

The National Archives Education Service

Body Snatchers:

'The London Burkers' and the Case of 'The Italian Boy'



Introduction

Lesson at a Glance

Suitable For: KS3,
KS4

Time Period:

Empire and Industry
1750-1850

Curriculum Link:

Ideas, political power,
industry and empire:
Britain, 1745-1901

- Crime and Punishment
- Medicine through time
- Frankenstein (English Literature GCSE)

Learning Objective:

How common was the
crime of Body Snatching?

How successful was the
Anatomy Act of 1832?

Resources needed:

Printed sources

Medical Advances

The early 19th Century saw many advances in science and medicine, in a time where scientific and religious ideas often clashed over what was morally correct. These ideas are explored in nineteenth century literature such as the novel Frankenstein, but the stories in the real world were often as shocking and brutal as the Gothic fantasy. This lesson explores the business of the grave robber and how they furthered the study of medicine through a grey area of the law.

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Background

The study of anatomy had a troubled history. Religion dictated that dissection of human bodies was an offence leading to misunderstandings of human anatomy based on limited evidence. Galen's writings 'On Anatomy' in AD190 built on the theories of Hippocrates' Four Humours whilst applying observation of living humans and anatomical study of the deceased. As Human dissection was still not allowed outside of Alexandria, he recommended the dissection of animals such as apes and pigs, using his findings to suggest the anatomy of humans. Whilst some aspects of his observations were accurate, the differences between humans and other animals led to many mistakes but his detailed books on anatomy were believed for many hundreds of years before they were questioned. By the 16th Century, Vesalius had proven that more could be learnt through human dissection and the study of our own anatomy, and attitudes towards medicine began to change.

The industrial revolution brought social change, and significant medical advances through scientific enquiry. In an attempt to prevent murder through increasing the severity of punishment, the Government passed the Murder Act 1751 preventing the bodies of executed murderers from being buried. Instead their bodies would be strung up or given to medical science. As a result, medical students had a greater supply of cadavers to study legally than any previous period, and the study of anatomy through public dissection became a major part of the training of doctors and surgeons.

However, the opening of new medical schools and training centres in the 18th Century meant that even this new supply of subjects could not meet the needs of the students. Buried bodies were not considered property and therefore could be exhumed and sold without restriction, though the practice was hated by the general public. Cemeteries and mourners began to take measures against the business, installing gates, cages and mausoleums to protect their interred. Yet the need for bodies created a profitable black market and 'Resurrectionists' or body snatchers became commonplace, leading to notorious cases of murder for the sole purpose of selling the victim's corpse.

This is the background experience inspiring Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's novel 'Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus' which sees an ambitious and driven young medical student turn resurrectionist in his quest to discover a cure for death. Through Victor we see several roles of the medical science of the day, with the position of body snatcher and surgeon in one character whilst his friends and colleagues display the public disgust and conflict within the profession in their shock at the character's descent into desperation.

The most famous Resurrectionists were Edinburgh's Burke and Hare but London had its own notorious cases including 'The London Burkers' or 'Bethnal Green Gang' whose case, alongside several others in the early 1830s would lead to the Anatomy Act of 1832 and the legal recognition of the rights of a corpse.

'The London Burkers' trial took place under a media spotlight with the accused changing their story several times following the statements of new witnesses. The Home Office documents presented here provide evidence of their trial at the Old Bailey including the final confessions of two of the accused, describing their involvement in the crime and the business of resurrectionism, and the record of their sentences and punishments from Newgate Prison's Calendar. Also provided is an extract from the Anatomy Act 1832, passed as a direct result of 'the Bethnal Green Gang' murders. The final source provided is a later letter sent to the Home Secretary describing the resulting shortfall in subjects for medical students twenty-five years on. This is one of many letters collected by the Home Office after the Act as the appointed inspectors began to keep closer contact with the schools of anatomy and medical profession.

Teachers Notes

This lesson can be used as part of several fields of study for GCSE, including:

- Crime and Punishment
- History of Medicine
- Social Reform of the early 1800s
- Historical Context of 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley.

The confessions of Bishop and May describe their daily lives in great detail. The full confessions are twelve pages long each, and so have been presented as extracts to provide the most relevant sections describing one particular case. The initial task can be completed as group work, in carousel, or individually as its own lesson before moving on to the rest of the sources. Care should be taken in providing the source describing the murder to students.

The final source shows the ongoing effects of the Act over twenty-five years later, asking students to consider these sources in the context of a larger narrative.

Tasks

1. Read the two confessions and answer the provided questions. This activity could work well in two or more groups where one side is given May's confession and the other is given Bishop's. Come back together to discuss your findings.
2. Look at the Newgate Prison Calendar.
 - What was the sentence at the trial?
 - What was Bishop's punishment?
 - What was May's punishment?
3. Look at the Anatomy Act 1832. This document is written in legal language so can be quite difficult, try to separate it into blocks of information.
 - Why did the Act come into force?
 - Why is the study of Anatomy necessary?
 - What policies are put in place to help prevent further crimes?
 - List the people who can now apply for licenses to study anatomy.
4. Read the Letter from the Medical students of Guys Hospital.
 - How successful was the Anatomy Act 1832?
 - What problems are the Medical Students facing in 1859?

