

# CASEMENT

## Decoding False History

RECENT RESEARCH

by

Paul R. Hyde

Author of *Anatomy of a lie*

*Aubane Historical Society*

The author wishes to thank Jack Lane  
for his patient and generous research in The British Library  
and in the UK National Archives.

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## *Praise for the author's Casement research:*

“It’s very detailed scholarship – and I think you make a persuasive case for your argument – I was certainly persuaded.”

**Professor Adam Gearey,**  
Law Faculty, Birkbeck College, London

“The case you make is thoroughly convincing. By the end of the book it was clear to me that there’s now a need for a new telling of the last few years of Casement’s life, recast in the light of the findings of your book.”

**Professor John Harris, UCL**

“From a legal point of view the forensic and yet simple analysis was compelling, going to the very core of the issue and laying the evidence clearly before the reader. The research was in my opinion excellent and arguments convincing.”

**Brian Leahy, Barrister, Cork**

“You have built a strong and detailed case. Your argument is a very cogent one, and focuses on one of the key weaknesses in the authenticity case, provenance... Congratulations... it is forensic, non-polemic, and very convincing.”

**Dr. Martin Mansergh,**  
former Government special advisor

“Your fascinating paper held me spellbound. Your critical analysis exceeds what I fancied was my own above average ability in that endeavour. I believe you have written a most objective and unbiased essay that is impeccable in its forensic thesis...”

**Marcel Matley**  
US Forensic Document Examiner

“...very convincing. Your clarity and logic are first rate. You have broken it open at the fevered core. I have no doubt about the importance of what you have done. I find your reasoning and clarity immensely helpful... an arrow of light into the heart of darkness.”

**Dr. Angus Mitchell,**  
University of Limerick

“I enjoyed it ... it is a very impressive piece of work.”

**Dr. Brian Ó Conchubhair,**  
Associate Professor Notre Dame University.

“I’ve just finished reading ANATOMY OF A LIE, a superbly argued demolition of the propaganda surrounding Casement and The Black Diaries’. I marvel at the cosy compliance of so many academic historians, Irish as well as British, with the powers that be.”

**Chris Mooney, UCD**

“ ... an overwhelmingly powerful argument ...”

**Charles Stephenson**

“A thousand thanks...to you ... What a phrase "so that evidence could be manufactured"---indeed!... I'll be careful to quote your work.”

**Professor Declan Kiberd,**  
Notre Dame University.

“I read your book last year and thought it was excellent.”

**James O’Callaghan TD**

“The issue is whether Mr Hyde’s conclusion is established by him on the balance of probabilities (which, in my view, it certainly is) and then whether it is established “beyond reasonable doubt” ... In my opinion, no reasonable doubt is possible from the evidence considered ...” **G. Danaher SC**

“In this bracing attack on the alleged authenticity of the famous “Black Diaries”, Paul Hyde uses a rare but effective weapon to skewer opponents: logic. Anyone interested in the tragic heroism of Roger Casement, and the disgraceful traducing of his name, will be riveted ... Hyde shines a harsh light on all the apologists for the authenticity of the diaries. I found Anatomy of a lie immensely readable, eye-opening.”

**Angela Long, journalist**

“I am currently reading your ‘Anatomy of a Lie Decoding Casement’ and am just bewildered by how the wool has been pulled over the eyes of so many academics, historians, and the public about the Black Diaries. Myself included! Well done on such an eye-opening book.”

**Meadhbh Murphy,**  
Cultural Heritage Collection, UCD.

It’s a fine piece of scholarship in a fine style. What impressed me was the detail, the overwhelming detail that demolishes the legitimacy of the Black Diaries; it’s definitive, unanswerable. “

**Niall Antoin Gillespie, Dublin**

## Foreword

Perhaps the first lesson any Irish history student should be taught is that the political value of a document often takes precedence over its ‘truth’ value. Put another way: the politics of Anglo-Irish history habitually overrides the history of Anglo-Irish politics. Whenever Roger Casement is concerned such an equation is only magnified. For a recent example of this you might refer to the entry on Casement in Eunan O’Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin’s *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Yale, 2020).

Professor O’Halpin has engaged with the Casement story for the last two decades. He appeared as one of the voices in Alan Gilsenan’s documentary *The Ghost of Roger Casement* (2002) where he dismissed those who argued that the Black Diaries are forgeries as akin to those who believed in the Roswell conspiracy. In a book review in the *Irish Times* of 12 October 2002 he said that the forgery theory was ‘essentially an article of belief, not susceptible to conventional historical analysis.’ One assumes that what he means by ‘conventional historical analysis’ is the examination of the source evidence in order to come to a balanced interpretation of the past.

When Professor O’Halpin made this comment, I was in the process of formulating what historians who have examined my methodology agree is an approach that is a classic piece of ‘conventional historical analysis’, placing the diaries in alternative contexts and setting out legitimate concerns to do with motive and probability as to why the Black Diaries should be deemed forgeries.

Back in 2002, I found Professor O’Halpin’s comment peculiarly intolerant, offensive and censoring. In the intervening twenty years he has made no effort whatsoever to understand

or engage with my argument, which makes me wonder whose views are based upon an article of belief.

My interest in Casement extended out of my engagement with the Amazon and its environmental tragedy and the genocide of the pre-Colombian people of South America. It intrigued me that two of the three Black Diaries are concerned with Casement's voyages up the Amazon, during 1910 and 1911, to investigate abuses at a particularly intense moment of that on-going genocide. The other diary deals with his investigation of atrocities in the Congo Free State in 1903. For South Americans, Casement's investigation is an important moment in their history. This is the reason why *The Amazon Journal* has now been translated into a feature-length documentary – *Secrets of Putumayo* – directed by the Brazilian / Amazon filmmaker, Aurélio Michiles. As I sorted through the documentation to do with this part of Casement's life, I was persuaded by the evidence that the Black Diaries were forged in order to destabilise Casement's investigation of atrocities and deny him the moral high ground on his road to the gallows.

The key reason for the forgery is to control understanding of what Casement revealed and to deny him his rightful place in both British imperial history and in contemporary Irish history. The Black Diaries disrupt the logic of his evolution from decorated servant of empire into an enemy of empire. The Black Diaries are still used to discredit Casement's evidence and silence the voices of the victims whose world was ravaged by the rubber resource wars. The testimony of the victim is replaced by the saga of a man on a sexual odyssey and the Indians become 'extras' in that narrative.

It is significant that Trinity College has a department of history that has been closely involved in the analysis of historical atrocities. Professors John Horne and Alan Kramer collaborated in the writing of *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (Yale, 2001). This cultural study proved influential in dispelling lingering concerns about the long-made claims that accusations of German atrocities in Belgium were exaggerated. TCD's showcase digitisation project on the 1641 Depositions should

have made every student of Irish history alert to the political nature of atrocity claims. How come therefore that the atrocities investigated by Casement have received such short shrift? Why has there been so little curiosity shown by TCD's Department of History into what was in its day the most high-profile and notorious atrocity investigation of the early twentieth century and one inextricably connected to Ireland?

What is revealing about Professor O'Halpin's entry on Casement is that it captures the inertia and the bitterness that prevents the Casement story from moving anywhere. He adopts the devices that for years have kept Casement suspended in solitary confinement outside the boundaries of acceptable historical discourse. His main authority on Casement is Brian Inglis whose involvement in the Casement cover up is once again brought under the microscope of Paul Hyde's analysis in this new collection. O'Halpin has written an entry that allows his own historical belief system to stay intact. There is nothing about the Casement who helped to inspire and sustain one of the great humanitarian campaigns of the pre-war period; who supported the Irish language movement and organised the funding of schools in the Gaeltacht; whose courage and example led intellectuals around the world to question the morals of imperial governance. That Casement is shut out. Erased.

Instead, Professor O'Halpin describes a Casement who was inconsequential to his time, who received honours for apparently no clear reason. His entry implies that Casement got what he deserved for his nationalist fantasy of wanting an independent and peaceful Ireland unshackled from the oppressive structures of elite class politics and global systems built on injustice and violence. Embedded in this narrow interpretation of Casement's contribution to Irish and world history is a form of cognitive dissonance.

Four of the eight paragraphs in Professor O'Halpin's entry reference either Casement's sexuality, his 'moral' reputation or the Black Diaries. In other words, the entire biographical entry is framed around the diaries' questions and Casement's

suitability to interrogate the moral foundations of empire. In the final paragraph, reference is made to the ‘convoluted forgery theories’.

The longest paragraph in the entry is devoted to a defence of Cardinal Bourne’s efforts to prevent Casement from reconciling to the Catholic Faith in the days before his execution. Bourne tried to force Casement to sign a recantation of his belief in Irish independence, and a confession of abhorrence of his own actions. The priests who attended Casement at the end used their special powers to override Bourne’s unholy demand and the condemned man was accepted into the Catholic Church in articulo mortis on the night before his execution. As a reward, those priests who supported Casement were banished to the most deprived parishes in Catholic England to live out their days serving the poor and destitute (mainly Irish).

Although Professor O’Halpin is one of the authorities on British Intelligence in Ireland, there is not a single mention of Casement’s long and entangled intelligence connections. Casement’s involvement with different branches of Britain’s secret state might be traced through his time surveying the delta of the river Niger maps for the War Office, as one of Lord Salisbury’s men-on-the-spot, to his derring-do during the Anglo-Boer War, and, to his covert return up the Amazon in 1911 to prepare British trading interests for the collapse of the Amazon rubber boom. From the autumn of 1913, Casement was closely watched by different intelligence agencies as he began to conspire against the Empire which had ennobled him. Even after his death the spooks stayed on his case; most obviously, the MI6 historian, H.H. Montgomery Hyde, who did a good deal of patching up to make sure Casement’s trial appeared ‘fair’.

There has been much talk in recent months of decolonising the curriculum. Universities around the world are recognising that they hang onto the epistemological structures and mentalities of empire that promote race hatred and gender divisions without recognising it. And even if they do see it, they don’t do much about it. Public intellectuals and some media outlets

continue to perpetuate the symbolic and epistemic violence which supports the prejudices that keep us locked into a world of race and sectarian division and social inequality. Prejudice, especially race prejudice, is so engrained we just can't see it even when it's in plain view.

Anyone who doubts this should read Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Empire: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (Verso, 2020). The Black Diaries are an offensive residue from a time when the exploitation and murder of forest communities across the Amazon was carried out with impunity. That genocide is still happening. However, this is a story that we do not wish to hear either from Casement or from the Environmental and Human Rights Defenders who are killed each month protecting the forest. Commercial control is maintained through denying the telling of stories that might help us to see it differently.

Paul Hyde's *Anatomy of a lie*, for which I was also happy to write a foreword, was in many ways unanswerable in how it interrogated the carefully constructed archive and the suspect intellectual traditions supporting this remarkably toxic intersection of British and Irish history. Hyde's argument in that book should have put this whole matter to rest. Instead, the publisher was intimidated and withdrew the book. What Hyde revealed was clearly highly discomforting in some quarters. In spite of these difficulties, Hyde's argument endures . . . unanswered.

In this latest collection of essays, Hyde has excavated once more the murky depths of the Black Diaries' history and provided additional evidence of the interpretative violence and articles of faith that have kept Casement's legacy locked in a barren focus on his sexuality, as if nothing else matters. And once more, Hyde's analysis presents questions that demand answers from the stout exponents and defenders of 'conventional historical analysis'.

**Angus Mitchell**  
February 2021

## *Introduction*

In the summer of 1959, the British Home Secretary finally ended the decades of official silence about the diaries attributed to Roger Casement; the five bound volumes were given restricted release to selected persons in the Public Records Office. But although this event was certainly important, there are reasons for considering the year 1973 as being of greater importance. The publication in that year of a new biography by Brian Inglis had consequences which still resonate today. The Inglis book set out a new and convincing template for the interpretation of Casement's life and career. His study rapidly became the standard biography upon which later generations of readers and authors formed their 'understanding' of Casement and the diaries controversy. It has seldom been out of print and there have been at least six editions. In the English-speaking world, Inglis remains the dominant authority on Casement.

The Inglis template was convincing, detailed, clever and false. It remains unsurpassed for the subtlety of its deceptions. The total absence of source notes helps to conceal those deceptions by obliging unconvinced readers to travel to Dublin to check the notes in The National Library of Ireland. But even this is frustrated because the usual reference numbers in the text are missing so that the reader cannot know in advance if there is a source on the list in Dublin. No other serious Casement study is without source notes. Reid's biography only three years later from a smaller press contains over 1,100 source notes occupying 24 pages. Indeed, it is difficult to find any historical biography without source notes.

At the centre of the web of deception spun out by Inglis we find his portrayal of Christensen who becomes a key figure in

the new template. Foreign Office documents released in 1967 were available to Inglis and these reveal the role played by British minister Findlay in Oslo in the period from October 1914 to spring 1915 often referred to as The Findlay Affair. The documented facts in those files do not support the Inglis portrayal of Christensen as a treacherous villain plotting to betray Casement. On the contrary, the Foreign Office documents show that Christensen followed Casement's instructions faithfully in misleading Findlay with false information about Casement's plans, a strategy which finally produced Findlay's handwritten promise of a £5,000 reward. (1)

Many of Inglis' subtle deceits are revealed in Chapter 6 of *Anatomy of a lie*. But not all of them are revealed. In recent months yet another has been discovered. On page 404 of the 1974 paperback edition Inglis cites the second stanza of a poem entitled *Quo Vadis* which he attributes to Casement. No source for this poem is given but the original version of that stanza differs significantly from the version published by Inglis. Casement's handwritten *Quo Vadis* can be found in NLI and is dated 10th February, 1906. This original was published by Mackey in 1958. In brief, Inglis altered the original text of that stanza so as to present it as evidence of forbidden desire, a meaning consistent with his overall plan to verify the scandal allegations of 1916. Tens of thousands of trusting readers have been deceived for almost half a century.

Original version published by Mackey:

Is it never to cease the anguish? – is it never to end the toil  
Of a heart that is filled with longing, and maketh the soul its spoil  
Of a hunger of things unholy we loathe while we still prefer –  
For the gods of good die slowly, and dying, they still demur.

Inglis version:

Is it never to cease, the anguish? Is it never to end, the toil  
Of a heart that is filled with longing and maketh the soul its spoil?  
Of a hunger for things unholy, we loathe while we still prefer?  
For the gods of good die slowly, and dying, they still demur.

Inglis altered the punctuation and a crucial preposition in line 3. The poem is certainly mediocre and its meaning unclear and perhaps incomprehensible. Casement did not consider himself to be a poet; like many others in Ireland and elsewhere he was a versifier of his thoughts and sentiments. A first edition of a number of his verses was published in 1918 by his loyal cousin, Gertrude Parry; it did not contain *Quo Vadis*. However, another Casement document in NLI might contribute to an interpretation of the poem. This is a seven-page handwritten essay also entitled *Quo Vadis* found in the Bulmer Hobson collection Manuscript 13,159. The document is undated but it almost certainly was composed in 1906 or 1907 when Casement was in regular contact with Hobson. This essay deals entirely with the political situation in Ireland.

The ‘authority’ of Inglis remained unchallenged not only by trusting readers but even by other historians and the fateful false line from *Quo Vadis* reappeared in a Casement article by Robert Kee published to coincide with the open release of the diaries in 1994. ‘... the diaries did indeed confirm what Casement, in his own tortured words on the subject, described in a verse as his “hunger for things unholy”.’(2)

On pages 398/9 (1974 edition) Inglis published the text of a poem which he attributed to Casement, the original of which he had never seen. His notes in NLI cite Singleton-Gates’ book of 1959 as source. This latter had not seen an original either and he referred readers to a *Sunday Times* article by Montgomery Hyde of April 1957 where the text was printed with a claim that he had recently found the manuscript in NLI. Other than Montgomery Hyde, there are no reports of anyone ever seeing an original NLI manuscript of this poem. Strangely, a slightly amended manuscript of the same name was discovered in New York Public Library in the mid 1990s. Strangely again, there are no reports of this NY manuscript being seen by anyone before that discovery. But it can be seen today.

A few poems have been cited as evidence of the author’s homosexuality but the attribution to Casement has not been

demonstrated beyond doubt. Nonetheless, for proponents of authenticity, these poems exist in a symbiotic relationship with the diaries so that each serves to purportedly authenticate the other. However, whether or not these poems are Casement's work, this would not constitute evidence in relation to the diaries.

Another example of Inglis tampering with original texts to alter their meaning can be found on page 290 of his 1974 edition. Referring to the 3pm meeting on 30 October between Christensen and Findlay in the legation at Christiania, Inglis writes: 'But he [Findlay] transmitted Christensen's information to Whitehall, enclosing the material Christensen had handed over. It included a letter in which Casement described his servant. "I am glad I brought him, indeed—he is a treasure".'

In these lines there are four deceits. 1 - Christensen did not hand over any material. 2 - Findlay did not take possession of any letter from Christensen. 3 - The letter mentioned had not yet been written. 4 - The letter mentioned does not state 'he is a treasure'.

The letter in question was written in Berlin in November, some days—if not weeks—after it was allegedly handed over to Findlay on 30 October. This letter is also cited by MacColl (3) as being written later in Berlin. Doerries also cites it in *Prelude to the Easter Rising* (2000) and gives the date as 2 November. (4) Internal evidence demonstrates that the letter was written later in November and was one of the 'fake letters' prepared by Casement for Christensen to show Findlay to mislead him. This ruse is explicitly confirmed by Casement's Berlin Diary entries for 17 and 24 November. (5) Ostensibly Christensen was to post these letters from Christiania. The letter states: 'I will send this tonight by the man, who returns as I have said to visit his people'. Christensen left Berlin for Norway on 22 November and not on 2 November. Further internal evidence in the letter demonstrates that it was not written on Casement's second day in Berlin, 2 November.

