived through the Autumn of Terror and evoked it well in her story. As such a work of fiction, *The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper* is effective. Carnac's fascination with blood, his knowledge of his father's act of murder/suicide, his curiosity about his French ancestors' roles as executioners, and his own strange (and resisted) compulsion to kill his kind uncle set the stage well for the horrors to come.

The descriptions of his behavior as Jack the Ripper offer the most interest. Unlike most works and speculations of the time, which attributed to the Ripper complicated motives (religious fanaticism, a personal vendetta against women, a desire to undermine the police force and law in general), Carnac comes across much in the way we understand modern psychopaths today. He killed because he liked killing, and he got away with his crimes because he was smart enough to choose his victims carefully. His dark, wry sense of humor is both startling and convincing. What is more, the end of the Ripper's murderous spree has a believable justification: Carnac was badly injured in an accident with a carriage (while crossing the street to get to a paper detailing his latest crime), losing both his leg and his mobility.

What I find most fascinating about the book is how it follows and deviates from known facts about the murders. Carnac admits that he had kept scrapbooks of media coverage of the crimes, and the similarity between some of his narrative and contemporary newspaper accounts can be explained by the fact that, after forty years, he returned to his clippings to remind himself of particulars. That said, he also deviates in some critical ways from widely-reported details -- and, in one case, provides a detail only known to have been reported in one account published in New York -- which certainly creates the effect of firsthand knowledge.

The odd ending, with its vastly different tone -- and, seemingly, purpose -- is also a mystery unto itself.

It's interesting to speculate on the real nature of this work. I am not suggesting that I was persuaded that Carnac existed or that he was the Ripper, but I was impressed by the psychological insight of the text and the historical mysteries it provides.

Hannah says

Whether it's real or not, I really enjoyed reading this book. If it is a real confession, it's fascinating and it is very believable. Personally I'm pretty convinced by it, although of course it can't be proved and there are questions raised, as pointed out in the analysis. I have very little doubt that part three is fiction; it just falls into place too nicely. He mentions a lot of things which seem to have a purpose later on, like the fear of being burned alive. If I were him, I certainly wouldn't be writing down my plans to kill my landlady, at least until after I'd done it, given that the manuscript has already been discovered once. But the other two parts seem to be real, although I'm not claiming to be an expert.

Even if it is fiction, it's still a very interesting read and provides a unique take on the Jack the Ripper

mystery. Regardless of whether it's real or not, I would definitely recommend this book.

Rares Dinu says

If this really IS the notorious murderer, then I am fascinated by the unexpectedly human way his mind worked. If this is just some work of fiction, I respect the author's dedication in research. Personally, I found the story really believable. Maybe too believable. Some parts of it I found extremely poetical and gave such a big artistic boost to the story that I must suspect this is fiction. But, after all, I cannot be the judge of it. Maybe these really are the words of Jack the Ripper. And I really, really don't want to be facing is ghost's wrath.

Anyway, long story short, this is a highly enjoyable story.

Steven Walle says

An interesting book about the life of the author who claims to be Jack the Ripper. He lost his leg as a young adult and got a big chip on his sholder. He was quite a vengfull man. His book was very graphic. I would not recommend it to any one who is the slight bit squeamish.

Enjoy and Be Blessed.

Diamond

Marvin says

The entire appeal of *The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper* is this: Is it real or is it Memorex...er...fiction? This work was purported to be discovered in 2008 amongst the possessions of S.G. Hulme-Beaman, a prolific writer of children tales who died in 1932. The manuscript is authored by James Carnac who professes to be the real Jack The Ripper. Conveniently there is no evidence that Jack Carnac ever existed. It may be a pseudonym for the actual Jack. The book's two commentators, Alan Hicken and Ripperologist Paul Begg leads you to believe there are two possibilities. Either it is an early work of Ripper fiction by Hulme-Beaman, the mysterious Carnac or someone else... or it is the actual autobiography of the infamous serial killer. I suggest a third option. It is a modern hoax not unlike the Hitler Diary hoax of the 1970s. The clues are there based on the fact that it reads more like a modern interpretation of serial killer psychology than an early 20th century memoir. Begg states that Carnac brings up facts that were unknown at the time it was allegedly written. Maybe so. It is more likely these two issues exist because it *is* a contemporary work written by a contemporary mindset. The one thing that would settle the issue of date is missing: an lab examination of the manuscript by a neutral party, mainly to determine paper and ink age. In other words, the method that brought down the Hitler Diary Hoax. Of course, my suspicions are entirely my suspicions and nothing else. But it would be exciting to see the lab rats determine that it is indeed a manuscript of the 20s. If it really is a 1920s example of Ripper fiction or Jack's actual confession, that would be *really* exciting.

Unfortunately, that is all that makes it exciting. Contemporary or not, *The Autobiography of Jack the Ripper* is not very good fiction. Much of this can be blamed on Jack himself. JR, as he is often referred to in the book, is rather boring. He is full of himself, whether he is contemplating cutting his uncle's throat, experiencing his first infatuation, or actually doing his dastardly deeds. JR is quite rightly portrayed as a

psychopath and we get some interesting soliloquies on the nature of morality that we might expect from a madman. These are the most interesting things in the novel. Yet the actions and conflicts of JR never come to life for this reader. Tack on a rather pat ending that *does* seem very 1920s and you have a story that probably would not interest most publishing companies unless a gimmick (is it real or...) was added.

Over all, it is not a bad work. Just not that good. Read it for the novelty aspect if you must. That at least kept me going. But I can sleep soundly knowing that the real Jack the Ripper remains a haunting and still legendary mystery.

Stephanie Borders says

Synopsis:

This is the alleged manuscript of the “real” Jack the Ripper. Written in the 1920s by a man calling himself James Carnac, it was only discovered recently in a lot of memorabilia purchased by a vintage toy dealer.

The manuscript is divided into three parts. The first part deals with Carnac’s childhood, which was quite brutal and culminated with a heinous crime. Part two is specifically focused on the murders in Whitechapel and explains the initial catalyst as well as why they ceased abruptly. The third part is decades later, with Carnac detailing an odd circumstance he has found himself in with his landlady.

“Ripperologists” have had a difficult time ascertaining whether this manuscript is the real deal, not to mention confirming whether James Carnac was a real person. The general consensus is that Carnac is most likely a pseudonym, as no records can be found of anyone with that name given the details the author provided.

My thoughts:

I was hesitant about this book at first. I love true crime but Jack the Ripper has never been a case that truly interested me. I think it is mainly due to the fact that it was so long ago. In my mind, if it hasn’t been solved yet, what are the chances it ever will be? In fact, I read this only because my mom read it last year and passed it on to me. It sat on my shelf for a long time and I picked it up only because I was trying to keep up with a spooky/creepy/bloody Halloween theme during the latter half of October.

I could not put this book down. It hooked me from the start, with Carnac’s childhood being far more fascinating than I anticipated. If I remember correctly, I finished the book within 24 hours. The main question that lingered in my mind was Is this a true account? And over a month later, I still don’t know how I feel about it.

On one hand, I agree that there is a lot of information in the manuscript that would likely only be known by the killer. On the other hand, the fluidity and the unlikeliness of certain situations had me second guessing. I can see why there are questions about the validity of the manuscript, but I don’t know that the truth about Jack the Ripper will ever be known.