Task One - Questions

May's Confession:

- Becoming a resurrectionist: What is a resurrectionist?
How and why did May become a resurrectionist?
Why does he discuss Patrick Murphy?
What do the hospitals think of resurrectionists?
- Talking to Bishop: Bishop asked May for the 'best price' – what does this tell us about the treatment of bodies?
How often are they making sales?
What does the word 'bid' imply?
- May's involvement: How well treated is the body?
Why might they sell the teeth separately?
Why is it important to arrive before the Friday evening lecture?
- Selling the Body: What is May's main concern at the beginning of the extract?
How many times is drinking mentioned? How trustworthy is his account?
How responsible is he?
Was May expecting the arrest?
What do you think May's crime was?

Bishop's Confession:

- The Murder: Why was the boy vulnerable?
How did Bishop and Williams convince him to go with them?
What happened to the boy?
- Making Plans: Why does Mr Tuson turn down the sale?
What does 'The Lecture Room' imply about where he is selling the body?
How much does Bishop agree to sell the body for?
- Selling the Body: Why does Bishop check with May?
What was Bishop's offer to get May involved?
What does Mr Partridge demonstrate?
Describe May's behaviour during the sale.
How much does Bishop agree to sell the body for?
- Declaration: How does Bishop help May?
What do you think May's crime was?
How many bodies has Bishop sold during his career as a body snatcher?
What does this tell you about the trade?

Document: Confession of 'resurrectionist' James May 1831 (HO17/46/122)
Extract One: Becoming a ressurectionist

X
James May now under Sentence of Death in Newgate -
About six Years ago I began the business of Resurrectionist
I was then out of a situation and using the Alfreds
Head near the Elephant and Castle and several of
them used to use it - I got acquainted with them
there - one of them asked me to go to Woolwich after
a Convict that had been buried in the marshes - I
agreed to go and went with this person but I don't
recollect his name - We got the body and to the best
of my recollection sold the body at St Thomas's for
8 Guineas -

Patrick Murphy has become rich by the business
beginning from a Labourer^{or} Porter and by means of
his money is able to go to the Keeper of different grounds
and pay them handsomely for the run of the grounds
he used to have a man of the name of Richard Wilds and
Joseph Naples with him they used to do the work and
he looked out for the grounds and as they term it make
a place right - I have been at Hospital grounds but at
no others than Thomas's or Guys - They have a watch-
man there now a trust worthy one but we can't
get over him because I have watched him so narrowly
I have asked him to have something to drink it won't
do to give money fish but he won't drink with -
nobody - before he came there we had a man there
he was right and we could do as we liked - I

Transcripts: Confession of body snatcher James May 1831 (HO17/46/122)

Transcript: Extract – Becoming a resurrectionist

James May now under sentence of Death in Newgate – About six years ago I began the business of resurrectionist. I was then out of a situation and using the Alfred's Head [pub] near Elephant and Castle and several of them used to use it – I got acquainted with them there- One of them asked me to go to Woolwich after a Convict that had been buried in the marshes. I agreed to go and went with this person but I don't recall his name – We got the body and to the best of my recollection sold the body at St Thomas's for 8 Guineas. [...]

Patrick Murphy has become rich by the business beginning from a Labourer or Porter and by means of his money is able to go to the Keeper of different grounds and pay them handsomely for the run of the grounds.

He used to have a man of the name of Richard Wilds and Joseph Naples with him they used to do the work and he looked out for the grounds and as they term it made a place right- I have been at Hospital grounds but at no others than Thomas's or Guys – They have a watch-man there now a trustworthy one but we can't get over him because I have watched him so narrowly I have asked him to have something to drink it won't do to give money first but he won't drink with no body- before he came there we had a man there he was right and we could do as we liked.

Notes:

'Out of a situation' – out of work, possibly homeless.

Guinea – A pre-decimalised coin. 1G = £1 1s (or £1.05) Guineas were generally used for professional fees or prices of major goods at this time having been replaced by pounds as the main unit of currency in 1816.

8 Guineas = 42 days wages for a skilled tradesman at the time. Approx. £570 today.

Thomas's or Guys – Hospitals in London which held public lectures on anatomy for medical students.

Transcript: Extract – May's involvement

I then asked a man who drove a Chariot whether he would take the job he asked me what it was to do I told him and he said he would – Me and Bishop got into the Chariot and drove to the Fortune of War where the Prisoner – Williams was –

Bishop uncorded a hair trunk which was there and lifted up the lid – I there saw the body it was laying straight on the back with the head in the chest and the hands laying by the side I lifted the upper lip and asked him how it was he did not take the teeth out because it is natural in Young persons to have a good set of Teeth I can't be positive what he said but I think he said what would you take the teeth out I did not think they were good enough [...] I took the teeth out and put the body in the sack and carried to the chariot myself. We all three got in and I desired the coachman to drive to Guys Hospital which he did and we got there as they were getting ready for the Friday Evening Lecture – I took the Body out myself and took it into Mr Davies'. Bishop went with me and we left Williams with the Coachman. I asked Davies to take it and so did Bishop.

Notes:

Chariot – a horse and carriage.