Although Inglis was certainly aware of the correct citation from the letter published by MacColl in 1956, this did not deter

him from altering Casement's original text to obtain an innuendo that has deceived many thousands of readers for decades. Nonetheless, Inglis claims that Christensen handed the letter over to Findlay before it existed.

On page two of Findlay's 26 November account to Nicolson (6) of his meeting with Christensen on that day, Findlay refers to this letter as a postscript to one of three letters shown to him by Christensen at that meeting on 26 November (FO 95/776038). Findlay writes 'Informer arrived from Berlin today with letters from Casement to be posted here. I have obtained copies.' Since he confirms that he made copies it follows he did not take possession of the letters. On 4 December Findlay sent his own copies of the fake letters to Nicolson at the Foreign Office. Findlay did not claim that material was 'handed over' and did not mention the phrase 'he is a treasure'. The phrase went unnoticed by Findlay but not by Inglis, who noted its potential for innuendo. By changing the verb tense from past to present, Inglis shifted the meaning from simple appreciation towards an innuendo of endearment. The version cited by both MacColl and Doerries differs significantly from Inglis: 'I am glad I brought him indeed—he has been a treasure'. The shift in meaning is so subtle as to escape most readers but it did not escape Inglis, who changed the text for the purpose of manipulating his readers' understanding. Further proof of Inglis' duplicity is that the relevant Foreign Office file does not contain the letter allegedly 'handed over' and enclosed.

The Inglis portrayal of Christensen as a double-dealing betrayer is now *de rigueur* for most academics. The Inglis version is related faithfully by Lucy McDiarmid in *The Irish Art of Controversy* including the false details of Christensen handing over documents to Findlay and of his implying 'unnatural relations'. (7) This invention by Inglis is not supported by Findlay's extensive correspondence with the Foreign Office.

While Inglis' deeper motives for these deceptions cannot be determined, it is not credible that they can be explained by the

argument from honest belief. In that case, a statement is made in good faith but is nonetheless false. But the systematic pattern of deception including the alteration of documents, selective framing, omissions and distortions indicate a calculated intent to mislead. It follows that Inglis knew that the diaries were not authentic otherwise he had no need to resort to so many deceptions in order to convince readers that they were genuine. There are, therefore, solid grounds for describing Inglis as a negationist historian since he deployed all the standard techniques of negationism. These are explained in a Wikipedia article as follows:

Historical negationism applies the techniques of research, quotation, and presentation for deception of the reader and denial of the historical record. In support of the "revised history" perspective, the negationist historian uses false documents as genuine sources ... The revision techniques of historical negationism operate in the intellectual space of public debate for the advancement of a given interpretation of history and the cultural perspective of the "revised history". As a document, the revised history is used to negate the validity of the factual, documentary record, and so reframe explanations and perceptions of the discussed historical event, in order to deceive the reader, the listener, and the viewer; therefore, historical negationism functions as a technique of propaganda. Rather than submit their works for peer review, negationist historians rewrite history and use logical fallacies to construct arguments that will obtain the desired results, a "revised history" that supports an agenda – political, ideological, and religious, etc.

In the practice of historiography, the British historian Richard J. Evans describes the technical differences, between professional historians and negationist historians:

Reputable and professional historians do not suppress parts of quotations from documents that go against their own case, but take them into account, and, if necessary, amend their own case, accordingly. They do not present, as genuine, documents which they know to be forged, just because these forgeries happen to

back up what they are saying. They do not invent ingenious, but implausible, and utterly unsupported reasons for distrusting genuine documents, because these documents run counter to their arguments; again, they amend their arguments, if this is the case, or, indeed, abandon them altogether. They do not consciously attribute their own conclusions to books and other sources, which, in fact, on closer inspection, actually say the opposite ... They do not willfully invent words, phrases, quotations, incidents and events, for which there is no historical evidence, in order to make their arguments more plausible. (8)

Almost all of these crimes of intellectual dishonesty can be found in the Inglis study. Honest historians and biographers do not present as true sources those documents which are disputed or which have suspect provenance and they do not rely on documents which have not been proven to be authentic. Rather than base his 1910 account on Casement's extensive handwritten *Amazon Journal* in the NLI, Inglis admitted using the disputed Black Diaries as sources for his chapters covering the years 1903, 1910 and 1911. Thus he ignored an authentic source in favour of a disputed source and by so doing he eliminated even the benefit of the doubt which makes Casement the victim of his biography rather than his subject.

Inglis' book has conditioned the discourse for almost half a century and is a remarkable example of how low-level propaganda masquerading as impartial biography can accomplish long-term results. No-one should underestimate the achievement of Inglis which can best be measured by the number of distinguished Irish academics – mostly historians – who have fallen under the spell of his deceptive template: Paul Bew, Roy Foster, Patrick Geoghegan, Michael Laffan, W.J. McCormack, Sean McConville, Séamas Ó Siocháin, Mary Daly, Eunan O'Halpin, Lucy McDiarmid and David Norris. (9)

The only dissenting voice among Irish academics appears to be that of historian Owen Dudley Edwards while the most articulate dissenting voice in Ireland is that of historian Angus Mitchell.

§

It is not surprising to find that leading journalists and broadcasters and other opinion makers in politics, law and the arts have also fallen under the spell cast by the Inglis study. There is no reason for them to contest the judgment of the academic elite, none of whom have challenged the Inglis template of 1973. The result is a consolidated consensus in Ireland that the diaries are genuinely the work of Casement. Any residual reservations were dispelled by the 2002 Giles investigation. For those many whose opinions are media conditioned it seems that authenticity has received what amounts to an imprimatur.

Thus the question of the diaries has taken on essential features which are difficult to distinguish from those of dogma. Those features are a refusal to engage impartially with the evidence and a contemptuous dismissal of non-believers as recalcitrant, irrational and refractory. Dogma by definition contains an anti-rational component in which reason is replaced by authority; in this case the authority is simply majority opinion. But closer inspection reveals that the academic elite have not only failed to question the Inglis template but they have declined to scrutinize it closely. The evidence of this is revealed in their persistent repetition of the same factual errors about events in 1916 and since. These errors derive directly from Inglis who is frequently quoted as a source. In the authoritative *Dictionary of Irish Biography* the Casement entry contains gross errors of fact several of which derive from Inglis.

We read that ‘British officials circulated portions of diaries ...’ This is untrue; only police typescripts were shown. We read ‘... who were shown the diaries ...’ and this is untrue since there is no evidence of the bound diaries being shown to anyone at that time. We read that ‘Smith offered them to Casement’s counsel for inspection ...’ and this is also untrue. Smith offered the police typescripts only. We read that the Giles investigation was ‘scientific’ although comparative handwriting analysis is far from scientific since its results cannot be tested and verified. Such analysis is merely the expert opinion of one person and is unreliable as demonstrated in the case of the Hitler diaries.

Yet these errors appear almost insignificant beside those published on the *Decade of Centenaries* website where not a single basic fact was reported correctly. That this garbled misinformation was authorized on a state website remains to be explained. (10) It seems that the climate created by Inglis has made reading his book unnecessary; it is sufficient now to inhale the dogma of majority opinion. Besides multiple factual errors, there were extraordinary convolutions of disturbed reasoning such as; “a repudiation of the diaries does not mean that Roger Casement was not gay; if they are forged it is perhaps because there was knowledge of his homosexuality...” Readers might hear in this an echo of Stalin’s show trials when innocence and guilt were so perfectly compounded that accused persons confessed to imaginary crimes invented for them by the prosecution.

This recent example of disturbed reasoning has a notable precedent in the Inglis study. While in Germany Casement sporadically kept a diary which was later published in Germany and the USA and more recently in Ireland. This document is totally free from sexual references of any kind. This absence presented an anomaly to Inglis which he sought to explain as follows: ‘Of the other two surviving diaries, one was written while he was in Germany, under constant police surveillance, he would have been unwise to include any compromising material.’ [p. 439, Appendix 3, Inglis 1974]

From this ‘explanation’ we understand that Casement’s prudence prevented him from recording compromising activity which the police had failed to detect. Here too there is an echo of the Soviet psychology of guilt. Here too the absence of evidence is transformed into evidence of guilt. Casement is guilty whether or not he records his experience in a diary. Both these cases of tortured reasoning are based on ‘knowledge’ without evidence, a device which eliminates the age-old vital concept of innocence.

Most of the academic elite in Ireland found the Inglis paradigm unobjectionable because it appeared to offer an exit from the rigid mindset of old-guard nationalist Ireland which was by

then perceived as intolerant, bigoted and backward. Anxious to align themselves with progressive, modern tolerant attitudes, the Inglis biography was generally well received by the intelligentsia. The eruption of violence in the North with its roots in partition and sectarianism was a powerful incentive for their further detachment from the troubled past and present. It became progressively possible for intellectuals to agree with Inglis that the patriot-martyr of 1916 was also the author of the diaries. That possibility progressed until it became the present widely-accepted consensus which, unquestioned, atrophied into dogma defined simply as that which is believed to be true by most people and therefore should be accepted.

But the fact remains that this dogma rests on demonstrated deception and falsity rather than on scrupulously impartial historical research. It rests on the work of one dishonest author whose writings continue to exert a baleful influence over historians and readers, directly and indirectly. When closely scrutinized, Inglis' book fails to comply with accepted standards of historical scholarship because it is systematically and cunningly mendacious.

Inglis was a respected even popular figure in British public life, a prolific author, journalist and television presenter; his skill in verbal legerdemain allowed him to cover the traces of his deceptions which in turn made it difficult for many to suspect him. It is true that later authors have contributed to the consensus, notably Reid and Sawyer, but their works are conspicuously faithful to the Inglis blueprint in respect of the diaries as authentic sources.

The cumulative evidence of systematic deceit will not, however, close the controversy. The fact-based evidence is resisted by misinformed opinion which refuses to engage impartially with the evidence. This refusal indicates that something deeper is at stake such that the consensus must be protected regardless of verified facts. What is at stake is self image.

In less than fifty years Ireland has changed from being a church-dominated conservative society struggling with a pain-

ful past to being an outward-looking liberal multi-ethnic state comparable to other European countries. The church in Ireland has lost control of sexual attitudes and behaviour which are now much the same as those in other western countries. The diaries controversy is unique in modern history in that a dispute about authenticity of century-old documents is inseparable from the mystery of human sexuality. Asserting authenticity of those documents is understood to be asserting the liberal, tolerant values shared by neighbouring countries. But this is a sad misunderstanding. Confronting the facts about the diaries would not conflict with self image or with those values. It is true that the diaries belong to a dreadful colonial past of intolerance, cruelty and repression which has been painfully overcome. From these circumstances an equation emerges which is reductive but explanatory; the diaries as forged belong to a shameful, intolerant and repressive past while the diaries as authentic demonstrate our liberal, tolerant present. Unfortunately this comforting equation ignores the facts about the diaries and is therefore negationist. When reason is replaced by the illusory authority of misinformed opinion, history becomes the narcotic of dogma - a temporary refuge for those afraid of the evidence.

To understand the past it is necessary to shed historic anger but not at the price of truth. Ireland would not become an intolerant country by accepting the evidence that the diaries are forged; it has survived much worse.

**Paul R. Hyde**  
*February 2021*

## Notes

- 1 – Readers are referred to Chapter 11 of *Anatomy of a Lie* for a detailed treatment of the issues.
- 2 – *The Times*, p.18. 26.3. 1994.
- 3 – *Roger Casement: A New Judgment*, René MacColl, p. 149. 1956.
- 4 – In his *Prelude To The Easter Rising* (2000) Professor Doerries states that a photocopy of this letter is held in the NLI with reference Ms 14,914, Volume 1. Doerries published the full text of this letter in his

book. However, the photocopy of the letter is now missing from that file in the NLI and it is not listed on the contents page of Volume 1. It appears, therefore, that someone removed the original volume containing the letter and replaced it with a manipulated volume at some time after the publication of Doerries' book. Paradoxically, Inglis himself refers to this NLI file on page 420 of his first edition as being copy material from German archives; this strongly indicates that he had seen the letter when researching in the NLI.

- 5 – 17 November, 1914: “Today I sent Adler out to buy various things ... and arranged all details of his return to Moss ... With two faked letters and some pages of my ‘Diary’ he has ‘stolen’”. 24 November, 1914: “... I found Adler still here, but prepared to go back to Norway on the morrow – with sham letters I had written for Mr. de C. Findlay’s benefit.” “On Sunday I saw Adler off at 11.18 to Sassnitz with two faked letters and two ‘stolen’ pages of ‘my Diary’ giving hints of impending invasion of Ireland ... it should make Findlay’s hair ... rise up and bless him ...” *One Bold Deed of Open Treason*, 2016. Ed. Angus Mitchell. Merrion Press.
- 6 – Arthur Nicolson, senior official in the Foreign Office to whom Findlay reported.
- 7 – *The Irish Art of Controversy*, 2005. Lucy McDiarmid. Cornell University Press.
- 8 – Extract cited from Wikipedia article.
- 9 – Unlike Inglis, these scholars can legitimately plead honest belief since they trusted Inglis and did not suspect deception. They were simply misled.
- 10 – Following representations made concerning the errors, the article was withdrawn.

## *Secret Provenance*

There are now seven conflicting versions of the provenance of the Black Diaries and all seven come from state officials. First among these is the head of CID, Basil Thomson, who generously provided four conflicting versions during his lifetime. Next is Casement's prosecutor, Attorney General F.E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead, whose version was published in 1926. Then there is Home Secretary R.A.B. Butler who furnished the 'official' version in 1959 to the House of Commons. Lastly, there is an ingenious version allegedly proposed in 1916 by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Charles Mathews.

One credible version from a reliable source would be sufficient to close the matter in a court of law. Two equally credible versions would cause problems for the court. Seven versions would be sufficient to close the matter for the court; none would be considered as credible. Yet the Black Diaries do exist and therefore have a provenance. But it is not the provenance given by any of the four state officials.

The question which imposes itself is: why there are multiple versions? How is it possible that the officials—Thomson, Smith and Mathews, all of whom were in a position to verify the provenance in 1916—were unable to confirm the true provenance?

The answer which imposes itself is that the bound volumes had no provenance that could be verified in 1916. This leads to the absurd conclusion that, *if the bound diaries were in police custody in 1916*, these three top officials did not know where they had come from. To dispose of the absurdity, one is compelled to conclude that the diaries were not in police custody. But this leads to yet another absurdity: the typescripts were

certainly in police custody and these were allegedly copies of diaries which were not in their custody. There is only one way to dispose of the second absurdity; the typescripts were not copies of the bound diaries which had no provenance at that time because they did not exist at that time.

### The Official Version

Since the only version supported by documents is Home Secretary Butler's, this merits examination before the other six versions. These documents are the interrogation transcript HO 144/1636 Ref 20261 which is incomplete and MEPO 2/10672, an official but incomplete list of contents of trunks wherein the diaries were allegedly found. The list of contents is dated July 1916 and indicates that the trunks were delivered to Scotland Yard upon police request on the morning of 25th April. The transcript records the arrival of the trunks at the end of Casement's third interrogation, 25th April. This version of the delivery of the trunks was recorded by the police in 1916 but remained secret until 1959, when it became the British Government's official version of provenance. However, the list of contents (MEPO 2/10672), dated July 1916, which records the alleged 25th April delivery, was kept secret until its release in June 2001.

A number of problems at once arise with this version. Chief among these is that Thomson himself, the leading player in these events, seemed later unaware that the trunks were delivered on 25th April; all four of his published accounts state that the trunks were in police hands before that date. If Thomson is right, the police papers are false and in particular the sentences attributed to Thomson in the interrogation transcript were never spoken by him.

A second consideration supports this; on 14th June Casement sent a note to his solicitor Gavan Duffy, advising that he had possessions stored at his former lodgings in Ebury Street. But, according to the transcript, Casement knew seven weeks earlier on 25th April that these trunks had been brought to Scotland

Yard on that day when, moreover, he allegedly consented to their forced opening.

A third consideration indicates that the DPP did not see the police papers referring to delivery of the trunks since his version of provenance indicates that the diaries were purchased by the authorities.

Therefore there is evidence that the police version of delivery on 25th April was kept secret in 1916 from both Thomson and the DPP. An impartial enquirer would want to know why these key players were deceived and by whom. The enquirer would also ask why, If they were not deceived, they both invented conflicting and contradictory versions of provenance.

The internal stresses in the official version are such that it cannot resist our best efforts to render it credible.

### Unofficial Versions

The DPP, Mathews, wrote to Serjeant Sullivan twice in 1916 in relation to the diaries, with a view to a joint plea of Guilty but Insane (meaning that the Defence would submit such a defence, and that the Prosecution would accept it). According to Duffy, Sullivan did not respond. Many years later Sullivan was interviewed by historian Robert Kee and related that the DPP had informed him that the diaries had been stolen from Casement by Christensen during the 1914 sea-trip from New York to Oslo. At some later moment the diaries were purchased by the British authorities. There is no record anywhere of such a theft nor of the later transaction and nothing to support such an improbable version of provenance. It is improbable that the DPP would have invented such a story without a purpose; if invented, its purpose was to convince Sullivan of the authenticity of the diaries and thus persuade him to agree to the joint plea.

But the significance of this version is that the DPP was in 1916 unaware of the police version of provenance, a version which some might consider as somewhat more credible on account of supporting police documents. If the DPP was aware

of the police version, it remains to be explained why he did not relate that version to Sullivan.

Casement's prosecutor, Smith, produced a version of prov- enance which surpasses that of the DPP for its outlandish im- probability. In his 1926 book *Famous Trials of History*, Smith relates that the diaries were found in Casement's coat pocket at Banna Strand after arriving from the German submarine. The inherent absurdity of this does not merit comment. Yet Smith was far from a fool. But it seems that he too was not aware, ten years after the trial, of the police version.

