

When opened it was found to contain a cassette tape, recorded by a man with an accent which a voice expert said belonged to a man who had lived within 5 miles of Sunderland for much of his life. On the tape there was a personal message to Mr. Oldfield about his failure to detect the series of crimes. The saliva on the envelope flap was quickly found to indicate a "B" secretor blood-group so linking it with the third letter and, as a result, with the Harrison murder. Senior officers in West Yorkshire now appeared to be fully convinced that the author of the letters and the tape recording was indeed the man responsible for the crimes which they were investigating and they decided to attach top priority to this aspect which, they felt, would be bound to lead to the detection of the Ripper crimes. In addition to the major internal police effort it was decided to seek increasing assistance from members of the public in West Yorkshire and the North East of England in an attempt to identify the voice on the tape and the writing on the letters. Accordingly, a press conference was arranged, although the impact of it was slightly dulled by the publication earlier of some relevant aspects in the "Yorkshire Evening Post". Details of the letters and tape were given at the press conference, which was held on the 26th June 1979, and police inquiries thereafter concentrated on identifying a suspect who still lived in the North East of England or a suspect with origins in the North East who had subsequently moved to the West Yorkshire area. From this stage, existing lines of inquiry, some of which had already been suspended because of the demands of the Whitaker investigation, began to attract even lower priority.

53. Because of the very high number of vehicles printed out by the Police National Computer as having been seen in two separate "red light" observation areas, this particular line of inquiry also began to suffer from a lack of manpower needed to conduct the follow-up action. Of the 21,231 vehicles printed out, 15,195 were not pursued by further checks. As a result of this overloading, compounded by the effects of the Whitaker inquiry, a decision was then taken to print out only those vehicles which had been observed in at least three separate observation areas, subsequently referred to as "Triple Area Sightings".

54. On the 29th July 1979 Sutcliffe was again interviewed after his black Sunbeam Rapier had been printed out, first as a "Double Area Sighting" and later as a "Triple Area Sighting", having been seen in the "red light" areas of Leeds, Bradford and Manchester. Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood visited him at his home. It is unfortunate that they were not aware that Sutcliffe had already been interviewed in connection with the £5 note inquiry and also because of the "Double Sighting" of his earlier vehicle. Sutcliffe gave explanations for having been in Leeds and Bradford but denied that he had been to Manchester in his own vehicle. Because of the police decision to keep the "red light" area observations secret, investigating officers were advised not to challenge those whom they interviewed in respect of any individual sighting but were required to approach the subject obliquely. Sutcliffe again denied making use of prostitutes' services and was again loosely alibied by his wife. The detectives obtained samples of his handwriting and searched his car and garage, finding nothing to connect him with the murders. They were, however, not satisfied with Sutcliffe and reported their disquiet to the Major Incident Room. Unfortunately the report was not linked with previous papers and Sutcliffe was eliminated because his handwriting did not match that of the Sunderland letter writer.

55. On the 6th August 1979 Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield, who had been showing increasing signs of strain, developed what was officially described as a chest infection but is generally regarded as having been a series of heart attacks. He remained off-duty on sick leave until the 6th January 1980.

56. On the 2nd September 1979 Barbara Leach, a 20 year old student, was murdered by Sutcliffe in the University area of Bradford. A post-mortem examination revealed that she had been struck a single blow to the head with a hammer after which she was stabbed in the abdomen and shoulder blade a total of eight times. From examination of the injuries it was possible to say that the weapon used to cause them was, in all likelihood, the one used in the murder of Josephine Whitaker five months previously. Detective Chief Superintendent Gilrain led this inquiry and established his incident room in Bradford. The crime was immediately linked with others in the series and Detective Superintendent Holland who, on hearing of the murder, had immediately returned to West Yorkshire from leave in Scotland, continued to supervise the overall inquiry from the main incident room at Millgarth. This incident room, due to the shortage of manpower, together with the rapidly increasing response from the general public and the demands of the

North Eastern inquiry, was being inundated by a very large backlog of uncompleted actions. The position was exacerbated by the fact that almost no follow-up actions had been processed after the Whitaker murder in April that year.