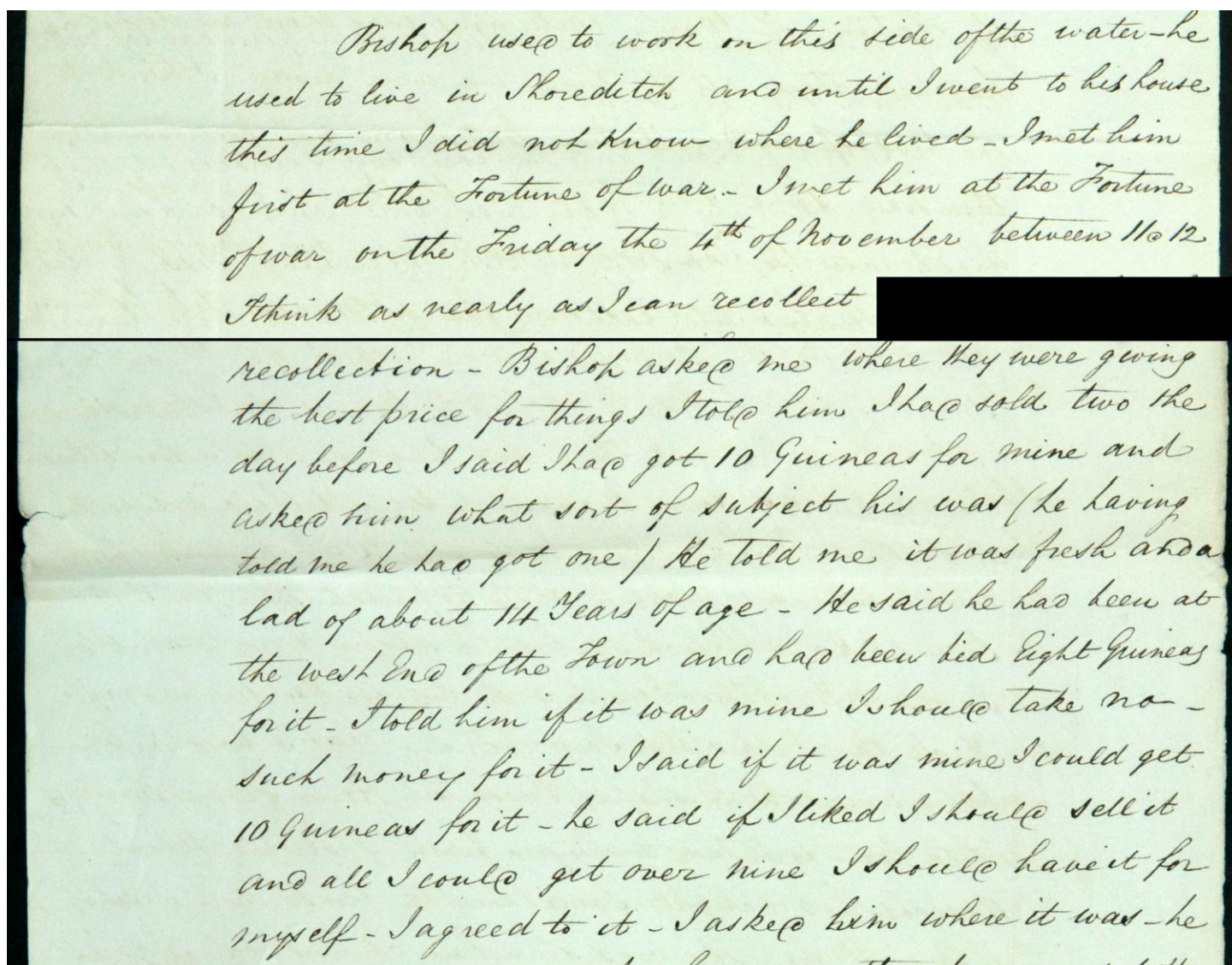
Hair trunk – a trunk covered in animal hide with intact hair.

Uncorded – untied

Guy's Hospital – a leading teaching hospital

Document: Confession of 'resurrectionist' James May 1831 (HO17/46/122)

Extract Two: Talking to Bishop



Bishop used to work on this side of the water - he used to live in Shoreditch and until I went to his house this time I did not know where he lived - I met him first at the Fortune of War - I met him at the Fortune of War on the Friday the 14th of November between 11 & 12 I think as nearly as I can recollect

recollection - Bishop asked me where they were giving the best price for things I told him I had sold two the day before I said I had got 10 Guineas for mine and asked him what sort of subject his was (he having told me he had got one) He told me it was fresh and a lad of about 14 Years of age - He said he had been at the west End of the Town and had been bid Eight Guineas for it - I told him if it was mine I should take no such money for it - I said if it was mine I could get 10 Guineas for it - he said if I liked I should sell it and all I could get over nine I should have it for myself - I agreed to it - I asked him where it was - he

Transcript: Extract – Talking to Bishop

Bishop used to work on this side of the water – he used to live in Shoreditch and until I went to his house this time I did not know where he lived – I met him first at the Fortune of War [pub] – I met him at the Fortune of War on the Friday the 4th of November between 11 and 12 I think as nearly as I can recollect [...]

Bishop asked me where they were giving the best price for things I told him I had sold two the day before I said I had got 10 Guineas for mine and asked him what sort of subject his was (he having told me he had got one) He told me it was fresh and a lad of about 14 Years of age – He said he had been at the west end of the town and had been bid Eight Guineas for it – I told him if it was mine I should take no such money for it – I said if it was mine I could get 10 Guineas for it – he said if I like I should sell it and all I could get over nine I should have it for myself – I agreed to it.

