**J. Best and John Gardner**

It was raining heavily on the night of September 29th 1888 and at 11pm J. Best and John Gardner were certain that they saw Elizabeth Stride sheltering in the doorway of the Bricklayer’s Arms on Settles Street. She was in the company of a man who was about 5′ 5 inches tall. He had a black moustache, sandy eyelashes and was wearing a black morning suit together with a billycock hat. According to Best “He was hugging and kissing her, and as he seemed a respectably dressed man, we were rather astonished at the way he was going on with the woman.” The two men couldn’t resist a little light-hearted banter at the couple’s expense and remarked to the woman “Watch out, that’s Leather Apron getting round you!” Embarrassed by the chaffing the couple “went off like a shot” and best and Gardner watched them hurry off through the rain towards Commercial Road.

**William Marshall**

At around 11.45pm, William Marshall, a labourer who lived at number 64 Berner Street was standing outside his lodgings, when he noticed a man and woman outside number 63. The couple then moved off heading in the direction of Dutfield’s Yard. Marshall described the man as being middle aged and stout, and had the appearance of a clerk. He was around 5 feet 6 inches tall clean shaven, and respectably dressed. He wore a Small, black, cutaway coat, dark trousers, and a round cap with a small sailor-like peak.

**Matthew Packer**

Matthew Packer, a greengrocer who lived at and traded from number 44 Berner Street, two doors to the south of the International Working Men’s Educational Club. An Evening News reporter politely described him as a respectable and hardworking person who was “a little past the prime of life.” At 9am on the 30th September, Sergeant Stephen White called on Packer in the course of his door to door enquiries in the wake of Liz Stride’s murder. Packer was adamant that both he and his wife had neither seen nor heard anything untoward during the night. Two days later, Packer was visited by Grand and Batchelor, two private detectives employed by the Evening News and the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee. He had, it seems, remembered an important detail that had somehow slipped his mind when White had called a few days before. He told the two private detectives that he had sold grapes to a man and a woman from his shop window at around 11.45pm on the night of the murder. The man, he said, was aged about thirty five, was around 5 feet 7 inches tall, and was of stout square-build. He wore a wide-awake hat, dark clothes and had a clerkly appearance, or as Packer put it when expanding on his story to an Evening News reporter “…I am certain that he wasn’t what I should call a working man or anything like us folks that live around here.” Packer recalled how the man had asked him, ‘I say, old man, how do you sell your grapes?’ ‘Sixpence a pound the black ‘uns, sir, and fourpence a pound the white ‘uns,’ was Packer’s response. Turning to the woman, the man asked, ‘Which will you have, my dear, black or white? You shall have whichever you ‘like best.’ The woman chose the black ones. Packer insisted that the couple had loitered in the street for more than half an hour and that he had watched them eating the grapes in the rain. By 12.15am the couple had moved across the road to stand in front of the Berner Street Club where they stood listening to the singing. After that Packer, who had begun shutting up shop for the night, lost sight of them.

**PC William Smith**

At 12.30am PC William Smith proceeded along Berner Street on his beat and noticed a man and a woman on the opposite side of the road to Dutfield’s Yard. The man was approximately 28 years old, with a dark complexion and a small dark moustache. He was about five foot seven inches tall, had on a dark overcoat, a hard, felt, deerstalker, dark hat, and dark clothing. The woman, whom Smith later identified as Elizabeth Stride, had a flower pinned to her jacket. However, the couple were doing nothing to arouse Smith’s suspicions, so he continued on his beat onto Commercial Road.

**James Brown**

At the inquest in to Elizabeth Stride’s death he told the Coroner’s Court that he had “seen the body in the mortuary. I did not know deceased, but I saw her about a quarter to one on Sunday morning last.” He was “going from my house to the chandler’s shop at the corner of the Berner-street and Fairclough-street, to get some supper. I stayed there three or four minutes, and then went back home, when I saw a man and woman standing at the corner of the Board School. I was in the road just by the kerb, and they were near the wall. The man was standing with his arm against the wall; she was inclined towards his arm, facing him, and with her back to the wall.” According to Brown the man was wearing a long dark overcoat. He was 5ft. 7inches tall. Some newspaper reports had Brown saying that the man’s build was average, whereas the Times reported him as testifying that the man was of “stoutish build.”

**Israel Schwartz**

The most important witness to have seen Elizabeth Stride, in the 30 minutes before her body was discovered in Dutfield’s Yard, was a Hungarian Jew by the name of Israel Schwartz. He turned into Berner Street at around 12.45am and noticed a man walking ahead of him. The man stopped to talk to a woman who was standing in the gateway of Dutfield’s Yard. Schwartz was emphatic that the woman had seen was Elizabeth Stride. Schwartz spoke no English, and therefore gave his evidence through an interpreter.

According to Scwhartz, the man was about 5 feet, 5 inches tall, aged around 30 with dark hair, a fair complexion, a small brown moustache. He had a full face, broad shoulders and appeared to be slightly intoxicated. As Schwartz watched, the man tried to pull the woman into the street, but then spun her around, and threw her onto the footway, whereupon the woman screamed three times, but not very loudly. Israel Schwartz appears to have believed that he was witnessing a domestic attack, and so crossed the road to avoid getting involved. As he did so, he saw a second man standing, lighting his pipe. As Schwartz passed him, the man who was attacking the woman called out, apparently to this second man, the word ‘Lipski,’ at which point the second man began to follow him. Schwartz panicked and began to run, and had managed to lose his apparent pursuer by the time he reached the nearby railway arch. This second man, Schwartz said, was aged about 35, around 5feet, 11 inches tall, had a fresh complexion, light brown hair, a brown moustache, and wore a dark overcoat with an old, black, hard felt hat. The presence of the second man is something of a mystery. It has suggested to some that the killer had an accomplice. However, the evidence seems to suggest that the police traced the second man, and eliminated him as a suspect. Indeed in a report, dated the 19th of October 1888, Chief Inspector Swanson wrote that ‘the police apparently do not suspect the second man’.

**On the 1st October, the Star newspaper carried the following tantalising report:-**

From two different sources we have the story that a man when passing through Church Lane at about half-past one, saw a man sitting on a door-step and wiping his hands. As everyone is on the lookout for the murderer the man looked at the stranger with a certain amount of suspicion, whereupon he tried to conceal his face. He is described as a man who wore a short jacket and a sailor’s hat.