Yet he was aware of the police version in 1916, or was aware of a version of that version. This is demonstrated by the fact that, when the police typescripts were passed by his Junior, Humphreys, to Defence Counsel Artemus Jones, the former told Jones that the diaries had been found by the police among Casement's luggage from Ebury Street.

### Protective Secrecy

It seems impossible to resolve the questions which the seven versions provoke because none can be externally verified. The impartial enquirer risks falling into a vortex of futile specula- tions. The police version of 1916 became public and official only in 1959, but it did not thus become automatically true. If it was false in 1916, it remains false today. And, if false, it does not eliminate any of the other six versions which were produced by state officials.

It is the fact that there are conflicting versions which requires explanation. In the years of official silence, 1916 to 1959, *state officials* produced seven versions. This alone is evidence that the State had no documentary evidence *sufficient* to prove that the incriminating documents came into state possession in 1916. There is indeed nothing to demonstrate externally that the documents *believed by many in 1916 to be in state possession* were indeed in state possession at that time.

It is essential to discover what circumstance in 1916 made it possible for so many versions to come into being then and in

the following years. *Secrecy was the sufficient circumstance*. It follows that the reasons for this secrecy need to be ascertained. Secrecy is a protective strategy. That which is protected would, if disclosed, compromise one's position and render one vulnerable. There was no secrecy in 1916 about the *alleged* provenance of the unseen diaries; it was said they had been found in Casement's luggage from Ebury Street. Rumour took over at once and spread the alleged provenance. There was, however, *secrecy about material evidence* for this allegation. No documentary or witness evidence was produced. Most crucially, nor were the diaries produced. The secrecy regarding material evidence for provenance was therefore a necessity and that which rendered it necessary was the immediate absence of material evidence. In due course the evidence (transcript HO 144/1636 Ref 20261 and MEPO 2/10672) was manufactured but it remained secret in 1959 when these false supporting documents were not produced. They were released many years after 1959.

This secrecy created both lasting confusion and suspicion. The confusion is evident in both the police papers and the DPP files of the period, which give the distinct impression of a story being assembled over time by several persons acting on *imprecise verbal* instructions.

## Pulp Fiction

The implausible story in the interrogation transcript of the missing keys to the locked trunks has already been examined in Chapter 10 of my book, *Anatomy of a lie*; it is a story which belongs to the slush pile of unpublizable, third-rate crime fiction. By itself, the presence of this pulp fiction element demonstrates that no trunks were *delivered* to Scotland Yard on 25th April 1916.

Since the trunks certainly existed, it follows that they (the trunks) were already in police hands before that date. Thomson himself confirms this in *all four* of his versions of provenance. For example, in 1922 he published the following in his book

*Queer People*: “Some months earlier, when we first had evidence of Casement’s treachery, his London lodgings had been visited and his locked trunks removed to Scotland Yard”. In 1939 Thomson published another version in his memoirs *The Scene Changes* in which the trunks are in police custody before the first interrogation and have been opened. Superintendent Quinn enters and places a manuscript volume on Thomson’s table which has been ‘abstracted’ from Casement’s luggage.

It follows that the secret police version was false in 1916, false in 1959 and remains false today. Smith’s 1926 version is self-evidently preposterous and without supporting evidence. The version related to Robert Kee by Sullivan and attributed to the DPP is also without supporting evidence and is probably among Sullivan’s many inventions and deceits.

The elimination of the official version of 1959 also disposes of the police version and the interrogation transcript of 1916. This leaves Thomson’s four published versions. It has been argued and demonstrated that the trunks were in police possession before 25th April. *This does not entail that diaries were in those trunks*. Indeed the fabrication of the story of keys to locked trunks on 25th April demonstrates firstly that the trunks had already been opened and secondly that nothing had been said or recorded about incriminating diaries.

It might be argued that the trunks were in police custody months before the interrogations and that the diaries had been examined but that nothing was done with them so as to avoid suspicions, then and later, that the diaries had been planted in the trunks. But that decision, taken months earlier, to remain silent about the diaries would have compelled the police to an indefinite silence since suspicions of planting the diaries could be raised at any future time with or without Casement’s capture. Such suspicions did in fact arise after April 1916. Those suspicions would have been substantially dispelled by display of the bound volumes, an event which did not happen in 1916.

## Thomson's Versions

1 – *The Times*, 15 November, 1921. During the first interrogation a police officer “who had been sent to search Casement’s old lodgings” requests keys to trunks he had brought from Ebury Street at an unspecified time.

2 – *Queer People*, 1922. Police searched Casement’s lodgings “some months earlier”.

3 – *English Life*, March 1925. A detective interrupts the first interrogation to ask for keys to trunks brought months earlier by landlord.

4 – *The Scene Changes*, 1939. During the first interrogation Superintendent Quinn places a manuscript volume on Thomson’s table. Thomson’s locution that the luggage ‘was lying in the Special Branch office’ indicates it had been there for some time.

Thomson’s versions contradict the police papers, which clearly state the delivery of trunks on 25th April. They also contradict the transcript dialogue about arrival of the trunks at end of that 3rd interrogation. However, it is not credible that his four versions are 100% false. If his versions are entirely false, it means that Thomson was unable or unwilling after 1916 to relate a single true fact about the provenance of the trunks and diaries for the 23 years before his death.

It is necessary to distinguish between the provenance of the trunks and that of the Black Diaries. Casement himself on 14th June acknowledged in writing that he had left property at Ebury Street and also at Allison’s depot in Farringdon Street. He did not know that the property stored at both addresses had already been taken into police custody before 14th June. He did not know because no-one had told him. Nonetheless, the official transcript of his third interrogation on 25th April contains a brief alleged dialogue between him and Thomson about the trunks. Here is that dialogue.

*A.C.C. [Thomson]: “Have you got some trunks at 50 Ebury Street? I propose having them down and examined.”*

*Sir R.C.: “There’s nothing in them.”*

[After a seven minute interval]

*A.C.C. [Thomson]:* “Sir, Roger, your trunks are here but there are no keys.”

*Sir R.C.:* “Break them open.”

Thomson’s four versions of provenance contradict the transcript dialogue about trunks and the police papers in this essential detail—none of the latter confirm delivery of the trunks by Germain on 25th April. Indeed his versions explicitly deny such delivery *on that day* while three versions deny that the trunks *were delivered at any time by anyone*. From this it follows that Thomson was not the author of the transcript and was not party to its preparation.

Casement’s written statement of 14th June concerning his luggage at Ebury Street demonstrates that the above dialogue never took place. It follows that the transcript dialogue is a fiction and that the words above attributed to Thomson were never spoken by him. Equally it follows that the words above attributed to Casement were never spoken by him. The official version of provenance is thus demonstrated as false. It was invented weeks, perhaps months, later in order to conceal police possession of the trunks many months before April 1916. The only credible circumstance which made that concealment necessary is that no incriminating diaries were found in the trunks *at any time*.

Certainly Thomson’s versions contain lies. The most evident and clumsy deceit in two versions is that referring to keys to open the trunks. A second deceit refers to the alleged display of a manuscript volume during the first interrogation—before the trunks had allegedly been delivered on 25th April according to the transcript. The falsity of the keys story is demonstrated on page 144 of *Anatomy of a lie*.

## Unknown Provenance

That the bound volumes have a secret provenance cannot be reasonably doubted. But secrets are devised and protected

by people. The multiple contradictory versions of provenance proposed by state officials acted to protect that secret during the period of official silence. In 1959, Butler *appeared* to reveal the secret at last, but what he revealed was the police version which was created to conceal not the true provenance but that in 1916 *there was no provenance at all*. What Butler presented to MPs was a demonstrably false version of provenance, unsupported by verifiable *external* evidence. Thereafter, what had to be protected was the official version originating in false police documents which were not released to accompany Butler's revelation. Attention at once shifted to the authentic *existence* of the bound volumes which could at last be examined by selected persons. This was a masterful piece of legerdemain with a quasi-hypnotic effect which still endures. The true provenance of the bound diaries is still unknown and from this it follows that their authorship is also unknown.

### Opinion & Imprinting

There are two principal paths by which so many people have reached the conclusion that the Black Diaries are authentic. The first of these is the path of misinformed opinion. The second is that of irrationality. In the first case they have been confused and deceived by some of the principal biographers whom they have trusted. And they have done no research of their own which would alert them to the systematic deceit. The second case is more complex, because it is inherited from both personal and collective culture, from moral and emotional needs, from an established protective *weltanschauung* often only half-understood by the individual. This imprinting functions like an acquired instinct driven by fear and desire, not by reason. One may tread both paths at the same time to reach the same destination—falsehood. "It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he was never reasoned into" : Jonathan Swift.

# *The Bigger Mystery*

**Synopsis:** *The Bigger Mystery* concerns two versions of an alleged secret involving Professor Joseph W. Bigger, nephew of Casement's Belfast friend Frank Bigger. In 1956 when René MacColl published his biography *Roger Casement: a new judgment*, he reported for the first time a 'secret' allegedly told to him in 1954 by an anonymous 'well-known resident of Cork'. That 'secret' concerned further scandalous diaries allegedly found in 1916 and at once destroyed. However, MacColl's story already had a secret history and was known in 1937 when it first emerged in curious circumstances.

## Part One

René MacColl was a leading British journalist with the Beaverbrook press empire and was foreign correspondent with the mass-circulation *Daily Express* for 24 years. In 1956 he published a biography entitled *Roger Casement; a new judgment*, (Hamish Hamilton). In late March 1955, having completed his research and before sending his final version to the publishers, MacColl wrote to the Home Secretary to ask if the diaries actually existed. (HO 144/23453.) Early in April he received the standard reply that no comment could be made. His earlier requests to see the diaries had also been rebuffed. MacColl's question to the Home Secretary reveals that he had found no evidence of the material existence of the diaries at any time since 1916. Nonetheless he proceeded with publication of his book and asserted the authenticity of those diaries without knowing if they existed in 1916 or in 1955. His book was a commercial success and enjoyed four editions until it was superseded by Brian Inglis' *Roger Casement* in 1973.

The story below, which MacColl reports, is a mystery not least because it is a hearsay story from an anonymous source who, we are told, heard it from a person since deceased who had heard it from another since-deceased person. Moreover, it involves a chance encounter between two strangers and no part of the story can be verified. Nonetheless, MacColl describes it as a fact.

MacColl presents the story on page 284 as follows:

“There was a second group of Casement homosexual diaries and account books. This fact has until now been a secret.”

MacColl explains that in 1914 Casement left a ‘tin trunk’ with his Belfast friend, the well-known antiquarian Frank J. Bigger. After the execution Bigger opened the trunk and was shocked to find “a voluminous diary, full of homosexual notations and reminiscences”. Bigger at once burned the diary (or diaries) and letters found in the trunk. MacColl then explains how Frank J. Bigger related this event at some later time to his nephew Joseph W. Bigger who “not long before his death” in 1951 recounted the story of the destroyed diary (or diaries) to “a well-known resident of Cork” who in turn related it to MacColl during an interview in November 1954. In his book MacColl declined to name his source without explaining the reason.

Joseph W. Bigger was a noted professor of preventative medicine and bacteriology at Trinity and Dean of the medical school; he was also a senator in the Seanad. He died of leukemia in August 1951. MacColl explains that the professor was dining at his club when he “fell into conversation” with the anonymous resident of Cork and related to him the story which “had always deeply worried him”. Unlike his uncle who had known Casement well, Professor Bigger never knew Casement.

On 18 August, 1967 *The Times* published a letter from MacColl revealing the name of his source: John J. Horgan, the well-known coroner of Cork. Horgan died on 21 July, 1967. With MacColl’s death in 1971 the secret of the Bigger mystery also seemed to die.

There is much about MacColl's hearsay story which is tenuous and which strains credibility. With regard to the unexplained anonymity, an astute reader could have guessed the identity of the source; in the Foreword, MacColl thanks various persons for interviews with him and among these is "Mr. John J. Horgan, the Cork Coroner" and the only interviewee resident in Cork. On pages 124-5 MacColl writes disparagingly about Casement's contacts with Horgan in December 1913 and January 1914 about the restoration of transatlantic shipping to Cork. Horgan's name also appears in the Index and merits four lines in the biographical Appendix 1.

Besides Horgan in Cork, MacColl also interviewed Casement's friend Bulmer Hobson in Connemara and his defence lawyer A.M. Sullivan in Dublin. Both interviews are dated (14 and 16 November, 1954) and reported in journalistic style with context, description and detail and both cite extensively the direct speech of the interviewees. But these are missing in his report of the Horgan interview and his memories and impressions of Casement are omitted. Not a word spoken by Horgan is reported.

MacColl's locution "*...fell into conversation with ...*" means that the encounter with Bigger was by chance and that Horgan did not know him beforehand. MacColl's story is that at the 1954 interview no-one but Horgan knew about the destroyed diary/ies of 1916. And that until Horgan's alleged meeting with Bigger "*not long before his death*", no-one but Bigger knew the story. MacColl reported a story which cannot be corroborated and which rests on a chance encounter between two strangers on an unknown date but not long before the death of one of these. In order to report this 'secret' MacColl conceals the name of his alleged source and omits all details of the interview so that nothing remains except the alleged revelation of the 'secret'. That he resorts to further secrecy in order to reveal the 'secret' must be cause for maximum suspicion. MacColl does not explain why he chose to interview Horgan who had never been a friend, colleague or associate of Casement and who had met him only once some forty-one years earlier.

What further strains any minimal credibility in MacColl's report of a 'secret' revealed but on conditions of almost total secrecy, is precisely what he does not provide – a means of external corroboration. Without such corroboration, Horgan's 'secret' is not revealed at all but is merely transmitted by MacColl alone. Sensitive to this, he attempted to mitigate the tenuousness of his story by assuring us that his anonymous source 'has no doubts about the genuineness of the story'.

Horgan's purported conviction about the genuineness of the story must have followed a rather dramatic conversion during that chance encounter with Professor Bigger some years before. This is because Horgan had already publicly stated his conviction regarding Casement's moral integrity. In his 1949 book, *Parnell to Pearse*, Horgan wrote the following testimonial:

"Yet no one who knew him could believe the vile, and entirely unproved, suggestions which, with diabolical cleverness, were later made against his moral character by British propagandists." (p. 240) (1) MacColl's report does not mention this book.

It is just possible that MacColl had not read Horgan's book before the interview but it is not credible that in a conversation about Casement and the diaries, Horgan did not mention such a dramatic conversion and did not refer to his own published testimonial. MacColl's report therefore asks us to believe that in 1954 Horgan spoke to him exclusively about the purported encounter with Bigger some years earlier, which encounter took place by chance in Bigger's club. This, therefore, occurred in Dublin. Again by chance Horgan was a member of that same Dublin club although a resident of Cork. And yet again by chance they happened to talk about Casement.

"This fact has until now been a secret." What MacColl here describes as a 'fact' is something which has not been verified and which is incapable of verification. That which is incapable of verification cannot be defined as a fact. Relying only on his reputation as a distinguished journalist, MacColl begs the trust of the reader who cannot determine if the so-called fact is indeed a fact or if it has been a secret.

It is clear that all detail in the report which might identify Horgan has been omitted, ostensibly to safeguard his anonymity. Thus nothing is left of the interview which rests entirely upon MacColl's word. From MacColl's report we are to believe that Horgan, an experienced lawyer, listened to Bigger's hearsay version of the story, believed it without evidence and in 1954 passed it to MacColl for publication, again without evidence but accepted MacColl's assurance that his name would not be associated with the story. In safeguarding Horgan's anonymity for unexplained reasons, MacColl is in fact safeguarding his story from all possibility of investigation.

On balance there are sufficient grounds for considerable suspicion about the veracity of MacColl's report not least because no part of it can be verified. If indeed, Horgan was not the source of the story attributed to Professor Bigger of long destroyed diary/ies, then it follows that MacColl must have obtained it from another source.

## Part Two

William J. Maloney was a Scottish-born neurologist who moved to New York in 1911. During WW1 he served in the British Army Medical Corps and was seriously injured in the Gallipoli campaign. He became disaffected with Britain following the executions of the 1916 leaders and returned to the US. The execution of Casement particularly incensed him and by 1934 he had completed the investigative study which was later published in Dublin as *The forged Casement diaries*.

Maloney sent a copy of his typescript to Bernard Shaw in 1934 having been told that Shaw would show it to influential people in London who, Maloney hoped, would put pressure on the Home Office to issue a statement about the diaries. Shaw thought little of the proposed book which espoused the unfounded theory that the diary materials used to smear Casement in 1916 were in fact Casement's handwritten translations of the obscene writings of a Peruvian criminal named Normand

involved in the Putumayo atrocities; these translated pages, Maloney believed, had been sent by Casement to the Foreign Office in 1910-1911 and in 1916 they were mistaken for records of Casement's own behaviour. Maloney unwisely hoped that when the responsible Whitehall officials perceived their error, the government would investigate and issue a statement and apology. In this reasoning, Maloney was wrong and no statement was forthcoming. The Whitehall officials noted that the Normand theory of translated pages did not correspond with the three diaries and ledger then secretly held in the Public Records Office. No statement was necessary.

In the meantime, De Valera turned down the request to write a Foreword for Maloney's book on the grounds that "the British allegations against Casement have never been believed by Irishmen and so far as they are concerned no refutation is needed". De Valera feared that publication "might only result in a renewal of the campaign of defamation" (NLI Ms. 17,604).

When Maloney finally published his book in late 1936, the Home Office officials faced a predicament. They knew that Maloney's theory was wrong but knew also that the public could not know it was wrong unless a statement was made which demonstrated the physical reality of the diaries. Whitehall declined to make such a statement. The Home Office was not disturbed by the wrong theory but by the reasonable apprehension that the forgery claim itself would be believed. And many did believe in forgery albeit on the basis of a groundless theory.