Notes:

10 Guineas = Equivalent to 52 days wages for a skilled tradesman at the time. Approx. £712 today.

Document: Confession of 'resurrectionist' James May 1831 (HO17/46/122)
Extract Three: May's involvement

Then -
asked a man who drove a Chariot whether he would take
the job he asked me what it was to do I told him and
he said he would - Me and Bishop got into the Chariot
and drove to the Fortune of War where the Prisoner -
Williams was -

Bishop uncoiled a hair trunk which was
there and lifted up the lid - I there saw the body ^{it} was
laying straight on the back with the head inclining in
the Chest and the hands laying by the side I lifted the
upper lip and asked him how it was he did not take
the teeth out because it is natural in Young persons to
have a good set of Teeth I can't be positive what he
said but I think he said what would you take the
teeth out I did not think they were good enough -

I took the teeth out & put the Body
in the sack & carried to the Chariot myself - we all three
got in - & I desired the Coachman to drive to Guys Hospital
which he did - & we got there as they were getting ready for
the Friday Evening Lecture - I took the Body out myself &
took it into Mr. Davies! Bishop went with me & we
left Williams with the Coachman - I asked Davies to
take it & so did Bishop -

Document: Confession of 'resurrectionist' James May 1831 (HO17/46/122)

Extract Four: Selling the body

he declined he said you know
 John I took two of you Yesterday & that's more than I know
 what to do with - Bishop then as well as myself asked him
 to leave it there that night which Mr. Davis complied with
 Bishop requested Mr. Davis not to let any one have it but
 himself as it belonged to him and I requested not to let it
 go without I was there as I should be money out of pocket
 by which I meant that as I had paid for Tea & what we
 had had to drink & 10/- for the Coachman's hire if he
 had taken the Body away himself he might have done
 me out of the money as well as what portion I might have
 got by the sale of it

we went away after I had paid the Coachman 10/- we
 then took another Coach in the Boro' & went to the Portico
 of war - had some more drink & stopped there sometime
 I was then a little elevated & don't recollect very accu-
 -rately but I think I went out from there with Bishop
 and Williams & had a Coach to Golden Lane

After I had sold the Teeth I went to Mr. Davis
 at the Hospital & shortly after I had been there the Prisoner
 Bishop & Williams & Shields the Porter came - Williams &
 Shields we sent to get something to drink & wait our
 return - Bishop & I then went to Mr. Grangers they did
 not want it & then we went to the King's College we
 saw the porter - Bishop agreed for the price & we came back
 again to Guys for Williams & Shields we then took the
 Body put it in a Hamper placed on Shields Head & had a
 Knot - Me & Bishop had a Cab - Williams went with
 Shields - we got to the Kings College first & waited for
 them - there we were taken into Custody -

Transcript: Confession of bodysnatcher James May 1831 (HO17/46/122)

Transcript: Extract – Selling the Body

He declined he said you know John I took two o[f]f you Yesterday and that's more than I know what to do with – Bishop then as well as myself asked him to leave it there that night which Mr Davies complied with Bishop requested Mr Davis not to let any one have it but himself as it belonged to him and I requested not to let it go without I was there as I should be money out of pocket by which I meant that as I had paid for Tea and what we had had to drink and 10 S for the Coachman's hire if he had taken the Body away himself – he might have done me out of the money as well as what portion I might have got by the sale of it [...]

we went away after I had paid the Coachmen 10 S we then took another coach in the Borough and went to the Fortune of War – had some more drink and stopped there sometime I was then a little elevated and don't recollect very accurately but I think I went out from there with Bishop and Williams and had a coach to Golden Lane. [...]

After I had sold the teeth I went to Mr Davis at the ~Hospital and shortly after I had been there the Prisoner Bishop and Williams and Shields the porter came – Williams and Shields we sent to get something to drink and wait our return – Bishop and I then went to Mr Graingers and they did not want it and then we went to the King's College we saw the porter – Bishop agreed for the price and we came back again to Guy's for Williams and Shields we then took the Body put it in a Hamper and placed on Shields' Head he had a knot – Me and Bishop had a cab – Williams went with Shields – we got to the Kings College first and waited for them – there we were taken into Custody -.

Document: Confession of bodysnatcher John Bishop 1831 (HO17/46/122)
Extract One: The Murder

Newgate Dec^r 4. 1831.

I John Bishop do hereby declare & confess that the Boy supposed to be the Italian Boy was a Lincolnshire Boy - I and Williams took him to my House about ½ past 10 O'clock on the Thursday night the 3rd of Nov^r from the Bell in Smithfield - He walked home with us - Williams promised to give him some work -

I took him into the House - we lighted a candle & gave the Boy some Bread & Cheese & after he had eaten, we gave him a Cup full of Rum with about half a small Phial of Laudanum in it.

I then took him in my arms & let him slide from them headlong into the well in the Garden whilst Williams held the Cord to prevent his Body going altogether too low into the well - He was nearly wholly in the water of the well -

Transcript – Extract One: The Murder

Newgate December 4 1831

I, John Bishop do hereby declare and confess that the boy supposed to be the Italian boy was a Lincolnshire boy - I and Williams took him to my House about ½ past 10 O'Clock on the Thursday night the 3rd of November from the Bell in Smithfield - He walked home with us - Williams promised him some work.[...] I took him into the House - we lighted a candle and gave the boy some bread and cheese and after he had eaten, we gave him a cup full of rum with about half a small phial of Laudanum in it.

I then took him in my arms and let him slide from them headlong into the well in the Garden whilst Williams held the cord to prevent his body going altogether too low into the well - he was nearly wholly in the water of the well.

Document: Confession of bodysnatcher John Bishop 1831 (HO17/46/122)

Extract Two: Making Plans

we had something to eat & drink there, & after we had been there about half an hour May came in - I knew May, but had not seen him for about a fortnight before - he had some rum with me at the Bar - Williams - leaving May at the Fortune of War - Williams & I went to Mr Tuson's in Windmill Street where I saw Mr Tuson & offered to sell him a subject - meaning the boy we had left at home - He said he had waited so long for a subject which I had before undertaken to procure that he had been obliged to buy one the day before we went from there to Mr Capries in Dean Street & offered it to him in the Lecture Room with other Gentlemen they asked me if it was fresh, I told them Yes - they told me to wait - I asked them 10 Guineas & after waiting a little a Gentleman there said they would give 8 Guineas which I agreed to take & engaged to carry it there the next morning at 10 O'clock -

Transcript – Extract Two: Making Plans

[...]We had something to eat and drink there [a pub] and after we had been there about half an hour May came in – I knew May, but had not seen him for about a fortnight before – he had some rum with me at the bar.[...]