57. Police inquiries into the murder of Barbara Leach produced one suspect described as being a white male in his early thirties and of athletic build. He had short dark hair and a thin dark moustache, and was seen to put a "bundle" into what was thought to be a green Hillman Avenger estate car parked near to the murder scene. In addition to this vehicle a blue Datsun 160/180B saloon was seen in the area and was sought for elimination purposes.

58. In the absence of Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield on sick leave his Deputy, Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson, assumed responsibility for all crime matters in the West Yorkshire area but at the same time continued to act as the senior detective in the Eastern Crime area of the force. No arrangements were made for him to assume the rank of Acting Assistant Chief Constable. Although Chief Superintendent Hobson thus had command of the overall Ripper inquiry, day to day decisions in connection with the investigation of crimes in the series were taken by Detective Superintendent Holland. Detective Chief Superintendent Gilrain, formerly in charge of CID Administration at force headquarters, was put in command of the Barbara Leach investigation, this being the latest crime in the series.

59. On the 13th September 1979 a "Special Notice" was issued by the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police to all forces in the country giving details of 16 murders and attempted murders then linked together in the series together with details of the tyre tracks from the Richardson, Moore and Millward incidents and also details of the "Sunderland" letters and tape. None of the descriptions or photofit impressions provided by surviving victims was included and a crucial section of the notice said that:

"A person can be eliminated from these inquiries if:—

- (a) Not born between 1924 and 1959
- (b) He is an obvious coloured person
- (c) His shoe size is size 9 or above
- (d) His blood group is other than B
- (e) His accent is dissimilar to a North Eastern (Geordie) accent."

60. On the 17th September 1979 Mr R E Stockdale, a Principal Scientific Officer from the Wetherby Forensic Science Laboratory was attached to the West Yorkshire Police as a resident scientific officer for the Ripper series of crimes. On the 24th September he was joined by Mr R A Outteridge, the Director of the Nottingham Forensic Science Laboratory. The two scientists were provided with accommodation in the Western Area headquarters at Bradford. During a meeting with the Chief Constable it was agreed that their specific role was one of "liaison and co-ordination" (of scientific services) and that they should be available to the Ripper inquiry team as consultants on a day to day basis. During their period of attachment the two scientists reviewed the forensic evidence which was available in connection with all previous Ripper cases and also suggested to the inquiry officers a number of new lines of inquiry in connection with existing and possible future cases. The attachment of the two resident scientists ended in January 1980.

61. On the 2nd October 1979 a massive publicity campaign aimed at detecting the series of crimes by identifying the author of the "Sunderland" tape and letters was launched throughout the North and the North East of England. The cost of this campaign (estimated at around £1 million) was met by contributions from local industry and commerce with a relatively modest contribution by the Police Authority.

62. On the 23rd October 1979 Sutcliffe was interviewed again, on this occasion by Detective Constables Vickerman and Eland who were investigating the murder of Barbara Leach. This interview resulted from a resurrection of the inquiries made by Detective Constable Smith who had seen Sutcliffe in August and November 1978 in connection with the sighting of the red Corsair motor car in the prostitute areas of Leeds and Bradford. The officers were told that Sutcliffe's

alibi for the Jordan murder was inadequate and they were asked to check his movements in relation to the murder of Barbara Leach. Unfortunately, they were unaware of the previous interview of Sutcliffe by Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood and of their reservations about him. When the officers spoke to him, Sutcliffe quickly volunteered the information that he had been interviewed before but he also said that on the night of Barbara Leach's murder he had been at home working on improvements to the house. This was confirmed by his wife as in previous interviews. A further handwriting sample was obtained and this was subsequently used to eliminate him from the inquiry again.

63. On the 7th November 1979 Mr I Evett and Mr C Brown of the Home Office Central Research Establishment visited Leeds and Bradford at the instigation of the two resident scientists. They examined the operation of the computerised "red light" area observations and discussed a number of problems with the senior inquiry officers but were unable to suggest significant changes in the established system.