One of those who believed Maloney's thesis was W.B. Yeats who published his famous ballad in *The Irish Press* on 2nd February, 1937, so bringing the diaries controversy to tens of thousands of people. On March 1st, 1937 *The Irish Times* published a reasonably balanced review of Maloney's book by former British diplomat and author Shane (Sir John) Leslie which conceded that there were serious questions which should be answered. It would have dismayed Whitehall officials to note that his neutral review did not quash the forgery claim and

did not cast doubt on it. Moreover, Leslie was a cousin of Winston Churchill and had been assistant to Ambassador Cecil Spring Rice in Washington in 1916. Several items of his correspondence in NLI predating publication of his review reveal Leslie's support for Maloney's book and for Casement himself. (Ms. 17,604/5/8, Ms. 17,604/5/12, Ms. 17,604/6/14.) It is not credible that the Home Office officials were indifferent to the charge of forgery.

On 8th March, 1937 *The Irish Times* published a letter from the Irish writer and editor Francis Hackett who criticised Leslie for being too lenient on the British government and for overlooking Maloney's distinguished career. (Maloney also held a doctorate in law and several military honours.) Hackett had little patience with Leslie or with the wealthy land-owning class to which he belonged. Hackett was a friend of Maloney and unsurprisingly his letter repeated the Normand story. Later in March, Hackett received a 'statement' purporting to come from Professor J.W. Bigger of Trinity. It is not known if this document was typed or handwritten and to this writer's knowledge no original is extant and only some copied extracts are available. At this point the Bigger mystery becomes even more confusing and mysterious because MacColl's 1954 story of the destroyed diary/ies had a secret precedent in 1937.

Hackett was shaken and angered by the 'statement' and on 24th March he wrote to inform Maloney in New York. "Dr. Joseph Bigger of Trinity has [given] Leslie and myself a statement for private consumption that Casement was a homo. You know this I assume. I'll copy the statement." (NLI Ms. 17,604/9/5.)

On 25th April, having read the copy of the statement sent to him, Maloney wrote to Hackett:

"It came safely, was very interesting but more so to me was your reaction to it... The proof offered to you is the good faith of your informant, Joseph W. Bigger. You think Bigger is telling the truth ... he seemed a straightforward chap. But he offered no evidence beyond his unsupported word." (NLI Ms. 17,602.)

Maloney then quoted from the Hackett copy statement as follows:

*"My object in writing is to attempt to bring the controversy to an end because I am convinced that the British Government had and probably has diaries of Roger Casement which if published would establish beyond question that he was a pervert... I should be sorry to have publicly established Casement's immorality as it would displace him from his present position of national hero and martyr, a position which he well deserved..."* (Italics added.)

The author of the above lines is purportedly Professor Bigger. This conviction concerning the reality of Casement diaries in government possession was then reported in the statement as being founded on Bigger's purported experience of finding a scandalous Casement diary in his uncle's Belfast home some 22 years earlier. The story, reconstructed from Maloney's quotation from the text of the statement, is that the nephew Bigger had found the diary in his uncle's home, that the uncle fainted with shock and that the diary was burned at once. No specific date for this alleged event is given in Maloney's quotation from the copy of the statement. Maloney himself regarded the statement as 'drivel' and entirely false.

The following brief extracts given in italics indicate that those italicised phrases were present in the statement received by Hackett and then copied and sent to Maloney who reproduced them in his four-page typed reply to Hackett. The remaining phrases in normal type were Maloney's own comments in the same letter.

"Your informer states it was destroyed: "immediately ... in the kitchen fire—it was late at night and everyone but ourselves had gone to bed."

... I am sure he would not have "*actually fainted*."

... as late possibly as September 1915 ... "*in the small room on the right of the hall at Ardrigh, which Mr Leslie may remember*" ...

The informer Bigger tells you that his uncle when Casement's activities in Germany had become known (which was in October 1914) "*feared a search by the military authorities and got rid of his (Casement's) bags and old clothing*."

... as he says, resisted the temptation to steal it ..."

Professor Bigger was a Unionist and he strongly favoured dominion status for Ireland. In 1948 he made a controversial two-hour speech in the Seanad debate opposing *The Republic of Ireland Act* which ended dominion status and took Ireland out of the Commonwealth. There is no record that he had ever shown any interest in the Casement controversy before 1937. It is unclear why he purportedly took such an interest following The *Irish Times* review of Maloney's book.

There are grounds for doubting that the statement was written by Professor Bigger. The grounds for doubt derive from scrutiny of the following parts of the statement as cited by Maloney in his letter to Hackett of 25 April, 1937.

1 – “... because I am convinced that the British Government had and probably has diaries of Roger Casement which if published would establish beyond question that he was a pervert.”

2 – “I should be sorry to have publicly established Casement's immorality as it would displace him from his present position of national hero and martyr, a position which he well deserved ...”

Here we have Casement described as a national hero and martyr *and pervert*. Bigger was a professor of medicine and the use of the derogatory term '*pervert*' is improbable and incongruous. It is even more incongruous that Bigger, an anti-republican Unionist, should respect Casement's status as hero and martyr since he gained that status by his efforts *against the Crown* to which Bigger owed his first loyalty. That a convinced Unionist should entertain any respect for someone hanged as a traitor by his own monarch and whom he describes as a '*pervert*' is beyond comprehension. The author states that Casement was an immoral '*pervert*' who nonetheless deserves our respect and he does not wish to destroy his status as a republican hero. The incongruity expressed in these quotations is difficult to reconcile.

It is when those surviving parts of the 1937 statement are scrutinized that its incoherence is revealed; the author states his motive for making the statement as being a desire to “*bring the controversy to an end*”. However, it is difficult to understand

how this could be achieved by sending a statement “*for private consumption*” to only two people, private individuals who had not played any significant role in the twenty-year-old controversy. With the publication of Yeats’ ballad, the diaries question was made known to tens of thousands of people. It cannot be understood what either Hackett or Leslie could have done to terminate such a widely publicised controversy and there is no indication that they are asked to take specific action to that end. Therefore the motivation given for the statement is not credible and the true motivation remains to be discovered.

It is even less credible when one considers that the statement attributed to Bigger was intended “*for private consumption*” which can only mean that it was not to enter the public domain. The author of the statement knows that there is no guarantee the recipients will respect his wish for privacy. The purported reason for not wishing to be publicly identified as author is given as a reluctance to be held responsible for damaging Casement’s status as hero and martyr. Therefore the author is someone who wishes to defend the diaries as the authentic records of a ‘pervert’ and who, at the same time, *knows that denial will follow any publication of the statement*.

It has been demonstrated that Bigger’s political pedigree makes it untenable that he was the author of the statement sent to Hackett. It has been demonstrated that the given motivation – ending the controversy – is false. Bigger was nonetheless an authoritative voice since he was the nephew of a well-known Casement associate, Frank Bigger, at whose home Casement had left various belongings before he travelled to the US in 1914.

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On the hypothesis that Professor Bigger was not the author, an interpretation is possible which eliminates much of the incongruity. If the statement was falsely attributed to Bigger, it was made by someone who wished to communicate anonymously not to, but through, Hackett. The unknown author proposes that

the British government holds Casement diaries which if made public by that government would destroy his reputation as hero and martyr. Support for this hypothesis of an unknown author comes from the “*for private consumption*” condition with its implicit intimation of denial if not respected. In the event of the statement being made public, that denial would logically come from Professor Bigger himself as the purported author. The true author would in any case remain anonymous and unknown to Bigger. In 1937 the existence of the statement was made known only to a handful of people who continued to believe that Bigger was the author. Since the statement was not made public, Bigger himself never knew that his respected name had been ‘borrowed’.

In order to determine who ‘borrowed’ Bigger’s name it is necessary to examine both motive and method. The motive attributed to Bigger of ending the controversy has been discounted as untenable. The implicit hint that the statement will be denied if made public indicates that the unknown author is certain of Professor Bigger’s denial. That certainty of denial is in turn predicated upon the knowledge that Bigger is not the author.

It is not credible that Whitehall officials were indifferent to Maloney’s public accusation of forgery. They nonetheless felt it necessary to limit the damage and to *indirectly* assert the existence and authenticity of the Black Diaries. And at this point, the revelatory statement appeared – a private communication containing a shocking revelation purportedly from a respected professor of medicine who was the nephew of a close associate of Casement. It becomes clear that the purpose of the destroyed diary story was to assert the existence of the Black Diaries *without having to publish them*. Yet the only thing which would have the effect of appearing to ‘verify’ by *default* the Bigger revelation would be publication of the diaries.

Knowing that it was in fact kept secret by the recipients who *believed* the statement came from the purported author, the unknown sender ran no risk of being discovered. But a shock-

ing revelation which intimates a risk of subsequent denial by its purported author merits maximum suspicion. The method is that of a false attribution to a known and respected name which conceals both the true motive and identity of the sender.

In the statement we discern a balance between Casement's acquired reputation as hero and a risk to that reputation through publication of the diaries held by the Home Office. It is in this balance that the real motivation of the statement is revealed. The decoded message is that those who wish to protect Casement's status as hero must renounce claims that the diaries are forged. Such a message could only have come from someone *who was in a position to threaten Casement's status as hero*. If that someone was Bigger who "*should be sorry to have publicly established Casement's immorality ...*", it is unclear how he (Bigger) could have proceeded to achieve what no-one was asking him to do.

Obviously he could not constrain the British Government to make a statement about the diaries or to publish them. Therefore Bigger could not damage Casement's status as hero. The only person who could threaten Casement's status was someone with *certain knowledge of the Black Diaries* held by the Home Office. Bigger did not possess that knowledge.

If we are to believe that Bigger related the story to Horgan in 1950-51 we are also required to believe either that Bigger did not tell Horgan about the 1937 statement he allegedly sent to Hackett reporting the destroyed diary/ies. Or if Bigger did tell him, we are to believe that Horgan did not tell MacColl. In either case, the 1937 statement is missing from MacColl's report. If Horgan knew the 1937 story and told it to MacColl, then he suppressed it in his report. There is simply no evidence whatsoever to demonstrate that a chance encounter between Professor Bigger and Horgan ever occurred. Nor is there any evidence that Horgan related anything to MacColl.

However, the key which finally unlocks the Bigger mystery is to be found in one simple sentence: "*This fact has until now*

*been a secret.*” This sentence is unnecessary since it does not verify the Bigger story; by ‘secret’ MacColl means not in the public domain. Whereas this is true, MacColl could not know that it had not been in the public domain unless he had been informed by someone with inside knowledge. Sharing the secret privileges the reader who, trusting in MacColl’s reputation as a distinguished journalist, is compromised into believing it to be a fact.

The term “*pervert*” used in the 1937 statement undermines the “*well deserved*” admiration of Casement as “*national hero and martyr*”. Charged with negative moral judgment, the term betrays a contempt which is utterly incompatible with sincere admiration. Conversely, a sincere admirer would not use a term meaning sexual deviancy which at the time was a criminal offence. It follows that the author of that sentence was not a sincere admirer of Casement as hero and martyr but was someone who, with one word, revealed his distaste for Casement.

Hackett’s letter to Maloney states he has received “*a statement for private consumption*”, which can only mean that the content is ‘for your eyes only’. It has not been confirmed that Sir John Leslie also received an identical statement or if he received any statement but Hackett believed he had and that Leslie would send it to the Foreign Office. Nonetheless, the intimation of secrecy is explicit and is therefore motivated. “*Private consumption*” does not, however, exclude sharing the secret; rather it indicates that the statement is not intended for public consumption – not for publication. Both Hackett and Leslie were authors and had shortly before published about the diaries in *The Irish Times*. The phrase “*for private consumption*” is therefore an admonition that the statement ought to be kept in the private sphere. It is at once obvious to the true author that this cannot be practically enforced and that in the event of publication, the alleged author will deny authorship.

The phrase in MacColl’s report “*...not long before his death ...*” is not strictly necessary since the chance encounter obviously could not happen after his death but the timing, although

vague, does indicate that MacColl was aware of Horgan's 1949 published testimonial. The alleged encounter had to be inserted in the period after publication between 1949 and 1951; otherwise the encounter might have occurred at any time between 1926 when the uncle died and 1951 when the nephew died.

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MacColl asserts that the unverifiable story is a fact which has not been in the public domain. It is not clear how MacColl knows it has not been in the public domain but the unwary reader assumes that his un-named source assured him of this. A story the content of which cannot be verified is not a fact. Nor can it be verified that the unverifiable story came from MacColl's un-named source. These two major weaknesses demonstrate that MacColl's report rests entirely on the faith of the trusting reader.

It is axiomatic in journalism that a story, particularly if controversial, must first be corroborated before it will be published. MacColl's story was constructed so that no corroboration was possible. MacColl was a prominent and experienced journalist but he did not follow the most basic rules of his profession.

Inglis, the most influential Casement biographer, also found the Bigger mystery confusing. In an appendix to his 1974 edition, we find the following: that MacColl's "voluminous diary" has become plural *diaries*; that J. W. Bigger has become Professor of Pathology rather than of Bacteriology; and, more surprising, that the Professor is no longer the *nephew* of F.J. Bigger but has become his *son*. Inglis does not mention Horgan's book but, following MacColl's suggestion, he does assert that "Horgan did not wish his identity to be disclosed".

Then in the Preface to his 1993 edition (2), Inglis retracted this assertion and finally admitted that the story of F.J. Bigger destroying Casement papers after the execution was "unauthenticated". He does not explain this loss of faith in MacColl's 1956 version but he does offer the following in compensation: Inglis refers to being contacted in 1973 or 74 by Ernest Blythe, then aged 86, who insinuated that the allegedly destroyed papers might have been scandalous rather than political.

Blythe was an extraordinary character, a theatre lover, fluent in Irish, journalist, former government minister, founder of the fascist Blueshirts, self-educated, and in early life a sworn member of both the Orange Order and the IRB at the same time, a fact he concealed throughout his life. During WW2, Intelligence files described Blythe as “100% Nazi”.

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There are grounds for believing MacColl was aware of Horgan’s 1949 published testimonial. There are grounds for believing that Professor Bigger was not the author of the 1937 statement. That MacColl does not refer to the 1937 statement invites us to believe that Bigger either forgot or concealed this from the un-named source at a chance encounter for which there is no evidence.

The basic ingredients of MacColl’s story – hearsay, scandalous secret, unverifiable, un-named source – are those of gossip. That a journalist of MacColl’s reputation and experience should report as fact a story indistinguishable from gossip is both remarkable and suspicious. And yet one aspect of his story can be verified; the story had not been in the public domain as demonstrated in preceding paragraphs. A sceptical reader would ask how MacColl can know this.

When the 1937 and 1954 versions are compared, we note they have in common: 1 – the attribution to a respected name, 2 – which attribution cannot be verified in either case, 3 – both rest upon conditions of secrecy, 4 – and both present anomalies and incongruities difficult to resolve.

There are two major discrepancies between the two versions; when examined, doubts reach a critical point.

- 1 – MacColl states that the discovery and destruction took place after the execution in August 1916. The 1937 version indicates that these events happened when Casement was in Germany in 1914-15.
- 2 – This concerns who was present at the discovery and destruction. The 1937 version clearly indicates that the nephew Joseph Bigger was an eyewitness. MacColl’s 1954 version states that the story was “*related to him by his uncle*”.

Both versions ostensibly have the same origin – Professor Bigger. It is not possible to reconcile these conflicting versions; to propose that one version is false requires proof that the other version is true. Neither can be proved true. These discrepancies are demonstrated to be fatal contradictions at the heart of the Bigger mystery.

The following hypothesis must be judged on its capacity to resolve all the incongruities and contradictions and also on its probability as a complete explanation of the Bigger mystery.

- A – the 1937 statement was falsely attributed to Professor Bigger.
- B – the 1937 statement was invented and written by agents of British Intelligence.
- C – MacColl was informed of the 1937 statement by British Intelligence.
- D – MacColl invented the chance encounter between Horgan and Bigger.
- E – MacColl interviewed Horgan in order to attribute the false Bigger story to him.

The device of false attribution is a basic tool in intelligence work and it was used by Captain Hall for the Zimmerman telegram and by MI5 officer Frank Hall for the Millar story as demonstrated in Chapter 9 of *Anatomy of a lie*. False attribution acts as a decoy which conceals the true source of the misinformation.

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### Notes

- (1) It is worth noting that Horgan's testimonial was not influenced by his politics which were radically opposed to those of Casement. Horgan had been a supporter of Redmond and he repudiated republicanism. Moreover, he abhorred the Easter Rising which he described as unwarranted, undemocratic and un-Catholic. Horgan favoured the British empire, the Commonwealth and dominion status for Ireland.
- (2) The 1993 edition of the Inglis book is a facsimile of the text of the 1974 paperback edition and it includes the appendix with its reference to the Bigger story and the assertion that 'Horgan did not wish his identity to be disclosed'. Inglis died while the 1993 edition was still in preparation. It appears that he was unaware that his new preface contradicted that earlier assertion.

*Irish Political Review*, February 2020

## The Findlay Memorandum

Dated 29th October 1914, this four-page handwritten document contains the first reference to 'unnatural relations' which set the seed for the scandal which erupted in May 1916. An in-depth analysis of this memorandum can be found in Chapter 11, of *Anatomy Of A Lie*, where it is demonstrated to be an invention of the British minister in Oslo.

Renegade Britishman from U.S. interfering with Bush  
Sent to F.O. Sec. E. Sec  
in pack letter  
Oct 29. 1914

1

Scout A young man called at the legation this afternoon. He spoke with a strong American accent & said he was a Romanian. He asked for the minister but, finally consented to see me wished, as the minister was out on business.