Leaving May at the Fortune of War – Williams and I went to Mr Tuson's in Windmill Street where I saw Mr Tuson and offered to sell him a subject – meaning the boy we had left at home – he said he had waited so long for a subject which I had before undertaken to procure that he had been obliged to buy one the day before. We went from there to Mr Capries in Dean Street and offered it to him in the Lecture Room with other Gentlemen. They asked me if it was fresh, I told them yes – they told me to wait – I asked them 10 Guineas and after waiting a little a Gentleman there said they would give 8 Guineas which I agreed to take and engaged to carry it there the next morning at 10 O'clock-[...]

Document: Confession of bodysnatcher John Bishop 1831 (HO17/46/122)
Extract Three: Selling the Body

I called May out to the outside of the House & asked was the best price - giving for "Things" - He said he had sold two the day before for 10 Guineas each (I think) - I told him I had a subject - He asked what sort of one - I said a Boy about 14 years old - & that I had been offered 8 Guineas for it - He said if it was his he would not take it - he could sell it where he sold his for more - I told him that all he could get above 9 Guineas he might have for himself - we agreed to go presently & get a Coach -

crossed the water in a Boat to the Kings College where we inquired of Mr. Hill the Porter if he wanted a Subject - He said he was not particularly in want but would speak to Mr. Partridge, the Demonstrator; - Mr. Partridge came & asked what the subject was, May said a Male subject "Mr. Partridge asked the Price - May said "12 Guineas" - Mr. Partridge said he could not give so much & went away - Mr. Hill asked us to stay a few minutes whilst he went after Mr. Partridge to speak to him again - Hill returned & said Mr. Partridge would give 9 Guineas - May said he would be damned if it should go under 10 Guineas - He was in liquor & on his moving a little way off I took the opportunity of saying to Hill that it should come in at 9 Guineas - I told May directly after that I had sold it for 9 Guineas & that I would out of it pay him what I had had of him & give him something besides -

Document: Confession of bodysnatcher John Bishop 1831 (HO17/46/122)
Extract Four: Declaration

I declare that this Statement is all true and that it contains all the facts as far as I can recollect May knew nothing of the Murder and I do not believe he suspected that I had got the Body except in the usual way & after the death of it - I always told him that I got it from the ground and he never knew to the contrary until I confessed to Mr Williams since the Trial - I have known May as a Body Snatcher 4 or 5 Years but I do not believe he ever obtained a Body except in the common way of men in that calling by stealing from the Graves -

Until the transactions before set forth I never was concerned in obtaining a subject by destruction of the living - I have followed the course of obtaining a livelihood as a

Body Snatcher for 12 Years I have obtained & sold I think from 500 to 1000 bodies but I declare before God that they were all obtained after death & that with the above exceptions I am ignorant of any Murder for that or any other purpose -

Transcripts: Confession of bodysnatcher John Bishop 1831 (HO17/46/122)

Transcript – Extract Three: Selling the Body

I called May out to the outside of the House and asked was the best price giving for “things” – He said he had sold two the day before for 10 Guineas each (I think) – I told him I had a subject – He asked what sort of one – I said a boy about 14 years old and that I had been offered 8 Guineas for it – He said if it was his he would not take it – he could sell it where he sold his for more – I told him that all he could get above 9 Guineas he might have for himself – we agreed to go presently and get a coach.[...]

[we] crossed the water in a Boar to the Kings College where we inquired of Mr Hill the Porter if he wanted a subject – he said he was not particularly in want but would speak to Mr Partridge, the Demonstrator ; - Mr Partridge came and asked what the subject was, May said a male subject Mr Partridge asked the price May said ‘12 Guineas’ – Mr Partridge said he could not give so much and went away – Mr Hill asked us to stay a few minutes whilst he went after Mr Partridge to speak to him again – Hill returned and said Mr Partridge would give 9 Guineas - May said he would be damned if it should go under 10 Guineas - He was in liquor and on his moving a little way off I took the opportunity of saying to Hill that it should come in at 9 Guineas – I told May directly after that I had sold it for 9 Guineas and that I would out of it pay him what I had had of him and give him something besides. [...]

Notes:

Subject - body

Transcript – Extract Four: Declaration

I declare that this statement is all true and that it contains all the facts as far as I can recollect May knew nothing of the murder and I do not believe he suspected that I had got the body except in the usual way and after the death of it – I always told him that I got it from the ground and he never knew to the contrary until I confessed to Mr Williams since the Trial – I have known May as a Body Snatcher 4 or 5 years but I do not believe he ever obtained a body except in the common way of men in that calling by stealing from the graves –[...]

Until the transactions before set forth I never was concerned in obtaining a subject by destruction of the living – I have followed the cause of obtaining a livelihood as a Body Snatcher for 12 years and I have obtained and sold I think from 500 to 1000 bodies but I declare before God that they were all obtained after death and that with the above exceptions I am ignorant of any murder for that or any other purpose.