64. On the 21st November 1979 Commander Nevill and Detective Superintendent Bolton of the Metropolitan Police visited West Yorkshire at the invitation of the Chief Constable to examine and report on the overall Ripper investigation up to that time. The two Metropolitan officers had discussions with investigating officers from all forces involved and also examined the incident room systems and records then in use. In a report to the Chief Constable on the 8th January 1980 Commander Nevill stated, inter alia:

"The following lines of inquiries were agreed as viable and could be completed in a reasonably short period:

- (a) Persons born and/or educated in Wearside to be located and interviewed.
- (b) An inquiry throughout England to trace all owners of Avenger estate cars and Datsun 160/180 saloon cars. Positive sightings of vehicles of these descriptions were seen near the venue of the Leach murder.
- (c) To trace the history of a £5 note issued at or near Bingley and found in possession of the murdered prostitute at Manchester.
- (d) Inquiries at speech therapists. (Prompted by the suggestion by a linguistic expert that the author of the letters and tape suffered from a stammer for which he had probably received speech therapy).
- (e) Inquiries at all banks to attempt to identify handwriting through counter staff."

It will be seen, therefore, that Commander Nevill accepted the letters and tape connection, although in fairness, he introduced a caveat later in his report when he said:—

"During the years of the inquiries many persons were eliminated only on the facts known at the time. It may well be prudent to re-evaluate these in the light of all the facts known today. For instance, many have been cleared purely on dialect or handwriting. Whilst it is agreed that the author of the letters and tape is probably the murderer it is not a complete certainty".

Commander Nevill made recommendations for streamlining the major incident room system with a view to the accurate monitoring of outstanding and completed actions, and to the filtering of information reaching incident officers. He commented on the absence of forensic evidence and the lack of dialogue between scientists and investigating officers and finally warned that other assaults on women in West Yorkshire might well prove to be part of the series of crimes.

65. Unfortunately, we have been unable to trace evidence that Commander Nevill's more important recommendations were implemented thereafter by the West Yorkshire Police.

66. On the 31st December 1979 the "Triple Area Sighting" exercise using fixed observation points (which had by that time, to quote a West Yorkshire officer, been "decaying into misuse") was stopped and replaced by a less manpower-expensive system of mobile observations.

67. During the autumn of 1979 senior detectives of the Greater Manchester Police decided to re-activate the £5 note inquiry in an attempt to detect the Jordan and Millward murders. With the full

co-operation of the Bank of England and the Midland Bank they were able, by experiment, to eliminate several firms as possible recipients of the £5 note. There had, of course, always been the possibility that the £5 note had been paid to a customer cashing a cheque at a bank but, on the balance of probabilities, it seemed most likely that the note had been included in money drawn for wages by one of only a few firms in the area. The total number of employees to be seen in this resurrected inquiry was a readily manageable 241. Sutcliffe was number 76 on the list, being 44th of 49 employees from the firm of T. & W.H. Clark Ltd.

68. Before the people shown on the list were seen their names were searched against the nominal index in the Millgarth incident room to see whether they had been previously involved, other than in connection with the original £5 note inquiry. For some reason, which we have not been able to discover, Sutcliffe's name was marked "N/T", meaning "no trace".

69. On the 13th January 1980 Sutcliffe was seen by Detective Sergeant Boot of West Yorkshire Police and Detective Constable Bell of the Greater Manchester Police who were unaware of the previous "Double" and "Triple Area Sighting" interviews. Sutcliffe told the officers that when he was not working as a lorry driver he spent all his spare time with his wife working in their house and that he did not go out in the evenings without her. This story was verified by his wife. Sutcliffe also told the officers that he had already been seen in connection with sightings of his motor cars. On learning this the officers returned to their office to check this information. The papers relating to the red Corsair sighting were located but those in respect of the black Sunbeam Rapier (which referred to the Manchester sighting) were not because they were attached to documents which were waiting to be returned to Sutcliffe's employers. Sutcliffe's car, which by that time was the Rover saloon in which he was eventually arrested, was searched, as was his garage. His footwear and the tools he kept in his house were also examined but nothing of interest was found. Unfortunately the search was not thorough enough to discover a pair of wellington boots in a wardrobe. These boots could have linked Sutcliffe with the murder of Emily Jackson some 4 years previously. The two detectives knew that Sutcliffe had been eliminated on handwriting but, being suspicious about him, they recommended that another inquiry team should interview him to see whether they too might share similar reservations.