He stated he had come over from the U.S. in the S.S. "Oscar II" in the company of a highly placed Britisher, a nobleman who had been awarded by King Edward. This I understood that his relations with this Britisher were of an improper character;

537 F.O.

~~it is quite possible they have been  
seen in this but I don't think so.~~

The visitor stated that the Englishman was  
the bearer of letters from the German  
Embassy in Washington to Berlin

& that these letters had been entrusted to  
him <sup>for a time</sup> as the Englishman was afraid  
of being searched.

These were four letters &  
they informant <sup>stated</sup> had been open  
before returning them <sup>of two</sup>  
& had made pencil copies, which  
he showed me.

One was addressed to the  
Reichskanzler outside & was in cipher.  
The other began "Dear Mr  
Another was addressed to "Dear Mr  
Harden" & was addressed,  
I presume to the ~~etc~~ well

2

well known German <sup>it</sup> citizen, & said was  
in English. It said that the <sup>Mr. Hader</sup> ~~beaver~~  
would soon be able to give him ~~some~~  
very useful information which would  
enable him to enlighten the German  
public as to the true state of affairs.  
This letter was signed as near as  
possible ~~if~~ like this "Georg"; that  
is, the pencil copy was; & at the top  
of the paper was Geo von SKal,  
5-Beekman St. New York &  
Cable address Lakanor New York  
a. b. c. Code 5 Edition.

The other two letters were,  
I was informed, for the German ~~legations~~  
law & at Coppenbrug & about Farsat.

~~Very important fact~~  
The pencil copies

copies of the letters shown to me seemed  
glarwic; the German Chancellor's  
address was correctly given ~~to~~ in  
German & the English in the letter

to Harden was natural & apparently  
the letter addressed to Lt. G. Winter (in which)  
he writes, also saw in copy from Lt. Winter his proper  
title etc in general official style.

The man further stated that

Mr. Englishman was really going to Germany about trouble in Ireland & that he was now in Xian, but this he did not give his name

Incidentally he stated that over his name were 8 German officers on board the Oscar II

who escaped being taken off, when the ship

who escaped being taken off, when the ship  
was stopped by a British cruiser, owing to their  
having false passports; some Laramie bandits  
were arrested.

The teacher did not state why

he gave me this by information I did  
not ask for money. The man was very anxious & I let him  
3 <sup>19th</sup> struck me his story was true. <sup>19th</sup>

## *Findlay Memo - Transcription*

Renegade Englishman from U.S. [illegible]

Sent to F.O. Sir E. Grey

[illegible]

Oct 29. 1914.

Secret A young man called at the Legation this afternoon. He spoke with a strong American accent & said he was a Norwegian. He asked for the Minister but finally consented to see me instead, as the Minister was out on business.

He stated he had come over from the U.S. in the S.S. "Oscar II" in the company of a highly placed Englishman, a nobleman who had been decorated by King Edward. This I understood that his relations with this Englishman were of an improper character;

[Page 2]

~~it is quite possible I may have been wrong in this but I don't think so.~~ The visitor said that the Englishman was the bearer of letters from the German Embassy in Washington to Berlin & that the letters had been entrusted to his care for a time as the Englishman was afraid of being searched.

There were four letters & my informant steamed them open before returning them and had made pencil copies of two which he showed me. One was addressed to the Reichskanzler outside & was in cypher. The other ~~Another was~~ began addressed to "Dear Mr Harden," & was addressed presumably to the ~~Edi~~ well

[Page 3]

known German [illegible], ~~R~~ it said was in English. It said that the bearer would ~~give~~ be able to give him Mr Harden some very useful information which would enable him to enlighten the German public as to the true state of affairs. This letter was signed as near as possible ~~G~~ like this "Geortz," that is, the pencil copy was; & at the top of the paper was Geo von Skal, 5 Beekman St. New York & cable address Laknov New York ? c.c. Code 5 Edition.

The two other letters were, I was informed, for the German Legations here & at Copenhagen & about passports.

My informant [illegible]

The pencil copies

[Page 4]

copies of the letters shown to me seemed genuine; the German Chancellor's address was correctly given [illegible] in German & the English in the letter to Harden was natural & apparently genuine. The letter addressed to the[?] G. Minister here which I also saw in copy gave the Minister his proper titles etc in German official style.

The man further stated that the Englishman was really going to Germany about trouble in Ireland & that he was now in X [illegible], he wd not give his name.

Incidentally he stated that there were 8 German officers on board the Oscar II who escaped being taken off, when the ship was stopped by a British cruiser, owing to their having false passports; some harmless bandsmen were removed.

The man did not state why he gave me this [illegible] information & did not ask for money. He gave was very nervous [illegible] & it struck me his story was true.

F ?  
Oct 29  
1914

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## *The Oslo Affidavits*

Comment on 'affidavits' dated July 1916 [overleaf].

In July 1916 Thomson solicited the obviously dishonest documents which follow from the Oslo Legation as corroborative evidence. The fact that he needed such corroborative evidence confirms that he was unable to show bound diaries because they did not exist at that time. The deponent named here, Jacobsen, had never met Casement or Christensen.

During Casements staying in Christiania

Adler Christensen had his separate room at Grand Hotel, where he received his friends and other persons which he had communication with, and among these also Casement, When Casement was to see Chr. at his separate room, the door was locked and nobody left in, very often there was heard a scream from the room, and also vociferous discourse.

Chr. did speak very little about his matter with Casement to his friends, but one day he told them that he had left the service of the same, as Casement had been very brutal to him in the night, and he told the porters not that he would not receive Casement, when he was comming to see him. Chr. had always plenty of money.

Christensen said that he had never been requested by the British Minister to kill Casement, but he said often that he should like to kill him for his own account. He had spoken with the British Minister about Casement, had shown him various documents which showed the real character and business of Casement and that he was a traitor. He had told Casement that he would go the British Minister and tell this all about him, but Casement had payed Christensen a great sum of money, that he should not do it, and after that Christensen had promised Casement not to go, but in the night just after this Casement had been with Christensen together and been very brutal against him, and after this it was that Christensen left the service of Casement the following day.

Christensen was ill, he had pain in his ~~rect~~ rectum, and visited a surgeon several times.

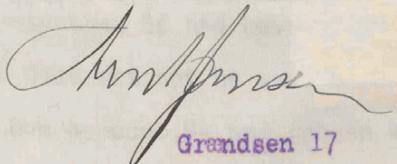
After having drawn back from Casement, Chr. was introduced to other people under an other name, Smith, Pedersen,

Adler, he had plenty of friends, but this friends did not known that his real name was Christensen, and that he was that kind of a man he was.

I certtify on oath that the attached is a true and correct account of what is known by the porters Mr. Russ and Mr. Suck of the Grand Hotel Christiania, concerning Casement and Christensen.

Neither of the above porters would make any written statement about this matter, stating it was too filthy a job for them to have their names connected with in any way.

Christania July the 11th 1916



Grandsen 17

Christania

Sworn before me at the British Consulate, Christiania, this nineteenth day of July 1916.

Stuart Dick.  
Vic. Consul.



Christania july 14th 1916

I swear on oath that the following  
is a true and correct account of a statement made to me by Mr.Korth  
the Porter at Victoria Hotel,Christania.

Pasing Victoria Hotel this morning I  
saw the porter at the gate, and as I am well known to him, he addresed  
me. We spoke about various matters, and that he asked me, if I knew  
Adler Christensen, I said now, but asked him if he did, He told me that  
that he did not know him himself, but knew several people who had known  
Christensen, had heard plenty of things about him, and said that, he, Chr.,  
was the biggest pig he ever had heard about. He was not only a sodomite  
but he was also a black mailer, and he used it as a sport. When he had  
been with some people together, he tryed to black mail them later.  
He did not know where Chr. was at present, but he knew that he had been  
in Berlin

*Arn Hansen*  
Grandsen 17  
Christiania

Sworn before me at the British Consulate, Christiania,  
this nineteenth day of July 1916.



*St. Paul's Church.*  
The Consul.

I desire to state that I have ascertained that ADLER  
CHRISTENSEN is now known to be a "sodomite".

(Signed) E.W. JACOBSEN.  
Inspector of Taxes.

Dated Kristiania 19th July 1916

( Declared at the British Consulate Kristiania in the  
Kingdom of Norway this 19th day of July 1916 before  
me )

(Signed) H<sup>2</sup> CHARLES DICK.  
Vice-Consul.

## *The Thomson Letter*

[Basil Thomson, head of the Metropolitan Police, sent a letter to Ernley Blackwell, legal adviser to the Cabinet. It is reproduced here, with an introductory comment]

### Comment on Thomson letter of 26 July 1916.

Three aspects of Thomson's letter to Blackwell are of interest. Contrary to the idea proposed by some biographers that the Casement question was not important enough for the authorities to undertake an extensive forgery and cover-up operation, the letter confirms the view of the US Ambassador that the question was of international importance. This view coincides with the considerations of Lord Chancellor Buckmaster and Archbishop Davidson on 2nd August 1916, when the Archbishop advised that "the well-being and safety of the Empire" required Casement's execution.

A second aspect is that Thomson refers to the so-called 'affidavits' from Oslo [see pages 54-57] as being of little use. "Not much in them." This conflicts with the view expressed by the biographer Ó Siocháin, who regards them as valuable evidence supporting the alleged authenticity of the diaries.

A third aspect is that the photographs given to the Ambassador were photographs of extracts from the police typescripts, as confirmed by the Home Office Working Party in HO 144/23481. "The Ambassador was given photographs of two passages from the typescript." These photographs were taken to Washington for showing to President Wilson, a personal friend of the US ambassador. There were no bound diaries to be photographed.



26.7.16

Dear Blackwell,

I had a talk  
with Dr. Page, the American  
Ambassador, today and at  
his request, showed him the  
diary, and pointed out the  
innocuous passages that  
identified the writer as well  
as the filthy part. He was

quite satisfied & said that  
he would like to have it & the  
P. Secretary who leaves for  
Washington with him on Saturday

the President, ~~but~~ and of Doyle's  
propaganda. But he would tell  
everybody to the President  
and he felt sure that he would  
be in time.

I left photographs of two pages  
with him. He said that he  
considered the matter of  
international importance in  
view of the pressure that  
was being brought to bear on

Sincerely yours  
B. K. Morrison

## *The Philadelphia Exercise*

Professor Christopher Andrew is a renowned authority on the world of Intelligence and was official historian for MI5. He is yet another Casement expert and has made his contribution in favour of authenticity of the Black Diaries. However, his contribution does not withstand scrutiny. In an essay *Casement and British Intelligence* published in *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Daly ed. RIA 2005) he writes:

“One of the reports from Findlay... included the statement that Casement and Christensen had ‘unnatural relations’ ...they began when he was a seaman aged only fifteen or sixteen and Casement was British consul in Brazil. According to Christensen, Casement followed him into a lavatory in a Montevideo hotel where they had sex. Christensen jumped ship and began an affair with Casement lasting for about a month.”

This appears to attribute to Findlay comments allegedly made to him by Christensen in 1914. However, Findlay did not make any such report concerning alleged events in Montevideo. The Montevideo story appeared in June 1916 after an interview with Christensen in Philadelphia was conducted on 23rd May 1916. The interviewer was Chief Inspector Ward of Scotland Yard CID (see appendix) who stated in his long report that he had travelled from London to Philadelphia on instruction of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

This visit is first mentioned by Inglis in his 1973 study (page 352, 1974 paperback edition) where he states that “Christensen wrote to the Foreign Office from the United States suggesting they might like to have his testimony against the traitor”. However, this is false; Christensen did not write to the FO and Inglis gives no source.

The visit is also mentioned by Ó Síocháin in his 2008 study, where his endnote reads “*Acting Consul, Philadelphia to Nicolson, 10 May, 1916*” (Endnote 16, Chapter 18). This also is false; the Acting Consul in Philadelphia, Mr. Ford, did not write to the FO. Ó Síocháin, however, cites his source as PRO FO 95/776. There is no communication of that date from Philadelphia to Nicolson in the TNA file. There is a telegram from Consul General Bayley in NY of that date which informs Nicolson that the Acting Consul in Philadelphia has contacted him regarding Christensen. It is not clear if that contact between Ford and Bayley was in writing or by telephone.

After the interview with Christensen, a typed document of 13 numbered pages was prepared in Scotland Yard (PRO DPP 1/46). This consists of a report (pages 1 to 7) dated 5th June 1916 followed by 6 pages (8 to 13) purporting to be a statement dated 23rd May by Christensen in the Philadelphia office of the Acting British Consul. The summary report, ostensibly by Chief Inspector Ward, does not bear Ward’s signature. Therefore, his authorship is uncertain.

The six pages numbered 8 to 13 bear the heading Philadelphia and the date 23rd May. This account is purportedly in Christensen’s first person voice but it too is unsigned. Both documents were typed on the same police typewriter in Scotland Yard at the same time. Therefore, the alleged first person typed statement is not an original account by Christensen but is the work of Inspector Ward and/or his colleagues. It is a police version of a narrative allegedly originating from Christensen some two weeks earlier. There is nothing to guarantee its authenticity, nothing to demonstrate that the typed words in the alleged statement were ever spoken or written by Christensen. But there is strong evidence to demonstrate that the statement attributed to Christensen is entirely invented, that it is an example of manufactured evidence.

Ward describes the meeting as an interrogation which implies questions and answers but the alleged Christensen statement

does not take the form of an interrogation; there are no questions and no answers. The entire document is hopelessly beset by errors and contradictions which expose this Philadelphia exercise to be as inept and false as the Findlay memo.

The timing cited in the police report and alleged statement, does not bear scrutiny. The Montevideo event reported by Professor Andrew allegedly occurred “about 10 or 11 years ago”, which would be in either 1905 or 1906. Casement was unemployed throughout 1905 and most of 1906 and was not in South America. He arrived in Brazil in mid-October, 1906 to begin work as Consul in Santos. It is not credible that he immediately absented himself and spent a month in Montevideo, some 1,200 miles away, nor is there any evidence that he did so.

A second error of timing appears on page two of the statement attributed to Christensen. “In November 1914, by arrangement with him, he having obtained an American passport from a Mr. Landz ... we sailed for Norway on the S.S. Oscar II.” The ship carrying Casement to Norway departed New York on 15th October, 1914. In November 1914, both Casement and Christensen were in Berlin. Casement carried the passport of a Mr. James Landy; the Christensen who travelled with Casement to Norway on that same ship certainly knew the date when he boarded the vessel and also knew the correct spelling of Casement’s alias. But the Christensen represented in the police statement did not know.

The spelling of several words further betrays the falsity of this endeavour. The names Bayley, Findlay, Devoy, Meyer, Nordenflycht, Landy and Christiania are all wrongly spelled in both Ward’s report and in the alleged statement. Christensen knew Findlay and Devoy personally and knew the correct spelling of their names. He equally well knew the correct spelling of Christiania, the capital city of his own country. But, since the pages were typed in Scotland Yard on 5 June, Christensen was not present to make corrections; more precisely, Christensen never saw these pages far less signed them.

There is no mention of sex in the police typescript although the innuendo was attractive enough for Professor Andrew to state as a fact that Christensen had confirmed the alleged relationship was sexual. This is a clear echo of Findlay's reports in 1914 and 1915 and indeed this 'Philadelphia exercise' was intended to recover something of Finlay's false memo which planted the seeds of scandal.

Both report and alleged statement claim that Casement was in Montevideo to visit the German Minister, Baron Ferdinand von Nordenflycht (1850-1931). The source given is the alleged statement attributed to Christensen. Indeed, that statement opens with the Montevideo story.

Casement did know the German diplomat but not in 1905 or 1906; they met only in August 1909 in the diplomatic community of Petropolis north of Rio de Janeiro, and Casement became a frequent visitor to the Nordenflycht home. Roger Sawyer verifies the meeting in 1909: "A friendship which began at this period was with the German consul-general, Baron von Nordenflycht" (*Casement, The Flawed Hero* p. 75. Routledge 1984).

However, if, as alleged, Casement travelled to Montevideo to visit von Nordenflycht in late 1906 or 1907, he travelled 1,200 miles from Rio in the wrong direction to visit a person who was not there and whom he did not know. This is because in 1906 and 1907 von Nordenflycht was working in New Orleans and did not arrive in Brazil until 1908, when he became Consul-General. The Foreign Office of the Federal German Republic confirms that he was posted to Montevideo only in May 1911 by which time Casement had left Rio De Janeiro (March 1910), never to return.

It follows that either Christensen was lying or Inspector Ward was lying but not both. In either case the Montevideo story is false.

The language and the grammatical structures used in the alleged and unsigned statement are those of an Englishman and

not those of Christensen, a non-native speaker of US English with limited schooling. We are invited to believe that Christensen himself spoke Ward's stilted formal English. There are no traces of Christensen's US English in the text, which is not a verbatim version of anything written or spoken by him. The text is the police version of an entirely imaginary first-person account attributed to Christensen, many elements of which derive directly from Findlay's invented memo of October 1914 and his subsequent botched attempts to corroborate.

Therefore the 23rd May date of the alleged statement is false, since it was typed in London at the same time as the summary report dated 5th June. There are no original handwritten notes made by Ward in Philadelphia with the typescript; Ward relied on a remarkable memory. The spelling errors listed above are common to both report and the alleged statement. Although Christensen allegedly refused to disclose his address in Philadelphia, somehow the Acting Consul managed to arrange the meeting at short notice.

Most noticeably, there is in Ward's report no description of Christensen's appearance, although brief descriptions of others are given. Also of note is that Ward, a senior policeman, states that Christensen and Landz (Casement) sailed "from Norway" "about November 1914" and, further, that he has verified the identity of the real Landz as a Real Estate agent in Nassau Street, NY. On a later page of his report he contradicts the false and imprecise November date of departure from NY and cites the correct date – October 15th, only to give the wrong year, 1915. One further minor detail confirms that the first person statement allegedly by Christensen was not copy-typed by the police from any original written by Christensen: the archaic spelling 'shews' (for shows) is used in both the report and the alleged statement.