Document: Newgate Prison Calendar (HO77/39/32)

MIDDLESEX PRISONERS FOR TRIAL.									
No.	Name.	By whom & when committed.	Trade, &c.	Offence charged with.	No.	When tried.	Before whom.	Finding.	Sentence.
161	Charles Burroughs .. 13	Labourer.	J. Rawlinson, Esq.	Stealing five books, the property of Fanny Horsall.	161	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
162	Henry Cook .. 14	Ditto			162	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
163	William Barnett .. 19	Plumber	Mr. Serg. Scllon	Stealing 16 locks and other articles, the property of Hugh Welch Cooper.	163	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
164	James Gibson .. 43	Weaver	S. Twyford, Esq.	Stealing a waistcoat, the property of Peter Page.	164	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
165	Robert Springett .. 17	Baker	G. C. Norton, Esq.	Stealing in the dwelling-house of William Wilkinson, £1. 10s., two shawls and other articles, value £20, his property.	165	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
166	James Faulkner .. 45	Roemaker	J. Hardwick, Esq.	Stealing a quantity of pointes, the property of Charles Russell.	166	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
167	Thomas Cranston .. 40	Ditto		Stealing a quantity of pointes, the property of Charles Russell.	167	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
168	Levy Bowyer .. 34	Labourer	P. Hardy, Esq.	Stealing a quantity of pointes, the property of Charles Russell.	168	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
169	John McGinnis .. 18	Ditto	J. E. Conant, Esq.	Stealing a coat, the property of Richard Rigby.	169	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
170	William Shepherd .. 17	Ditto	W. Crighton, Esq.	Stealing a pair of boots, the property of Thomas Cogswell.	170	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
171	Charles Kemp .. 19	Clerk	W. L. Rogers, Esq.	Stealing in the dwelling-house of William Ruggett, a gold watch and a diamond ring, value £25, the property of Henry Collins.	171	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
172	John Bishop .. 39	Labourer	G. R. Minshall, Esq.	The wilful murder of Charles Ferrier.	172	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
173	James May .. 30	Butcher			173	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
174	Thomas Williams .. 26	Bricklayer			174	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
175	Bishop and Williams .. 24	Taylor	W. Hoskins, Esq.	The wilful murder of Frances Pickburn.	175	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
176	James Waley .. 24	Labourer	J. E. Conant, Esq.	Stealing two loaves of bread, the property of David Hood.	176	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
177	John Jones .. 27	Plumber	J. E. Conant, Esq.	Stealing in the dwelling-house of Lord Lyndhurst, a clock, value £6, his property.	177	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
178	Thomas Taylor, the younger .. 19	Labourer		Stealing in the dwelling-house of Caroline Bowen, four gowns and other articles, value £11, the property of Pluche Mullings.	178	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
179	George Fox .. 19	Shoemaker	G. R. Minshall, Esq.	Stealing five silver spoons and other articles, value 38s., the property of Thomas Taylor, Esq.	179	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
180	Robert Lewis .. 35	Baker	W. Hoskins, Esq.	Stealing a hat and other articles, the property of Thomas Adams, and an ear, the property of Andrew Arthur, from a vessel in the river Thames.	180	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
181	Robert Elliot .. 16	Mariner	W. Ballantine, Esq.	Stealing a hat and other articles, the property of Thomas Adams, and an ear, the property of Andrew Arthur, from a vessel in the river Thames.	181	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
182	Robert Bullock .. 19	Butcher			182	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
183	Thomas Allweathers .. 33	Groom	W. Hoskins, Esq.	Stealing a weighing-machine and seven weights, the property of Thomas Gibbs.	183	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
184	Edward Baker .. 18	Labourer	H. M. Dyer, Esq.	Stealing a hat and a handkerchief, the property of Vincent Howard.	184	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
185	Margaret Rudcliffe .. 48	Married		Stealing a bowl and 14s., the monies and property of Anthony Clark.	185	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs
186	Margaret Rudcliffe .. 48	Married		Stealing a shawl and other articles, the property of Jane Earl.	186	Decr 2	16-17	Guilty	Transport 7 yrs

Document: Newgate Prison Calendar (HO77/39/32)

PRISONERS ON ORDERS.

MIDDLESEX.

Under Sentence of Death,

NAME.	AGE.	CONVICTED.	NAME.	AGE.	CONVICTED.
John Bishop(Executed)	33	Dec. 1831.	John William Butcher	22	Dec. 1831.
Thomas Williams do	26	"	William Scott	36	"
James May(Respited)	30	"	William Anthony	18	"
John Jones	27	"	James Brown	19	"
Samuel Connix	26	"	Arthur Poole	19	"
William Bailey	32	"	William Gibson	20	"
Deniston Angus	25	"	William Williams	54	"
Robert Springett	17	"			
William Weedon	27	"	Maria Dowling	25	"
Thomas Perry, alias Williams ..	25	"	Mary Elton	23	"

Respited and Transported for Life.

John Harris	20	April, 1829.	Margaret Smith ..(Penitentiary)	18	June, 1831.
George Mc. Lochlin (Penitentiary)	14	Sept. 1831.	Walburgis Elvire Roulette, alias		
Joseph Langley(Hulks)	19	Oct. 1831.	Christana Eckardt(Ship)	25	Sept.
George Alfred Glover do	31	"	Elizabeth Bacon	20	"
Emanuel Antonio do	34	"	Elizabeth Lee	20	"
Thomas Davis(Penitentiary)	18	"	Frances Bagley	24	"
James May(Hulks)	30	Dec. 1831.	Hannah Jones	40	"
			Isther Elias	23	Oct.
Ann Hyde(Ship)	23	June, 1831.	Elizabeth Martin	22	"

Respited, and Confined One Year in the House of Correction.