70. On 30th January 1980 Detective Sergeant McAlister of Manchester and Detective Constable McCrone of West Yorkshire interviewed Sutcliffe at Kirkstall Forge Engineering works whilst he was loading his lorry. Sutcliffe again satisfied the inquiry officers who were going over past history in connection with sightings of his red Ford Corsair and the £5 note inquiry.

71. He was interviewed again on 7th February 1980 when Detective Constable Jackson of Manchester and Detective Constable Harrison of West Yorkshire visited the Shipley Depot of T. & W.H. Clark Ltd. They too were unaware of the sightings of Sutcliffe's black Sunbeam Rapier in Bradford, Leeds and Manchester and also of the report submitted by Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood after their interview with him. Detective Constable Jackson decided he was unable to eliminate Sutcliffe but, following a discussion with his senior officers, it was concluded that as he had been alibied by his wife and mother for the night of the 9/10th October 1977, when Jordan's body had been moved and mutilated, he could be eliminated from the inquiry.

72. On the 23rd March 1980 Sutcliffe bought a red Mini saloon 372 SRR which he used occasionally although he did not dispose of his other car, the brown Rover saloon.

73. On the 25th June 1980 Sutcliffe was arrested in connection with a drinking and driving offence. The officers, Constables Doran and Melia, who detected the offence whilst keeping mobile observations on the Manningham "red light" area, passed details about him to the Millgarth incident room as a matter of routine. They were informed that Sutcliffe had been eliminated from the inquiry.

74. On the 20th August 1980 Marguerite Walls, a 47 year old civil servant, was murdered by Sutcliffe as she walked home in Leeds. She was struck on the head, knocked down and then strangled with a piece of cord. Her body was stripped, indecently assaulted and hidden under a pile of grass cuttings in the grounds of a large house. When this crime was discovered it was not linked with the Ripper series because death by strangulation was an entirely new feature in relation

to all the previously connected crimes. Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson assumed responsibility for the inquiry and set up an incident room at Pudsey Police Station from which he directed police operations. Descriptions were obtained of people who had been in the vicinity at the time of the murder but none of these was very useful and attention was focussed on a number of men living in the area who had previous convictions for serious sexual offences.

75. On the 26th August 1980 in recognition of the fact that the killer was now operating outside prostitute areas, the vehicle observations in "red light" areas were discontinued. By that time a total of 1,223 vehicles had been printed out as "Triple Area Sightings".

76. On the 24th September 1980 Uphadya Bandara, a 35 year old doctor from Singapore, was attacked with a hammer in Leeds after which an attempt was made to strangle her with a piece of cord. For some unknown reason this attack was not completed and the victim was taken to hospital where she recovered from her injuries. She was unable to offer any precise information about her attacker, except to say that he had a close-cropped beard. Detective Superintendent Newton took charge of the investigation which was supervised from a major incident room in Pudsey Police Station. Although this crime was not officially linked with the Ripper series it was linked with the murder of Marguerite Walls in which strangulation had been the cause of death.

77. On the 5th November 1980 Teresa Sykes was attacked on a footpath in Huddersfield by Sutcliffe who hit her over the head with a hammer. Fortunately for her, the attack was interrupted by the man with whom she was living who had heard her screams. Although she suffered severe head injuries she survived the assault. This crime was investigated by Detective Superintendent Hickley from an incident room at Huddersfield and was not publicly linked with the Ripper series. Many detectives involved in the case had by now reached private conclusions about which were and which were not Ripper cases and there was a strong body of professional opinion that Sykes was in the series. Information gathered about the assailant in this case included the fact that he was alleged to have had a gingery coloured beard and moustache.

