

## Amongst the Suspects

Michael Hawley

Beginning in November 1888, the New York press reported that Francis Tumblety was arrested on suspicion of the Whitechapel crimes, but was it merely a made up story by none other than Francis Tumblety himself in order to either promote himself or attempt to cover up the real reason for being arrested – gross indecency and indecent assault?

E.(Edwin)Tracy Greaves began as a London correspondent for the *New York World* in January 1888 and when TC Crawford, the chief London correspondent, left in August 1888, Greaves took the helm. Tracy Greaves was born in England in 1858, was educated in Hartford Connecticut, but lived in New York City. In 1885, he worked for the *New York Times*, having already worked for the *New York Herald*. In 1886, he came to the *World* as a night editor of its *Evening World* paper and in 1887 he was the managing editor until he left for London in January 1888. In London, he was a member of the Savage Club, a club all foreign correspondents joined. 'Amongst the US foreign correspondents', the thirty year old Greaves was considered the hard-charger,

*GETTING LONDON NEWS, Yankee Correspondents at, the World's Capital.*

*LONDON, Sept. 7. – There is probably no post in journalism which American newspaper men desire so much as that of London correspondent... By common consent the hardest working American newspaper man in London is Mr. E. Tracy Greaves, correspondent for the New York World. He has offices in Trafalgar Square, where you may have a reasonable chance of finding him at any hour of the day or night. (The Day: New London, Connecticut, Sep 22, 1891)*

Immediately after Tumblety posted bail from Marlborough Street Police Court Magistrate Hannay, Greaves sent the following news cable to the *New York World* home office, which was picked up by all daily US newspapers in contract with them,

*London, Nov. 17- Just think of it ! One of the Prince of Wales' own exclusives, a member of his household and cavalry and one of the best known swells about town who glory in the glamor of the Guelphs, getting into custody on suspicion of being the Whitechapel murderer. It is the talk of all clubdom tonight.*

*Just now it is a fashionable fad to slum it in Whitechapel and every night scores of young men who have never been in the East End before in their lives, prowl around the neighborhood of the murders talking with frightened women. So long as two men keep together and do not make nuisances of themselves, the police do not interfere with them. But if a man goes off alone and tries to lure a woman off the street into a secluded corner, he is pretty sure to get into trouble.*

*This was the case of Sir George Arthur of Prince Wales set. He put on an old coat and slouch*

hat and went to Whitechapel for a little fun. He got it. It occurred to two policemen that Sir George answered very much to the description of Jack The Ripper and they watched him and when they saw him talking with a woman they collared him. He protested and threatened them with the vengeance of the royal wrath, but in vain. Finally a chance was given him to send to a fashionable West End Club and prove his identity and he was released with profuse apologies for the mistake. The affair was kept out of the newspaper, but the jolly young baronets at the Brooks Club considered the joke too good to keep quiet.

**Another arrest was a man who gave the name of Dr. Kumbelty of New York. The police could not hold him on suspicion of the Whitechapel crimes, but he has been committed for trial, under a special law passed soon after the modern Babylon exposures. The police say this is the man's right name as proved by letters in his possession from New York and that he has been in the habit of crossing the ocean twice a year for several years.**

*A score of men have been arrested by the police this week on suspicion, but the right man still roams at large and everybody is momentarily expecting to hear of another victim. The large sums offered by private individuals as rewards have induced hundreds of amateur detectives to take a hand in the chase, but to no avail.*

*Leon Rothschild has offered an income of 2 pounds a week for life for the man who gives the information leading to the arrest and conviction of the assassin. (BOSTON GLOBE, November 18, 1888)*

Notice that Greaves picked up the Tumblety story when the gross indecency and indecent assault case was being transferred to Central Criminal Court from police court, it being made public when bail was posted.

The 'Tumblety lie' claim states that Greaves – or a subordinate reporter of his – in search of an 'American' story, spotted a New Yorker being committed to trial on the embarrassing charge of gross indecency and indecent assault. When the reporter approached Tumblety, Tumblety lied and told him he was being framed by the police and was first arrested on suspicion of the Whitechapel crimes and they believe he's the famous Jack the Ripper. Without corroborating the Ripper connection with the police, other than to find out 'Kumbelty' is his real name per letters in his pocket and that he crosses the ocean twice a year, Greaves had the story rushed to the telegraph station and sent.

In order for this 'Tumblety lie' claim to be true, Tumblety could not have been considered a Ripper suspect by the police; not even a minor one. Tumblety made the whole thing up. The police - from the police station all the way to Scotland Yard - would have been blind to Tumblety being a Ripper suspect ...until it was reported in the US papers. If Tumblety was considered even a very minor suspect, the report would still be true; Tumblety was first arrested on suspicion, then re-arrested for gross indecency and indecent assault.

When Chief Inspector Littlechild replied back to Sims in his letter in 1913, he stated Tumblety was "amongst the suspects",

*I never heard of a Dr D. in connection with the Whitechapel murders but **amongst the suspects**, and to my mind a very likely one, was a Dr. T. (which sounds much like D.) He was an American quack named Tumblety ...*

Many have brushed Littlechild off because of why he believed Tumblety was "a very likely" suspect, claiming he was biased against 'Sycopathia Sexualis' subjects with contrary sexual instincts, i.e., male lovers of men. A significant point is lost here. Littlechild was not involved in the creation of the Whitechapel murder suspects list; thus, he was informed Tumblety was on the list. The phrase, 'amongst the suspects', is Littlechild explaining to Sims that Francis Tumblety was a Ripper suspect in November 1888, regardless if he was considered seriously or not.

Tumblety could not have been too small of a suspect, since they weren't in the habit of re-arresting the 'score of other men' being arrested. Besides, Tumblety must have been on the front burner in November 1888 for Littlechild to know his name years later, know they had a large dossier on him, and know in amazing detail the Tumblety events of that time. The fact that Sims even approached Chief Inspector Littlechild about the Whitechapel murders, suggests he believed Littlechild was in the inner circle at Scotland Yard, i.e., in the know. Why else would he have even bothered to write a letter to Littlechild about Jack the Ripper? Littlechild certainly knew where the name of Jack the Ripper originated, so he was privy to the investigation enough to pick this up.

Now, there is the claim by the 'Tumblety lied' proponents that Littlechild, Assistant Commissioner Anderson (just days later, he sent a cable to US chiefs of police for all information on Ripper suspect Francis Tumblety), the *Associated Press*, the *Boston Herald*, and the British press read the Tumblety arrested on suspicion story in the New York papers (actually, all competitors of each other) and believed it – hook, line, and sinker – without corroborating it. So, according to this argument, Tumblety did eventually become a suspect, but it was because the Metropolitan Police Force read the US papers and believed it. The problem is, that's not what Littlechild wrote in his letter. He stated Tumblety was already...

*'amongst the suspects'.*