The police papers submitted to the DPP also claim that when leaving Montevideo, Casement gifted cash and jewels worth some \$900 to Christensen. This alleged extraordinary generosity

is unexplained and when scrutinised its absurdity is revealed. There is no evidence anywhere that Casement possessed jewelry during his life nor any evidence that he ever gifted jewelry to anyone. MI5's investigation of his London bank account does not reveal the purchase of jewelry. Moreover, Casement had been unemployed for over 18 months before his posting to Santos in late 1906, therefore without income. \$900 in 1906/7 is equivalent to some £21,500 today and amounted to almost one third of his annual consular salary. Though generous, Casement was never a wealthy man but the gift claim asks us to believe that he gave away a large part of his salary before he had received it and that he brought from England to Santos a cache of jewelry which he then brought with him to Montevideo only to give away. Such absurdity indicates that the police lost control of the story they were inventing.

The alleged statement is not signed – Christensen never saw the statement in Philadelphia because the statement did not exist on 23rd May. Therefore the Montevideo story, which opens the alleged statement, rests entirely on the word of Ward if he was the sole author.

That the Montevideo story is in prime position at the very start of the alleged statement indicates the importance given to it by the police. It is allegedly the first thing related by Christensen. And yet the words and sentences in the statement, allegedly spoken by Christensen in first person, are obviously not his; nor can they be considered a paraphrase reconstructed some two weeks later, because there is no original version by Christensen. There is no evidence that Christensen related the Montevideo story in any form. There is incontrovertible evidence that the story was typed in Scotland Yard by the police. But, since it is not signed by Ward, we cannot be certain that he is the author of this first person narrative attributed to a named third person.

The errors in the police papers are common to both report and alleged statement. Here are some of them.

- 1 - Christensen wrongly aged 36.
- 2 - departure date given wrongly as “about November 1914”.
- 3 - departure date given wrongly as October 15, 1915.
- 4 - departure from NY wrongly given as sailing from Norway.
- 5 - Von Nordenflycht spelled wrongly.
- 6 - Bayley spelled wrongly twice.
- 7 - Landy spelled wrongly as Landz throughout.
- 8 - Devoy spelled wrongly as De Voy throughout.
- 9 - Christiania spelled wrongly as Christiana throughout.
- 10 - Findlay spelled wrongly as Finlay and Findley throughout.
- 11 - wrong address given for Landz.
- 12 - Meyer spelled wrongly as Myers.
- 13 -Brogan spelled wrongly as Brogden.
- 14 - \$300 cited in report but cited as \$200 in alleged statement.

It is well-nigh impossible to understand how a senior police officer with 29 years experience who had distinguished himself in detective work did not notice so many errors in a few pages, especially when decent literacy skills were a basic requirement in police service. The presence of so many errors suggests that the narrative was prepared by several officers rather than by one officer.

The following anomalies remain unexplained: two addresses are given for ‘Landz’ in NY and, even when Ward claims to have verified this detail, he still uses the wrong spelling ,although the correct spelling of Casement’s alias was known in 1914; it is also unclear why Ward did not identify himself to Christensen at the interview as he attests; Christensen refused his address so it is unclear how he was contacted by the Acting Consul at short notice for the interview on 23rd May.

By 5 June, Ward and his CID colleagues had completed the report and alleged statement and top copies were “handed to” Sir Charles Mathews, Director of Public Prosecutions. On 28th June a retyped copy of the report and alleged statement was sent

from the CID to MI5 where it was read on 30th June by Frank Hall who commented as follows (KV 2-9-3):

“...in view of Ward’s opinion & the old Findlay incident I doubt if he is .....[illegible] ... His statement, if true, confirms our knowledge of the connection between the German-Irish- ...[illegible]”

Thus Hall attested that the statement contained little or nothing that was not already known to MI5. It is exceedingly strange that Hall made no comment on the scandalous Montevideo story which, all things being equal, ought to have been news to him. This lack of comment requires explanation, especially in view of Hall’s already recorded interest in such scandal about Casement. It cannot be excluded that on 30th June 1916 the Montevideo story was not news to Hall.

Ten or eleven years before May 1916 would cover 1905 to 1906. In that period Casement was present in South America less than three months, having arrived at Santos from the UK in mid October of 1906. There is no evidence of a visit to Montevideo in 1906. TNA files FO 368/9/116 contain his frequent reports to the FO during the latter period of 1906 from Santos, and these show that he was busy with normal consular duties concerning import-export, shipping and transport, coffee markets etc.

There is no evidence of a visit to Montevideo in the period January to end of June 1907, when Casement left Santos and returned to the UK. There is evidence of a two-week visit to Buenos Aires in March 1907, which he duly accounted for to the FO. Therefore there is no evidence whatsoever that Casement spent a month in Montevideo in either 1905, 1906 or 1907.

When these facts are added to the fact that Casement did not know von Nordenflycht in those years and to the fact that the German diplomat was located in the USA in those years, it becomes evident that the Montevideo story is a fabrication. It remains to determine who fabricated the story.

The prime suspect for the invention of the Montevideo story must be the Metropolitan Police because it is in their official papers that the story is reported. A potential secondary suspect is Christensen, because the story is attributed to him in those police papers. While it is clear that the police had both opportunity and motive to invent the story, it is less clear that Christensen had both opportunity and motive. This is because there is no external verification for what happened or was said at the consulate in Philadelphia. There is only the police account, unsigned by Inspector Ward and compromised by multiple errors of spelling, dates and facts.

If it is allowed that Christensen had opportunity, then it follows that a credible motive must be proposed. The present writer is unable to propose a credible motive which explains why Christensen might relate a self-incriminating and false story of a scandalous nature to three strangers (Consul Ford, Inspector Ward, P.S. Brewer).

The attribution to Christensen is made by the prime suspect, the Metropolitan Police, and the attribution cannot be verified externally. Therefore, Christensen would be a secondary suspect only by virtue of the prime suspect's attribution which rests entirely on the word of the prime suspect.

It is now necessary to distinguish between the falsity of the Montevideo story itself and the falsity of the attribution. It is clear that the attribution is effected by means of a lengthy first person narrative purportedly spoken by Christensen, but prepared by the police and completed some twelve days after the interview in Philadelphia. Analysis of that narrative demonstrates that the sentences were not spoken by Christensen but were created in London, probably but not certainly by Inspector Ward.

The error made by the police was to use first person rather than third person: quite simply the author/s lacked the literary skills to create a convincing first person narrative in the voice of another person. If Ward was the author, he knew very well

that the sentences in his narrative were not genuine first person sentences spoken by Christensen. Since those sentences are invented, it follows that they are falsely attributed with the result that there is no evidence that Christensen said anything about Montevideo. Since both the story and the attribution in the police papers are false, it follows that there are no grounds for considering Christensen to be a secondary suspect for the invention of the Montevideo story. The Metropolitan Police is the prime and only suspect.

One commentator on this episode has claimed that Christensen refused to sign the alleged statement. This is false. Christensen was not asked to sign any statement because no statement was presented to him at the interview and the report does not record any such presentation and refusal. The alleged statement was typed in Scotland Yard and was never seen by Christensen in Philadelphia. It is, therefore, not a statement and is evidentially worthless.

In order to locate the origin of the Montevideo story, the following must be considered. There is an unsigned and undated document in Casement's handwriting in NLI among the Dr .Charles Curry Papers (Ms. 17,023). This consists of two pages, the second containing only a few lines. Here is the complete text.

“When I first met Sir Roger Casement I am sure he never thought he would ever again meet the Norwegian sailor he had helped, as he has surely helped many others who were in similar trouble.

I had run away from my ship at a South American port, as many sailors do and after wandering around for a bit I got so hungry and tired that I did not know where to turn.

I could not go to the Norwegian Consul for I was a deserter and liable as such to punishment and I had no claim on any other Consulate.

But I wanted to get to work again and so I thought I would try the British Consulate, where there are always many sailors

engaged and wanted. I had no discharge papers from my last ship and so they would not take me.”

From the narrative tone and verbal economy this appears to be the start of a projected press article to be published under Christensen’s name as his own account of events and Casement probably intended it to include details of the Findlay episode. There is, however, no evidence that it was ever completed or published and the pages, along with other papers, were entrusted to Dr. Charles Curry in Germany until they were deposited in NLI.

Since the proposed article remained unfinished in Germany, it remained unknown to British Intelligence. Nonetheless, two essential aspects in those pages appeared in Ward’s report of June 1916: Christensen jumping ship in a South American port city and then meeting Casement.

There is only one explanation of how these aspects reappeared in the false Montevideo story. Christensen himself answered Ward’s question about how and when he had first encountered Casement. This would be a very reasonable opening question in such an interview and it is unthinkable that Ward did not ask. And Christensen’s ingenuous response corresponded to the basic content of the incomplete article. Thus in 1916 the police and then MI5 learned that Christensen had met Casement long before the already known meeting on Broadway in 1914. And from this hitherto unknown information the Montevideo story was fabricated. The police report omitted the original reference to the British consulate.

The un-named port could be Santos or Rio de Janeiro or Pará. Casement was in Santos from October 1906 to June 1907. He was in Pará from March 1908 to November 1908 and in Rio from March 1909 to March 1910. All were busy ports. If the ten year period is correct, the encounter took place in Santos sometime between mid October 1906 and the end of June 1907.

From the text of the incomplete article it can be understood

that Casement helped Christensen in some practical way. As a consul Casement often helped people in difficulty and since his three postings in Brazil were in busy port cities, those in difficulty were frequently sailors. His correspondence from Santos complains of having to deal with sailors: "... an impossible task as the men get drunk and come ashore and desert in shoals and the place is a pandemonium" (Letter to Mary Hutton, 24 October, 1906, NLI Ms. 8612).

Christensen later recalled the earlier meeting because, though he was not a British subject, Casement, a stranger, had helped him. And exactly because "he has surely helped many others who were in similar trouble", Casement had forgotten the encounter after so many years. Therefore the 1914 meeting in NY would be a coincidence for Christensen but not for Casement.

As an example of manufactured evidence, the Montevideo story did not strictly require the link to von Nordenflycht. The FO knew that the German diplomat had been based in Montevideo and that Casement was a friend from 1909 onwards. Ward (or his CID colleagues) took a risk in choosing Montevideo only because Nordenflycht had been posted there in the years just before the war.

Professor Andrew knows better than ordinary mortals that the *raison d'être* of Secret Services is secrecy and deception. It is unthinkable that he, an expert on Intelligence, genuinely believes in the veracity of the alleged statement which is unsigned and without probative value. Perhaps he felt that pretending to believe it was a risk worth taking. After all, *audacter calumniare, semper aliquid haerat* \*. We must therefore thank him for revealing it and by so doing, unwittingly exposing police duplicity in yet one more example of manufactured evidence.

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\* 'Slander boldly, something always sticks' — Francis Bacon

The Philadelphia Exercise, although hopelessly incompetent and bungled, is nevertheless yet another clear example that both police and Intelligence services were prepared to manufacture evidence in their frenzied determination to destroy Casement before the trial. However, the deeper significance of this manufactured evidence emerges only if we ask why the police fabricated the evidence when they allegedly held the Diaries which made such elaborate fabrication utterly unnecessary. From this it follows that the need to fabricate reveals itself as evidence of the falsity of the Diaries.

## Appendix

Alfred Ward was a highly-regarded detective, having solved several high profile crimes and reaching the rank of Chief Detective Inspector. He joined the police at age 21 on 27 December 1887 (Warrant number 73106), and served for 29 years until he was killed in a Zeppelin raid on 25 September 1916.

Ward travelled from Liverpool with PS Brewer on the S.S. Cameronia of the Anchor-Cunard Line, arriving in NY on 22 May. His passenger ID was 610144120113.

It is an indication of the priority given to the prosecution of Casement that two police officers were sent on a dangerous two-week round trip across the Atlantic in wartime without even the certainty of meeting Christensen. That the SS Cameronia was sunk by a U-boat in April 1917 is evidence of the danger.

In the event, Ward returned from Philadelphia with little of use to the DPP and most of it already known to MI5.

*Irish Political Review, January 2020*

## *A Suitable Case For Treatment*

Evidence shows that Casement's barrister  
A. M. Sullivan KC plotted to betray him

### **A Tyranny Of Crime**

In May 1922, the RIC Head Constable in Cavan, Andrew Jackson, received a letter from an outspoken Unionist supporter. The writer lamented the imminent disbandment of the paramilitary RIC in the newly founded Free State, to which he was implacably opposed. The writer's hostility was expressed unambiguously: he observed that the RIC "can no longer protect their Country against the bully and the brute...", and stated that the new disposition was "...a cringing submission to a degrading tyranny of crime...". The RIC had fought "...a battle against Paganism...", for "...the vindication of Christian civilisation against savagery..."

Anti-republican animosity was not surprising amongst embittered Unionists at the time, although the writer's vitriolic language betrays an emotional instability rather than political disillusionment. But what is surprising is that the writer of this letter was A. M. Sullivan KC, the barrister who led for the Defence in Casement's trial. (1)

### **Collusion**

Sullivan has long been a problematic figure in the Casement controversy not only for his intemperate language, his contradictory statements, his improbable allegations, his marked abhorrence for Casement and republicanism (2), but also for his suspect behaviour before and during the trial. His published allegations about Casement are still today considered by some to be evidence for the authenticity of diaries which he never saw. Several public figures have defended as true Sullivan's allegations that Casement had personally acknowledged authorship to him.

It is now difficult to imagine a less suitable Defence barrister for Casement than Serjeant Sullivan, who loathed everything Casement represented and who regretted that the trial was not held in Ireland so he himself could prosecute Casement. His motive for accepting the brief from Gavan Duffy was principally his ambition to enter the English Bar and secondly his substantial fee. (3)

Casement's technical defence was constructed for Sullivan by Professor J.H. Morgan, a prominent legal historian, expert in constitutional law and a friend of Casement. In essence the Defence was that no treason had been committed in England or in the colonies or dominions; therefore the ancient statute of 1351 did not apply. Casement preferred a political defence which explained and justified his actions, but he submitted against his judgment to the advice of lawyers and friends. In the event, the technical defence was rejected by the judges by the invention of an imaginary comma.

But, unknown to Casement's other lawyers, Sullivan had an alternative Defence in reserve. In mid-May 1916, at the preliminary hearing, the junior of Prosecuting Counsel F.E. Smith gave the police typescripts to Defence Counsel Artemus Jones, along with a verbal message from Smith which proposed they collude with a joint plea of guilty but insane; in the following weeks Smith persistently urged Sullivan's collusion. The insanity plea was to be based on production of the diaries or police typescripts in evidence. Only in 1918 did Smith's motive become clear when, at a lunch shortly after the Armistice, he admitted to Morgan that he had been aware of the legal potential of the technical defence.

“You had a good point but if I had given my fiat and the Lords had quashed the conviction on such a technicality, feeling against Casement was so strong it might have brought the Government down” (4)

Smith's refusal of an appeal to the Lords was political

expediency; Casement's life was sacrificed to save the Government and thus Smith himself.

## Madness & Mendacity

In 1947 the Bureau of Military History began to gather Witness Statements from those involved directly or otherwise in the independence struggle. In 1949 Sullivan was invited by Mr. Brennan of the Bureau to make a statement concerning his role in the 1916 trial. This statement (WS 253) contains his first written reference to the scandal:

"The second matter that troubled him [Casement] was the fear that the prosecution would introduce, in the trial, the deplorable entries in his Diary. In fact, the Attorney General sent me a number of messages asking me to inspect the Diary... Sir Travers Humphreys... handed me a full copy of the Diary on the morning of the trial. I did not read it but passed it to one of my juniors."

Sullivan's statement is typed but not signed or witnessed. It opens by saying he cannot write and is relying on an unidentified person to "write" for him; no explanation is given as to why he cannot write. An internal Bureau memo of May 1949 states: "In the opinion of the Director, the letter dated 23rd May, 1949 received from Mr. Serjeant A.M. Sullivan K.C. ...regarding the trial of the late Roger Casement is of little value".

Sullivan's letter was kept on record while futile attempts were made to obtain his signature. After some two years of refusal, these attempts were abandoned. All Witness Statements were confidential and were not to be made public for fifty years. The files were opened only in 2003. Sullivan's typed, unsigned allegation, which remained deniable in his lifetime and secret for 54 years, has nonetheless been accepted by some public figures as true.

By 1951 both witnesses at Sullivan's only meetings with Casement in Brixton, Duffy and Jones, were dead. In 1952 Sullivan published *The Last Serjeant*, and made public for the first time his controversial and highly improbable allegations

about Casement. On page 271 he confirms receiving “the envelope” containing the typescripts on 26th June, which he passed to Jones, his junior, without reading them. He adds that he had enough to do “without the strain of perusing this dreadful document of which I knew quite enough”. That he considered the document dreadful without reading it means he had been informed of its scandalous contents.

Both Jones and Smith had read the typescripts. It was impossible for Sullivan not to be aware, since Jones had offered him the typescripts upon his arrival in London—along with Smith’s verbal message concerning a plea of Guilty but Insane. And Smith had contacted him about the Diaries long before his arrival in London. But his 1949 Statement reveals that he had already decided to attribute his knowledge of ‘the dreadful document’ to Casement rather than to Smith, alluding to: “[Casement’s] fear that the prosecution would introduce... the deplorable entries in his Diary”. (5)

And more was to come. In a letter to René MacColl of 12th January 1954 he wrote

“I refused to read it as I knew all about it from Casement himself ... [he] instructed me to explain to the Jury that the filthy practices and the rhapsodical glorification of them were inseparable from genius ...”