78. On the 17th November 1980 the final murder in the series was committed when Jacqueline Hill was killed by Sutcliffe near the Arndale Centre in Leeds. After being disabled by a number of violent hammer blows to the head she was dragged onto waste ground and her exposed body was stabbed. Detective Superintendent Findlay took charge of the inquiry and established an incident room at Belle Vue, Leeds. The murder was linked with the Ripper series and circulated to all forces in an edition of "Police Reports" published on 19th November. A number of suspects had been sighted in the area and inquiries were also made to trace a squarish looking car which had been seen being driven in the wrong direction of Alma Road, a one way street, near to the crime scene, at about the time when Jacqueline Hill was killed.

79. In response to this latest crime a number of newspaper offices in the area agreed to add £30,000 to the reward being offered by the Police Authority for information, bringing the total amount to £50,000.

80 On 25th November 1980 amid increasing criticism of the West Yorkshire Police for having failed to detect this series of horrific crimes, a number of changes were made in the control of the inquiry. Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson was appointed temporary Assistant Chief Constable and put in charge of the series inquiry in place of Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield. At the same time an Advisory Team of four senior officers from other police forces with no previous connection with the Ripper investigation, together with a senior forensic scientist, were asked to review the case and to report their findings to the Chief Constable. The following month their report was submitted and, significantly, included the points itemised below:—

- (a) "The aim of the inquiry should now be to foster an opinion both within and outside the Police Service that the killer does not necessarily originate from the North East of England".
- (b) "We have indicated a number of facts which could point to the wanted man living in/working in the Bradford area".

81. On the 26th November 1980 an anonymous letter was received at the Millgarth incident room. The letter, which was one of many being received at the time, suggested that a man called Peter

Sutcliffe was the "Ripper". The claim was supported by a number of minor points about Sutcliffe's employment and character, but particular mention was made of an incident which had occurred within the previous five years of which the author of the letter could not give details because they might lead to him being identified. The author of this letter has since been identified as Trevor Birdsall a close friend of Peter Sutcliffe. Birdsall's girl friend, who had urged him to write the letter, later advised him that its contents were insufficient to enable the police to act and persuaded him to report to the police personally. Birdsall accepted this advice and visited Bradford Police Station late on 26th November 1980. He repeated the suspicions which he had voiced in his letter to Constable Butler and added that he had been to Halifax with Sutcliffe in August 1975 and suspected that Sutcliffe had assaulted a woman on that occasion. Constable Butler submitted a report on Birdsall's visit to the Millgarth incident room. By this time the incident room was suffering a progressive collapse because of the weight of information being put into the system and because the number of actions which were generated by new and existing information could not be accommodated by the officers who were available to deal with them. There is little doubt from the inquiries we have made that Constable Butler's report was received in the incident room but we have been unable to trace it despite detailed questioning of the officers concerned.

82. On the 1st December 1980 following a recommendation of the external Advisory Team an internal re-appraisal team of ten officers including Superintendent Charlesworth and Superintendent Bass was appointed to review the "Letters and Tape Inquiry", the operation of the major incident room, police circulations about the series and several other issues.

83. On 2nd January 1981 Sutcliffe was seen by the police whilst in the company of a prostitute in the "red light" area of Sheffield. He was arrested for an offence of theft of car number plates, detected because a check with the Police National Computer indicated that his vehicle did not match the vehicle to which the number plates displayed on it were allocated. Some 24 hours after his arrest the arresting officer, having been advised to consider the possibility that Sutcliffe might have connections with the Ripper crimes, returned to the scene of the arrest and there recovered a hammer and knife which Sutcliffe had disposed of whilst allegedly urinating nearby. An additional knife was later recovered from the cistern of a toilet in Hammerton Road Police Station where Sutcliffe had hidden it following his arrest. From that point onwards, although on the basis of his record card in the Millgarth incident room it might still have been possible for him to have been eliminated on accent and handwriting grounds, the finding of the hammer and the two knives prompted members of the West Yorkshire inquiry team into thinking that Sutcliffe was the man they were looking for. Thereafter he soon began to admit the crimes with which he was subsequently charged and gave a detailed statement to the interviewing officers.