John Kybert(Removed) | 20 | Oct. 1831.

Under Sentence of Transportation for Life.

James Hawkins	43	Jan. 1826.	Eliza Jones(Ship)	20	Sept. 1831.
Edward Tyler(Hulks)	20	Dec. 1831.	Mary Arnold	30	"
Robert Folks do	24	"	Mary Meeking	31	"
Patrick Bouchell	34	"	Henrietta Lethulier	21	"
James Richardson(Hulks)	22	"	Jane Morrison	24	Oct.
			Mary James	27	Dec. 1831.
Catherine Conjuet ..(Pardoned)	55	Sept. 1827.	Lydia Goodwin	25	"
Elizabeth Patterson	42	Sept. 1828.	Ann Hudson	22	"
Mary Middleton	32	Sept. 1831.			

Transcript: Newgate Prison Calendar (HO77/39/32) Extract

No.	Name.	Age	Trade &c.	By whom & when committed.	Offence charged with.	No.	When Tried.	Before whom.	Verdict.	Sentence.
170	John Bishop	33	Labourer	G.R.Minshull, Esq.,,	The wilful murder of Charles Ferrier	170	Dec 2	Lord Chief Justice Tindale	All Guilty	Death
	James May	30	Butcher							
	And Thomas Williams	26	Bricklayer							
	Bishop and Williams			ditto	The wilful murder of Frances Pickburn.					"
	- detained									

Prisoners on Orders.
Middlesex.
Under Sentence of Death.

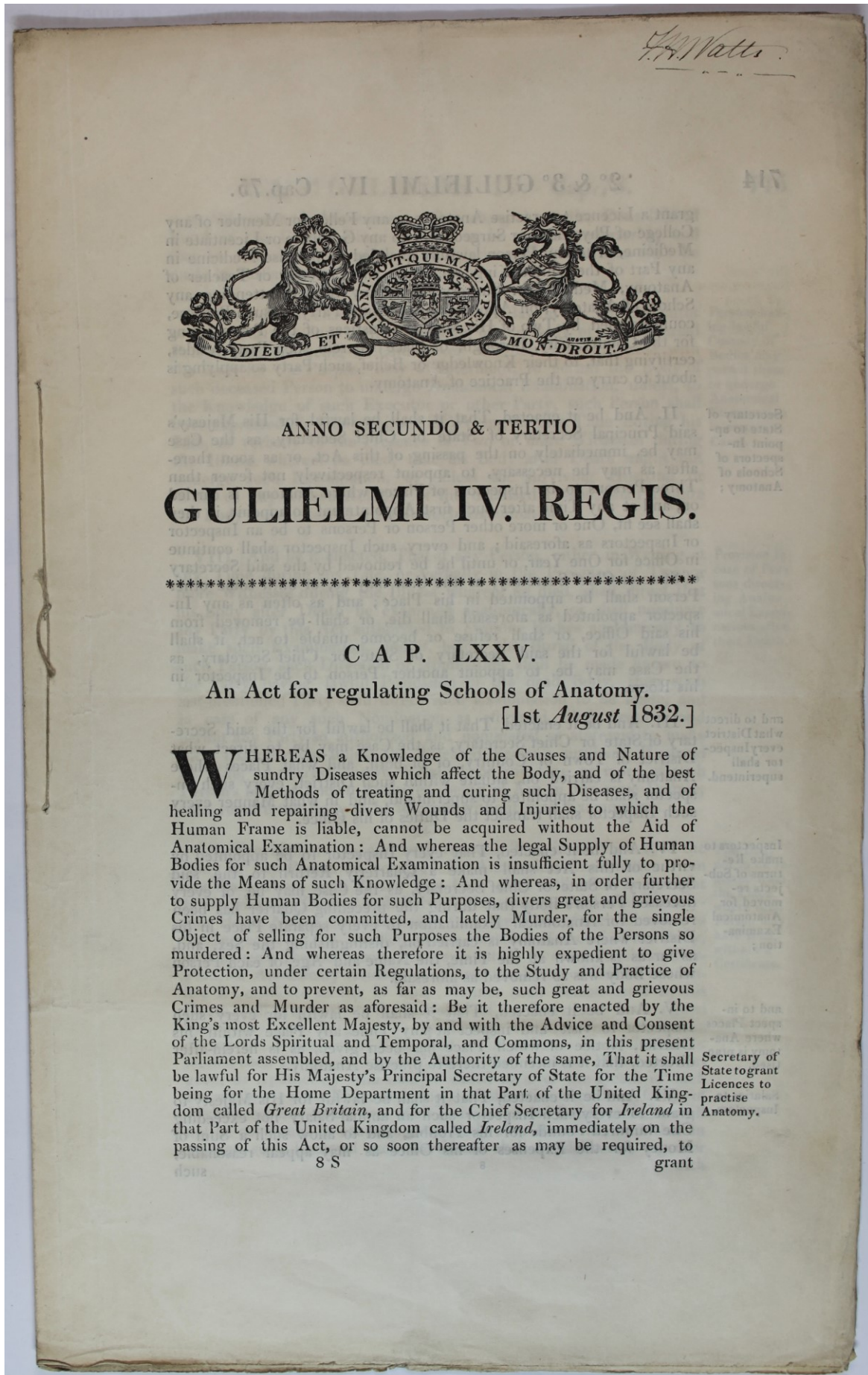
Name	Age	Convicted
John Bishop (Executed)	33	Dec. 1831
Thomas Williams d[itt]o	26	
James May (Respited)	30	

Notes:
Respited – postponed
Transported – sent abroad to labour as punishment, often to America or later Australia
Hulks –Ships used as floating prisons

Respited and Transported for Life.