In June 1954 Sullivan gave a two-hour interview to Dr. Mackey, Chairman of The Casement Repatriation Committee, which included his opinion of Casement: “... a liar, a rogue, a paid spy, a sex maniac, a traitor and a murderer. Hanging was too good for Casement”. Then, interviewed by MacColl in November 1954, he referred to F.E. Smith:

“Freddie Smith did his best to get me to plead guilty but insane, but I refused to have anything to do with the diaries ... Smith wrote to me and wired me ... to persuade me to go over and inspect the diaries. But I could not persuade Casement himself that these documents would never appear in evidence ... There is no doubt whatever about the genuineness of the perverted diaries”. (6)

## FACTS:

- a. Sullivan met Casement only twice on 12th and 24th June;
- b. at both meetings in Brixton, Duffy was present; Jones was present on 24th June; neither refer to any conversation about diaries or scandal at those meetings;
- c. in 1954, when Sullivan published his claim above, both Duffy and Jones were dead.
- d. The four defence lawyers Duffy, Jones, Doyle and Morgan had many more meetings with Casement but none reported anything to corroborate Sullivan's later allegations.

*The Irish Times* review of MacColl's book on 7th April 1956 provoked two leading barristers. They demanded Sullivan show Casement's written consent for the scandalous allegations. Sullivan replied that no consent was needed, adding

“On reflection, I perceive that he neither affirmed nor denied authenticity”. (7)

Further press letters appeared from Senator McHugh, MacColl, Dr. Mackey, and Shane Leslie. Later 34 members of the Irish Bar requested that Sullivan be struck off on grounds of “gross and dishonourable professional conduct”. After being censured, he resigned.

Sullivan's published statements are here listed in chronological order to expose their incoherence and contradiction.

1 - “The second matter that troubled him [Casement] was the fear that the prosecution would introduce, in the trial, the deplorable entries in his Diary.”

BMH unsigned Witness Statement 253, May, 1949.

2 - “... without the strain of perusing this dreadful document of which I knew quite enough.”

*The Last Serjeant*, 1952.

3 - “I refused to read it as I knew all about it from Casement himself ... [he] instructed me to explain to the Jury that the filthy practices and the rhapsodical glorification of them were inseparable from genius ... ”

12 January, 1954. Letter to MacColl.

4 - “I could not persuade Casement himself that these documents would never appear in evidence ... There is no doubt whatever about the genuineness of the perverted diaries.”

16 November, 1954. Interview with MacColl.

5 - “He talked more about the diaries than about anything else ... He discussed them on the basis that he had written them.”

15 February, 1956. Interview with Robert Kee.(8)

6 - “On reflection, I perceive that he neither affirmed nor denied authenticity.”

21 April, 1956. *Irish Times*.

7 - “ ...he was extremely anxious that this mission should be carried out whenever the fact of the diaries was revealed.”

26 April, 1956. *Irish Times*.

8 - “He told me nothing about the diaries or about himself...”

26 April, 1956. *Irish Times*.

9 - “Casement never suggested there was anything wrong with them.”

8 September, 1957. *Sunday Press*.

10 - “It is near falsehood to suggest that Casement told to his solicitor... that he was not the author of the indecent entries”

8 September, 1957. *Sunday Press*.

11 - “Casement told us nothing about the diaries or about himself.”

25 September, 1957. *Sunday Press*.

12 - “He certainly denied again and again that he had written anything indecent.”

25 September, 1957. *Sunday Press*.

## Darkness fell ... I crashed

Suddenly on day 3 Sullivan ended his role in the trial. In his 1927 memoir *Old Ireland* he wrote:

“Half-an-hour before the crash came, I believed that I was dying. Then it appeared to me that I commenced to rave. I implored my junior to ask for an adjournment... I was assured that I was in perfect trim and was urged to go on—again and again. I looked for the clock—it had disappeared—the jury faded away and still I raved on—the Lord Chief Justice commenced to recede down an infinite vista, until he was a pin point—then darkness fell and I crashed.”

And as late as October, 1955, Sullivan wrote to MacColl:

“... worrying... caused me to break down and fall senseless”(9)

But it is a fact that he did not *‘fall senseless’*. Those who observed this alleged ‘collapse’ report simply that Sullivan seemed confused but clearly announced to the judges that he had “broken down”, and, as *The Times* reported, “He then sank to his seat and rested his head on his hands.”

He did not collapse or fall or lose consciousness; no medical help was called and, upon adjournment, he left the court on his own feet.

Jones, his Junior, does not report being *“implored to ask for an adjournment”*. Court transcripts do not show that he *“commenced to rave”* for half an hour, nor would the judges have permitted him to rave for so long. His melodramatic descriptions above can only be intended to conceal that his ‘collapse’ was feigned so that he could abandon the trial as a lost cause.

Sullivan’s descriptions of his withdrawal present it as evidence of heroic endeavour by a man who had attempted the impossible. Within days, Sullivan wrote what all commentators consider to be an abject and sycophantic letter of apology, *not to Lord Chief Justice Isaacs but to Smith.* (10)

## Plot to betray Casement

There are indications that Sullivan had indeed secretly agreed with Smith to plead guilty but insane. Some details of this plot appear in Herbert Mackey's 1962 book *The forged Casement diaries*. (11) However, Mackey provided no corroborating sources and it follows that the confirmation of a plot rests upon the quality of the circumstantial evidence.

Mackey left extensive papers with his family in 1966, which remained unseen until this author accessed them with the consent of his family. (12) Mackey relates in his book that, on the second day of the trial, during an interval, Travers Humphreys, Smith's Junior Counsel, revealed to Casement's legal adviser, Professor J.H. Morgan, the agreed plan to change the pleadings.

Morgan confronted Sullivan, who denied any such plan and then signed a paper to that effect which Morgan showed to Smith. Thus the plot was foiled.

Mackey also states that Sullivan's 'collapse' was staged as a way of abandoning that projected Defence. There is substantial evidence above to support this assertion.

Further, it can be wholly confirmed from the Duffy Papers in the National Library of Ireland that, as Mackey states, Sullivan, despite his "*fall senseless*", was fit enough to travel alone to Dublin as soon as the trial closed, and that his fee cheque arrived at his Dublin address at the same time. External corroboration for Mackey's reference to Smith's motive for refusing an appeal to the Lords is found in Note 4 below.

It is confirmed that Mackey was in contact with Gertrude Parry for many years in their joint endeavours on The Casement Repatriation Committee, which Mackey chaired after her death in 1950. Among his papers there are clear indications that Gertrude Parry (present throughout the trial) was told at the time by Morgan of the plot, and it is reasonable to infer that Mackey later heard the details directly from her.

Two aspects must be evaluated: firstly, it is undisputed that

Smith urged Sullivan to plead guilty but insane; secondly, there is nothing improbable about such a plot agreed between Smith and Sullivan. All the circumstantial evidence supports Mackey's statement, while the absence of documentary corroboration is insufficient to dismiss it.

#### FACTS in circumstantial evidence:

- 1 - Sullivan's repeated and revealing claim that "Smith was savage at me" for not using the diaries;
- 2 - his apologetic letter to Smith after the trial;
- 3 - Sullivan's confirmation that Smith before the trial requested his entry to the English Bar as K.C. (13);
- 4 - that in 1919 Smith, then Lord Chancellor, raised him to K.C.;
- 5 - Sullivan's many dishonest public statements as listed above.

It must be admitted that Mackey's research lacked both rigour and impartiality and his failure to cite sources is unforgiveable. But, while there is evidence of errors and of excesses, there is no evidence of dishonesty.

### Death Better Than Dishonour

The key which exposes the full extent of Sullivan's Iago-like duplicity is found in his MacColl interview, where Sullivan explained why he excluded the 'diaries' as evidence. "I did not give Casement any option in the matter... I finally decided that death was better than besmirching and dishonour".

The former sentence is another implicature which, although true, suggests the option was discussed when in fact it was not. While claiming to have defended Casement's honour before his death, he proceeded to slander him as pervert, traitor and megalomaniac after his death; years later Sullivan seldom missed an opportunity to dishonour the dead man whose betrayal had escaped him. A lawyer who publicly maligns his former client has no sense of honour.

Sullivan's duplicity and treachery were premeditated and derived from a hatred which, when prolonged and deep-rooted, is symptomatic of mental illness. There is abundant evidence above to support the contention that Sullivan was for much of his life so emotionally unbalanced as to be pathologically disturbed and thus was a suitable case for treatment. It might be that those public figures who still trust his pernicious lies would benefit from the same treatment. Sullivan died on 9th January, 1959 without ever having seen the Black Diaries.

## Notes

1 - Sullivan's 1922 letter was found only in 2002 by a descendant of the original recipient. It was sent to the Northern Ireland Police Federation and featured in an article, *History Repeats Itself* by barrister John Hunter, in the Federation magazine, *Police Beat* of October 2002 and in an *Irish News* article of 17 October, 2002.

2 - Sullivan's political sentiments were well known in Ireland before 1916 and they made him few friends after 1916. By 1920 he was "an armed civilian", in fear of the indiscriminate violence of the Black & Tans and the Auxiliaries, and of the hostility of the IRA. In 1920 the latter made two attempts on his life and he left Ireland soon afterwards to start a lucrative career in London.

3 - Casement's solicitor, George Gavan Duffy, was unable to find any barrister willing undertake the defence. Sullivan, his brother in law, was a barrister and Crown Prosecutor in Ireland, whose ambition to enter the English Bar was known to Duffy. Duffy's colleagues in his London legal practice obliged him to resign over his defence of Casement.

4 - Smith's comment was published in *The Daily Telegraph* of 9th August 1957 in an article entitled *Two Cases Of Treason* by R. Barry O'Brien, literary executor of Professor Morgan.

5 - Letter, 21 April, 1956, *The Irish Times*. As with a number of Sullivan's published statements, this sentence is negatively predicated, which classes it as an impudicature. It appears to confirm a real event in which a specific thing did not happen. The implied event is a discussion referring to the diaries and in that discussion there was neither affirmation or denial of authenticity. The existence of the discussion is thus asserted by what was not discussed rather than by what was discussed. Paradoxically the sentence is true but its truth derives from the non-existence of any discussion.

6 - Sullivan's claim that he heard of the diaries scandal from Casement is easily disproved. He met Casement for the first time on 12th June in Brixton. Before that date he had already heard of the scandal from three separate persons: Attorney General F. E. Smith, Director of Public Prosecutions Charles Mathews, and junior Defence Counsel Artemus Jones. Smith was in contact with Sullivan from around mid-May, urging his collusion on the grounds of alleged insanity manifest in the police typescripts. It is no more credible that Sullivan totally ignored Smith's several communications by not responding, than it is credible that Smith did not refer to the scandalous contents. Nor is it credible that Jones, who had read the typescripts in May, did not refer to the contents when he offered these to Sullivan in early June. It is more than probable that the DPP contacted Sullivan before 12th June to support Smith's collusion proposal with a false explanation of how the diaries had been obtained. It is not remotely credible that these three persons kept silent about the scandal for almost a month and that it was Casement who revealed it to Sullivan on 12th June in the presence of Duffy.

7 - Sullivan letter in *The Irish Times*, 21 April, 1956.

8 - Robert Kee refers to his interview in February 1956 with Sullivan in *Ourselves Alone* (vol 3 of *The Green Flag*, 1972). Kee reports Sullivan telling him yet another version of the diaries' provenance. According to Sullivan, the DPP had informed him in 1916 that the diaries had been stolen from Casement by Christensen on the 1914 trip to Oslo and later sold to the British authorities. This would be the seventh version of provenance.

9 - Sullivan claimed later that he had been suffering from anemia of the brain due to stress during the trial and had risked his mental health by undertaking the appeal in July. The most common cause of this condition is iron deficiency which is treated with vitamin supplements. Brain anemia is not caused by mental stress.

10 - If Sullivan felt an apology to the court was appropriate, he ought to have been addressed his letter to the chief law officer of the court, Lord Chief Justice Isaacs. That he addressed his apology to Smith indicates that he recognised he had offended Smith; the only possible offence was his breach of the secret agreement between them which he feared had put at risk his entry to the English Bar.

11 - *Roger Casement; The Secret History Of The Forged Diaries*, Herbert O. Mackey, Apollo Press, 1962. pp. 103-104.

12 —The author thanks Deirdre Mackey for access to her grandfather's papers.

13 - Brian Inglis describes Sullivan's entry to the English Bar as "his reward" without specifying why he was rewarded.

## *Significant ‘Errors’*

For many decades Roger Sawyer has been a leading proponent for the authenticity of the Black Diaries. He is the author of two books, a biography, *Casement, The Flawed Hero*, 1984, and a study of the two 1910 diaries, *The Black and the White*, 1997 along with several articles and broadcasts.

Clement King Shorter (1857-1926) was founder and Editor of the influential illustrated weekly newspaper, *The Sphere*, to which he contributed literary articles. He was a noted collector of literary memorabilia and was on good terms with prominent literary people of the period. When Casement was sentenced to death on 29th June 1916, Shorter, along with Conan Doyle, set about organising one of the many petitions for his reprieve. In July 1916 Shorter was invited to Scotland Yard by CID chief Basil Thomson who showed him unidentified handwritten matter, purportedly by Casement, with hopes of convincing him that the condemned man did not deserve a reprieve. Shorter was unconvinced by what Thomson showed him and continued with the petition which, by 21st July, had gathered 48 prominent signatories.

In his 1984 biography Roger Sawyer comments on this event in Scotland Yard as follows:

“Among these was Clement Shorter who, as editor of *The Sphere*, was present when Hall first showed photographs of selected pages to a number of English and American journalists whom he invited to the Admiralty. At a later date, Shorter was shown the originals at Scotland Yard by Basil Thomson and was prompted to declare that the handwriting bore not the faintest resemblance to Casement’s” (pp 140).

Sawyer gives no source for his claim that Shorter was shown “*the originals*”, or for any such declaration. Since these assertions do not

appear anywhere else in Casement literature, they are perhaps ‘errors’.

Some years after this event in Scotland Yard, Shorter prepared a pamphlet for private printing, with the co-operation of Bernard Shaw. In February 1922, a collectors’ edition of 25 copies was printed with the title, ‘*A Discarded Defence of Roger Casement*’. The pamphlet contained the text of Shaw’s proposed defence—with which Casement had agreed, but which his defence lawyer A.M. Sullivan had rejected out of hand.

§

On 20th June 1956 the following letter appeared in *The Irish Times*. The original punctuation is here retained:

“Sir. – In the British Museum there is a pamphlet, privately printed in February, 1922, and entitled “A Discarded Defence of Roger Casement.”

This was the draft defence against the charge of treason which George Bernard Shaw sent to Roger Casement in 1916, and on which Casement wrote his own comments. These comments are printed in the appendix of the pamphlet and a footnote to them says: “These notes are in Roger Casement’s handwriting, which does not tally with the handwriting of the notorious ‘diaries’ shown to me at Scotland Yard by Sir Basil Thomson.”

Presumably this footnote was supplied either by Shaw himself, who contributed an introduction to the pamphlet, or by Clement Shorter, who prepared it for publication. Yours, etc.,

Roger McHugh

Seanad Eireann

June 20th, 1956”

Only two days later, on 22nd June 1956, a brief article appeared in *The Spectator* under the pseudonym Pharos (1). This reported the content of McHugh’s letter and cited the following sentence which is reproduced below as punctuated in *The Spectator*:

“These notes are in Roger Casement’s handwriting, which does not tally with the handwriting of the notorious diaries shown to me at Scotland Yard by Sir Basil Thomson.”

Shorter's 1922 pamphlet in the British Library contains that sentence printed thus, as punctuated in the pamphlet:

“These notes are in Roger Casement’s handwriting, which does not tally with the handwriting of the notorious "diaries" shown to me at Scotland Yard by Sir Basil Thomson.”

In the 1922 pamphlet the word *diaries* is enclosed in double inverted commas. In McHugh’s letter in *The Irish Times* that word is enclosed in single inverted commas. In *The Spectator* article that word is printed without inverted commas.

What has to be first determined is the reason why Sawyer fails to cite a source for his assertion that Shorter was shown ‘the originals’. The source can only be any or all of the three publications which had been seen by tens of thousands of readers: *The Irish Times*, *The Spectator* and the 1922 pamphlet. It is therefore strange that Sawyer does not cite a source which is already in the public domain. This failure must be counted as a very significant ‘error’.

*The Spectator*’s apparently innocuous elimination of the inverted commas printed in the original pamphlet might help to throw some light on why Sawyer failed to cite a source for his assertion. The *Spectator* article cites the 1922 pamphlet, where Shorter printed the word *diaries* in inverted commas to indicate a reserved meaning for that word (2). It is obvious that, by citing *The Spectator* as his source, Sawyer would also have led his readers to the 1922 pamphlet, where astute readers would have noted that the word “*diaries*” carried a reserved meaning. Since *The Spectator* was not cited as a source, readers could not know of the reserved meaning in the original pamphlet.

It is unthinkable that Sawyer failed to inspect the original 1922 pamphlet in the British Library. And it is unthinkable that he failed to note the inverted commas which indicate a reserved meaning. Such failures would be serious ‘errors’ indeed.

In the sentence immediately following his claim that Shorter saw the originals in Scotland Yard, Sawyer writes:

“The original rolled manuscript shown to the Associated Press representative... was later found to have been twenty-two pages torn out of the 1903 diary.”

This is strange and Sawyer is the only author to make this claim (3). He does not say when this was discovered or who discovered it or how he alone learned of this. But perhaps this was an oversight, yet another ‘error’.

It is even stranger since both the rolled manuscript and the twenty-two pages have long disappeared and Sawyer has never seen them.