84. On Friday, 22nd May 1981, Peter William Sutcliffe was convicted at the Central Criminal Court of 13 cases of murder and 7 cases of attempted murder and sentenced to 20 concurrent terms of life imprisonment, with a recommendation that he should serve a minimum of 30 years.

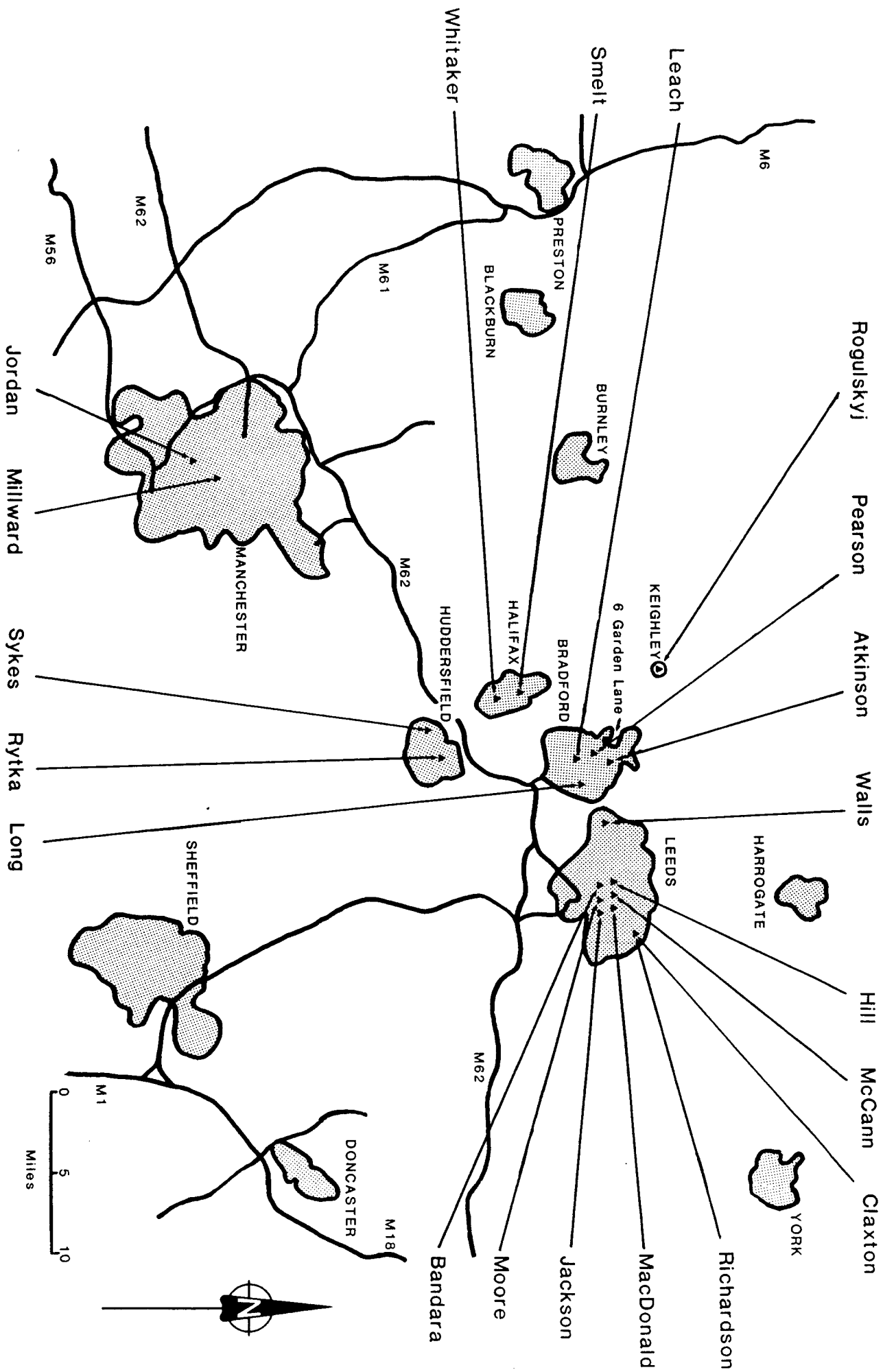
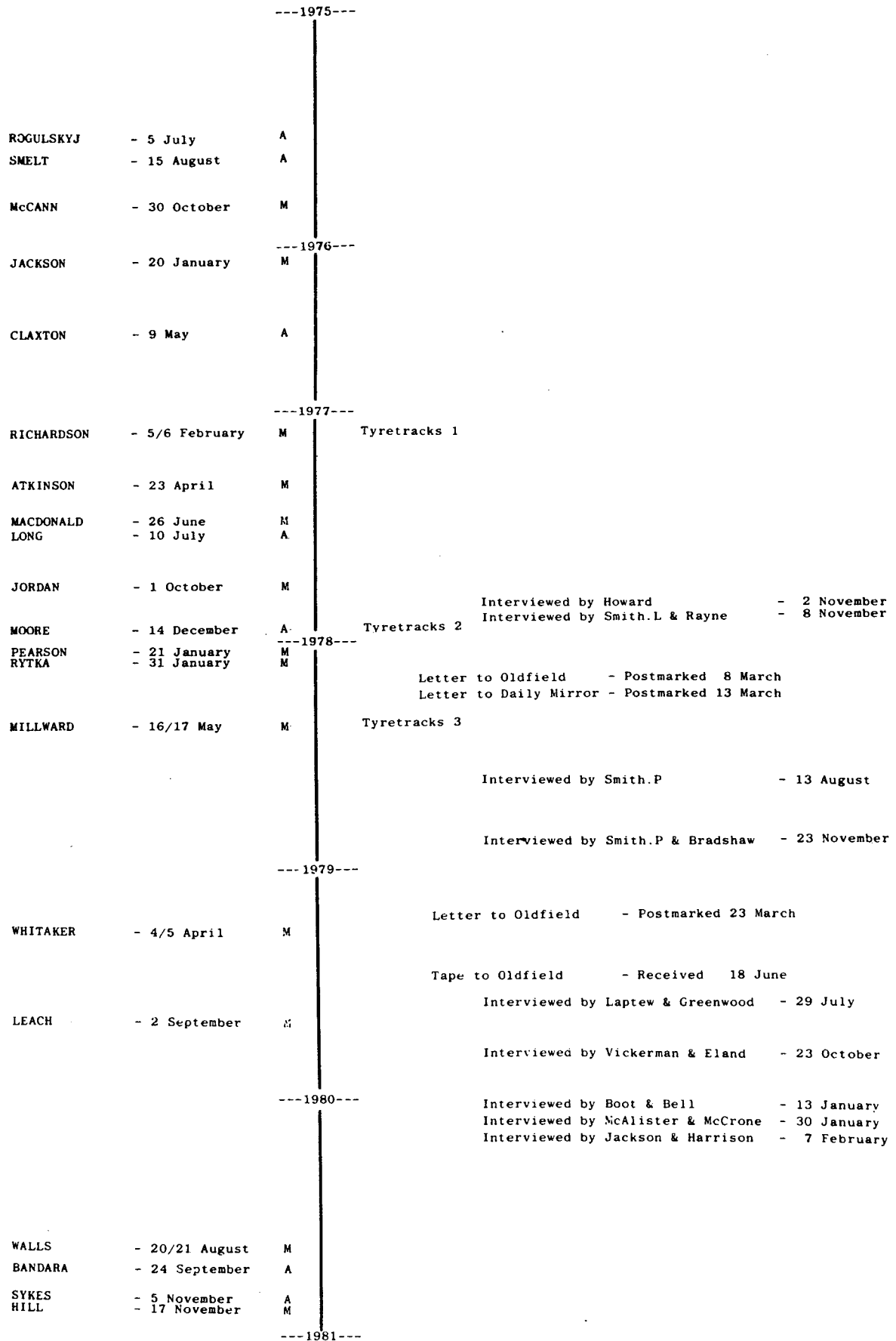


FIGURE 2

SEQUENCE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE RIPPER SERIES



Arrest of Sutcliffe — 2 January

Key: A - Assault
M - Murder