James May (Hulks)	30	Dec. 1831
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Document: The Anatomy Act 1832 (HO45/6521)



Transcript: Anatomy Act 1832 (HO 45/6521)

An Act for regulating Schools of Anatomy [1st August 1832]

I. Whereas a Knowledge of the Causes and Nature of sundry Diseases which affect the Body, and of the best Methods of treating and curing such Diseases, and of healing and repairing divers[e] Wounds and Injuries to which the Human Frame is liable, cannot be acquired without the Aid of Anatomical Examination: And whereas the legal Supply of Human Bodies for such Anatomical Examination is insufficient fully to provide the Means of such Knowledge: And whereas in order further to supply Human Bodies for such Purposes divers[e] great and grievous Crimes have been committed, and lately Murder, for the single Object of selling for such Purposes the Bodies of the Persons so murdered: And whereas therefore it is highly expedient to give Protection, under certain Regulations, to the Study and Practice of Anatomy and to prevent, as far as may be, such great and grievous Crimes and Murder as aforesaid; be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty,[...] that it shall be lawful for His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the time being for the Home Department [...] to grant a Licence to practise Anatomy to any Fellow or Member of any College of Physicians or Surgeons, or to any Graduate or Licentiate in Medicine, or to any Person lawfully qualified to practice Medicine in any part of the United Kingdom, or to any Professor or Teacher of Anatomy, Medicine or Surgery or to any Student attending any School of Anatomy, on Application from such Party for such Purpose, countersigned by Two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace acting for the [...] Place wherein such Party resides [...]

IV. And be it enacted, That every Inspector to be appointed by virtue of this Act shall make Quarterly Return to the said Secretary of State [...] of every deceased Person's Body that during the preceding Quarter has been removed for Anatomical Examination [...] distinguishing the Sex, and, as far as is known at the Time, the Name and Age of each Person [...]

VII. [...] it shall be lawful for any Executor or other Party having lawful Possession of the Body of any deceased Person, not being an Undertaker or other Party intrusted with the Body for the Purpose only of Interment, to permit the Body of such deceased Person to undergo Anatomical Examination, unless [...] such Person shall have expressed his Desire either in Writing at any Time during his life, or verbally in the Presence of Two or more Witnesses during the Illness whereof he died, that his Body after Death might not undergo such Examination [...]

IX. [...] in no Case shall the Body of any Person be removed for Anatomical Examination from any Place where such Person may have died until after Forty-eight Hours from the Time of such Person's Decease, not until after Twenty-Four Hours Notice, to be reckoned from the Time of such decease, to the Inspector of the District, of the intended Removal of the Body[...] nor unless a Certificate stating in what Manner such Person came by his Death shall previously to the Removal of the Body have been signed by the Physician

Document: Letter from Guy's Hospital Medical Students 1859
(HO 45/6521)

Sir!
 Guy's Hospital
 Oct. 5th 1859.
 The various Metropolitan Medical
 Schools having resigned for the winter session,
 the Committee appointed in the early
 part of the year, for the purpose of
 investigating the causes of the deficient
 supply of subjects for anatomical
 purposes, is anxious to present its
 report. The schools have of late suffered
 much from the lamentably inadequate
 means to study Anatomy and avoid
 with concern your reply to the address.
 The Committee had the honour to present
 to you in July.
 Permit me to take the liberty
 of asking, whether upon considering the
 practical suggestions you did us the

favour to request of the deputation, it has
 been possible to adopt any remedial
 measures; or whether it is in contemplation
 to effect during the next Parliamentary
 session an alteration of the Law,
 whereby the means so abundantly
 available under suitable regulations
 but now lost away for the future
 be secured.

I beg in my own behalf
 and on that of the Committee to
 apologise for this intrusion, which
 is solely prompted by our earnest
 desire to acquit ourselves advantageously
 of the task imposed by our very
 numerous fellow students, upon

us. I have the honour to remain
 Sir
 Your obedient & humble servant
 John Thos. Mercer.
 Hon. Secy & the Committee of Medical
 Students, on the supply of Anatomical
 Subjects to the
 The N. H. M. S. J. C. Lewis.

Transcript: Letter from Guy's Hospital Medical Students 1859 (HO 45/6521)

Guy's Hospital
October 5th 1859

Sir!

The various metropolitan medical schools having re-opened for the winter session, the committee appointed in the early part of the year, for the purpose of investigating the causes of the deficient supply of subjects for anatomical purposes, is anxious to present its report.

The schools have of late suffered much from the lamentably inadequate means to study anatomy and await with concern your reply to the address the committee had the honour to present to you in July.

Permit me to take the liberty of asking, whether upon considering the practical suggestions you did us the favour to request of the deputation, it has been possible to adopt any remedial measures or whether it is in contemplation to effect during the next Parliamentary Session an alteration of the law, whereby the means so abundantly available under suitable regulations but now lost may for the future be secured.

I beg in my own behalf and on that of the Committee to apologise for this intrusion, which is solely prompted by our earnest desire to acquit ourselves advantageously of the task imposed by our very numerous fellow students upon us.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant

John Thomas Mercer

Honourable Secretary to the Committee of Medical Students, on the supply of anatomical subjects

The Right Honourable Sir L.C. Lewis.

Did you know?

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A free **Video Conference** session allows our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone to set up this web-chat with us.

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