



The Real 'Sherlock Holmes' was Autistic

Fictional Sherlock Holmes displayed the traits of autistic hyperfocus, especially including (a) astute powers of observation, (b) brilliant at deductive reasoning, (c) phenomenal memory for details, (d) unemotional when speaking, (e) asocial, and (f) delivered monologues.

Arthur Conan Doyle modeled his Sherlock Holmes character after autistic medical professor Joseph Bell (1837-1911). Bell was the first Scottish scientific surgeon and a pioneer in forensic pathology. He had astute powers of observation, which he loved to display by picking a stranger at random and deducing his previous history, habits, nationality, occupation, and recent travels based on observation alone. Bell could tell by looking at hand calluses whether a person was a carpenter, a mason, or a church bell ringer – and from his walking gait whether he was a soldier or a sailor.



Bell was Scotland's first consulting medical detective. Edinburgh's police force asked him to assist them in solving crimes. In 1888, Scotland Yard consulted him in their hunt for Jack the Ripper, whom Bell deduced was a surgeon who spent all his money on drink

and women and had a vendetta against prostitutes. Dr. Bell gave the name of the suspect to Scotland Yard, and a week later the murders came to an end.