Here Sawyer has made a very significant ‘error’ because his claim is demonstrably false, as noted on page 153 of *Anatomy of a lie*. As confirmed in *The Giles Report* of 2002, the pages of the 1903 diary measure 90mm x 150 mm; journalist Ben Allen testified that the pages shown to him by Hall were of almost legal size, 216mm x 356 mm, were buff coloured; and torn at the top. Thus the latter pages were around 5.7 times larger than the diary pages.

It is unthinkable that Sawyer failed to ever personally examine the 1903 Black Diary. It is equally unthinkable that he failed to ever read the sworn statement made by Ben Allen, which is now in the NLI. Such failures would yet again be serious ‘errors’ indeed.

It is a fact that Sawyer bonded this unverifiable claim about the pages to his Shorter account. This might be a remarkable ‘coincidence’ but that coincidental proximity makes the unverifiable claim an essential part of a single claim, which acts to offset any suspicion that Shorter was shown the same roll of papers which Allen saw in May.

Despite the offer being repeated several times by Hall, Allen was never offered the bound volumes now at Kew. No doubt

Allen was not the only journalist to see these papers, although it seems that Hall wished to favour him with an exclusive. It cannot be excluded that this roll of handwritten papers was the diary materials shown to Shorter in July and which caused him to enclose the word *diaries* in double inverted commas.

There are good reasons for excluding that the roll of handwritten papers shown to Allen in May 1916 was a genuine Casement diary. The main reason is that Allen was not allowed to verify the pages with Casement, which procedure was a standard condition for publication. Another reason is that these unidentified pages have never been seen since 1916; they are presumed destroyed. Therefore, the authorities first produced and showed this evidence against Casement and then the authorities destroyed their own evidence. Such destruction of evidence is only explicable if the papers were not written by Casement. No other rational motive can be proposed. A third reason is that this mysterious roll of papers does not appear in any of the police lists of possessions allegedly found in Casement's luggage.

Whatever Shorter was shown purported to be the notorious diaries and he naturally expected to see conventional diaries of the type purchased and used by the vast majority of people. The use of inverted commas indicates that his expectation was not satisfied and he did not see conventional diaries. But the diaries at Kew are indeed conventional diaries mass produced for consumers.

There are strong grounds for interpreting the inverted commas as a signal that the materials seen were improvised diaries in some form, rather than bound volumes. And most probably Shorter was shown the mysterious roll of papers. This is the most credible explanation of his motive for using inverted commas for the word diaries.

This event represents yet another occasion when the bound diaries might have been shown to an independent witness but were not shown.

In this instance the non-showing was performed by Thomson himself and it was done in Scotland Yard where he allegedly held the bound diaries. Rather than show the volumes allegedly in his custody, Thomson showed something else to Shorter whom he had invited. There can be only one explanation for Thomson's failure to produce the bound diaries, only one explanation which satisfies reason and common sense. The compromising diaries which are now held in the UK National Archives could not be shown on the day of Shorter's visit in July 1916 because they did not exist.

The published claim that Shorter was shown the bound diaries at Scotland Yard rests upon a cluster of 'errors' which, by definition, cannot constitute evidence. Therefore there is no evidence that Shorter was shown the bound diaries. This fact adds to the absence of witness evidence for the existence of the Black Diaries in 1916.

The multiple 'errors' made by Sawyer must be considered as significant 'errors'. Such 'errors' are by definition unintentional only when caused by a cognitive bias of which one is unconscious. It follows that if the 'errors' are intentional, they are not true errors and therefore they belong to a distinct category. Readers can determine for themselves the significance of these 'errors'.

## Notes

1 - There are grounds for believing that Pharos was a pseudonym used by René MacColl who published a hostile biography in 1956 called *Roger Casement: A New Judgment*.

2 - Reserved meaning: inverted commas used to indicate the word does not carry its usual meaning. Example; Not surprised he couldn't find it in his "filing system".

3 – Inglis claims (*Roger Casement*, 1974, p. 66) that the 1903 diary pages were torn out in 1916 and shown to journalists. No source is given. He does not mention the rolled manuscript pages shown to Ben Allen.

## *Insider Knowledge*

“Everything secret degenerates ... nothing is safe that does not show how it can bear discussion and publicity”, Lord Acton

1

On 10th January, 1966, President De Valera received an envelope postmarked Hampstead, London. The typed letter within was read to him by his secretary, Máire Ni Cheallaigh, since De Valera was at age 84 almost blind. The writer was a freelance photographer whom De Valera had met some nine months earlier on the historic occasion of the state funeral for Roger Casement. His name was Kevin MacDonnell, a native of Mayo, who wrote as follows:

“I was informed by an ex-British Naval Intelligence source, whose name I cannot reveal, that the Casement Diaries were fabricated by his chief, Admiral Hall. He has had the matter on his conscience ever since and though he has great respect for Hall in all other ways he feels this was an evil piece of work.

I feel you should be the first person to be given this information. I will never forget your kindness and hospitality when I came across last year with Mr Angeloglou, the Picture Editor of The Sunday Times, to photograph you.”

De Valera responded on 18th January;

“With regard to the other matter, the important thing is to get some positive proof. Nothing else will suffice. I understand you intend visiting Dublin again soon ... I would like to see you.”

MacDonnell responded on 22nd January:

“Regarding the Diaries, I am trying hard to obtain names, dates, in short, proof, but my source of information fears

he has told me too much already. However, he may put me in touch with other people who worked with Hall and they may be willing to talk. I shall be in Dublin on the 27th, 28th and 29th of this month ... and I hope you will be able to see me ..."'

Attached to that letter in De Valera's file is an A4 page with the following typewritten:

"Casement's Diaries. Commander Clipperton – special friend of journalist Kevin McDonald – can give information. He worked under Hall."

Since De Valera could not type, the spelling error of McDonald for MacDonnell is probably a mishearing by his secretary in dictation. At the top of the letter from MacDonnell the words "Commander Clipperton" are handwritten in what might be a woman's hand. From these facts, it is reasonable to infer that MacDonnell did meet De Valera and revealed the name Clipperton to him at that meeting. It cannot be determined if De Valera made further enquiries or if he requested such enquiries. (1)

On 17th January MacDonnell had dispatched another letter to a close friend in Dublin, Padraig Ó Snodaigh. He explained how, on a visit to a friend's weekend house on the Sussex coast, he had met a neighbour there, an elderly retired naval officer, Commander Clipperton.

"Obviously a bit lonely, he drops in now and then, usually without phoning first, to have a beer and talk endlessly about his days in the Navy. Most people look on him as a deadly bore, but I am fascinated by the animal brutality of life in the Navy even as late as the twenties and thirties as revealed by him. He really has been all over the place and knows a hell of a lot.

"In the course of conversation with Sheila and I the subject of Ireland cropped up. "I worked at one time with Admiral Hall" he said. "He was a very clever man indeed. Brilliant. But he was unscrupulous. Though in many ways I admired

him, he shouldn't have fixed Casement in the way he did. He fabricated the Diaries, you know, and that was an evil thing to do." I expressed mild surprise and he said "Yes, he did it. Just a few of us knew about it. But do you know, it was a very funny thing, much later on in the last war Intelligence put me on the job of bringing a charge against Hall's son who was mixed up with a group of other young officers——." He went on to tell us how he tapped the phones, etc, and how Hall's son was killed in a raid just before charges could be brought."

MacDonnell's letter does not say when this conversation took place but the content suggests sometime in 1965 and very probably the 'subject of Ireland' was in fact the State Funeral of Casement on March 1st that year in Dublin. The repatriation of his remains had received wide press coverage in both England and Ireland. MacDonnell confirms in a letter written 30 years later that, "The name Roger Casement cropped up in the course of casual conversation." It is reasonable to infer that it was this recent historic event which focused Clipperton on Hall that day in 1965.

The letter to Ó Snodaigh then reports that, when Clipperton realised MacDonnell had press connections and was Irish, he "became very agitated indeed", and declared that he had said too much. MacDonnell wrote that he had not seen Clipperton since that conversation. Later MacDonnell's friend who owned the weekend house told him that Clipperton had subsequently raised the matter with him and was very anxious that nothing should come of it. (2)

## 2

This writer has with considerable difficulty identified Commander Clipperton. Sydney Robert Clipperton was born on 28th December 1898 in Stalham, Norfolk, the youngest son of Robert John Clipperton, a police officer who rose to the rank of Inspector with the Norfolk Police. Young Sydney joined the

Royal Navy in 1914 at age 16 and served some twenty-four years until his retirement from the Navy in 1938. On the outbreak of WW2, he joined the Home Guard with the rank of major and in 1940 married Evelyn M. King in Kent.

By 1958 Clipperton had retired and taken up residence with his wife in Fairlight, near Hastings on the Sussex coast. Photographs show a substantial detached house built in the 1920s in its own grounds; the address is The Thatch, Cliff End, Pett Level Road, Fairlight, near Hastings. It was a residential area close to the coast, favoured by retired business people, ex-service personnel, and returned expats. Clipperton was listed in the East Sussex telephone directory of the period. He died in Hastings in October 1969 aged 71.

Clipperton's Navy record shows his service number as J.31169 and records him as "School boy" from May 1914. Unfortunately the official record seems incomplete and is very difficult to decipher and interpret. However, it is clear from his record that he was a telegraphist and that he was awarded two medals: the S. G. C. (?) and gratuity on 23.3.1932 and the Royal Victoria Medal (silver) on 1.11.1934. Among the ships he served on in the 1930s were HMS Canterbury, HMS Frobisher, HMS Sussex. (3) Evidence from two distinct sources confirms that he became a commander later in his career.

In the early decades of the 20th century radio-telegraphy was a 'hi-tech' profession in both military and commercial contexts. It required above average intelligence and was accordingly highly paid. Indeed, Navy telegraphists were petty officers and enjoyed various privileges. It also required considerable discretion since they transmitted and received confidential and often top secret information.

The British were at the forefront of perceiving the vital importance of, and then developing, what became known as Signals Intelligence – SIGINT – especially in military and diplomatic contexts. The new communications technologies of

telegraphy and radio were vitally important and those trained specialists were an élite. During WW1 they were an essential asset.

In 1914, the very distinguished Sir Alfred Ewing who had scientific expertise in this field was recruited into Naval Intelligence by his friend Admiral Oliver. His remit was to establish an elaborate nationwide signal interception system and a decrypting unit in Admiralty Old Building. Thus Room 40 was born two months before the arrival of Captain Hall. (4)

The legend of Room 40 grew long after the War, during which it was a top secret operation. The legend is largely journalistic and is somewhat misleading. In fact, Room 40 refers to a number of offices within Admiralty Old Building which occupied several hundred employees. Forty-four year old Captain Hall (later Admiral) was Director of Naval Intelligence Division from October 1914 to 1919.

An eclectic group of mostly civilians was recruited to Ewing's decrypting operation. They included linguists, academics, lawyers and an actor, a wine merchant, a future clergyman and a stockbroker. Hall's deputy from 1917 was another naval man, Commander William James, who later became an admiral and much later Hall's biographer.

Hall was a remarkable man with a facility for "bold, unconventional" thinking. Charismatic and sociable, he was also an ingenious master of deception, a devout imperialist of "strong convictions", with a suitably uncomplicated moral mentality.

He was universally known as 'Blinker' Hall because of the intensity of his eye nictitation, which had a semi-hypnotic effect in conversation. He became a Conservative MP in 1919 and was the mastermind behind the 1924 forgery of the so-called Zinoviev letter, which purported to call on British communists to influence the Labour Party to sign a treaty with Russia. With industrial leaders, he founded the shadowy National Propaganda organisation which countered suspected Communism in British industry. (5)

Professor Eunan O'Halpin writes of Hall—

"Doubts about his reputation arise in three respects: his propensity to take unilateral initiatives on foot of diplomatic and political intelligence produced by Room 40; his frequent disinclination to place intelligence in the hands of those departments best placed to judge it; and his involvement while a post-war politician in anti-government intrigues drawing on his old intelligence connections. Like many able intelligence officers, he sometimes succumbed to the professional temptation of manipulating good intelligence in order to influence the decisions and actions of the government which he served". (6)

Hall was both a maverick and a Machiavelli, utterly fearless and determined in all he undertook. Admiral James, his biographer and former colleague, confirms the extent of Hall's influence:

"... a man whose name and fame spread to every seat of government in both hemispheres... a man to whom Cabinet Ministers turned when in difficulty..."; capable of "exercising a decisive influence on political affairs", including "affairs that were the sole concern of the Foreign Secretary".

What Admiral James calls "his unorthodox methods", and his constant personal control over information and secrets, made many apprehensive of him so that, upon his retirement in 1919, "Inside the Admiralty there were many who would not mourn his departure" (7).

Ruth Skrine, Hall's personal secretary, later wrote:

"the Machiavelli in him could be cruel, and the 'means' he used often 'justified the end' in many a battle he fought in the murky world of Intelligence."

Hall had friends in business and politics, in the press and in gentlemen's clubs, and he enjoyed access to the highest in political power, including the monarch. (8) Often described as a genius, his was a genius with a distinctly sinister cast. US Attaché Edward Bell said he was "a perfectly marvellous person

but the coldest-hearted proposition that ever was – he'd eat a man's heart out ...”

An anecdote related by Hall himself testifies to his ruthless audacity. Angered by a lenient sentence imposed on a captured German spy, Hall treacherously fed the judge's home address back to German Intelligence, alleging it was a military target. The house was bombed soon after, but the elderly judge survived and later innocently related his narrow escape at a dinner with Hall present. (9)

Hall was seen to be on the side of the angels but was not himself of their number. His determination to capture and destroy Casement was evident from 1914 onwards and was relentless. That he was deeply involved in the diaries scandal is confirmed by his biographer Admiral James:

“Though at that time there were not more than a dozen men who knew, or guessed, that Hall had circulated the Casement diary, they included men holding prominent positions who had sworn vengeance against him for making the disclosure.” (10)

Admiral James did not know that what was in fact shown (not circulated) were police typescripts allegedly copies of unseen diaries.

### 3

Some misunderstandings must be cleared up. Kevin MacDonnell was not as described in the De Valera papers, a journalist. He was a freelance photographer who worked for the press, not a reporter. Secondly, his description of Clipperton as a Naval Intelligence source is misleading. Clipperton did not serve with Naval Intelligence; he was a naval telegraphist, not an Intelligence Officer. Thirdly, the expression reported by MacDonnell that Clipperton “worked with Hall at one time” is misleading in as much as it suggests a close, regular working relationship. There is no documentary evidence for such a relationship between Hall and Clipperton. It is probable that,

in claiming this, Clipperton was enjoying some reflected glory in his retirement years. In the year of the diaries scandal, 1916, he was an eighteen-year old radio telegraphist.

Kevin MacDonnell was born in Mayo in 1919 but his family transferred to London in 1922. He was educated in England and became a well-known and successful freelance press photographer. He also wrote for many years regular articles on photography for the popular *Photography* magazine. He also worked in theatre photography and advertising, and in addition he published a number of photography books and manuals. He was known to be affable and was well liked. Further information on his personality and career can be found at [onlinedarkroom.blogspot.com/p/kevin-macdonnell](http://onlinedarkroom.blogspot.com/p/kevin-macdonnell).

There is strong evidence to show that in 1965 MacDonnell was not especially interested in the Casement controversy and was poorly informed. His letter to Ó Snodaigh indicates a superficial familiarity, gained from René MacColl's unsympathetic biography which was reissued as a mass market paperback in 1960 and again in 1965. (11)

Moreover, MacDonnell was not an admirer of Casement, writing of him: "He is not my favourite character and must have been a hell of a handicap to the revolution, poor devil." Indeed, MacDonnell's interest at that time was in Michael Collins, about whom it appears he had hoped to write a biography.

Although the Black Diaries had been available for inspection (with Home Office permission) since 1959, it is clear that after six years MacDonnell had not seen them or even requested to see them. He also seems unaware of Alfred Noyes' 1957 study *The Accusing Ghost*. (12) His antipathy towards Casement was inevitably coloured by his reading of MacColl's book and by the disturbing shadow of the diaries scandal upon a traditional practising Catholic. (13)

This evidence indicates that, in 1965, when he heard Clipperton's remarks about Hall and the Diaries, MacDonnell had minimal interest in Casement and felt uncertain and uneasy about him. (14)

In late February, 1998, Kevin MacDonnell—by then aged 78—took a number 24 bus from Hampstead into Central London. After a journey of just over an hour, he alighted in Pimlico and made his way to the house of historian Angus Mitchell, the Casement scholar who had recently edited *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*. In the Introduction to this book Mitchell had stated his conviction that the Black Diaries were forged. (15)

MacDonnell was talkative and affable and the meeting lasted about an hour, during which he related his encounter with Clipperton almost thirty-three years before. Mitchell was familiar with the names MacDonnell and Clipperton which he had earlier seen in the De Valera papers.

Some days later MacDonnell wrote to Mitchell to say that he had found, after a long search through old files, a notebook he had kept after meeting Clipperton in 1965. MacDonnell enclosed a typed copy of some notes from this notebook. This copy is an undated A4 page with the following text typed at the top:

“B. R. Clipperton, MVO, DSC, RA eventually commanded HMS Violent.” (16)

Below this header there is a list of Hall’s staff in two parts comprising his ‘assistants’ and his ‘helpers’, eighteen names in all. Curiously, some of these names are followed by familiar details: James Randall is described as “a wine merchant”; Ralph Nevill is described as “Club man”; H.B. Irving is described as “son of Henry”; Claude Serocold is described as “city man and yachtsman”.

Perhaps most significantly, Hall’s personal secretary Ruth Skrine is also referred to as ‘Mrs Hotblack’, her later name by marriage. These added details strongly indicate that the source of these names had personal experience of these people. MacDonnell wrote in his letter to Mitchell that he could no longer recall the source of this list but that he was sure it was not Clipperton. (17)

If the source of these eighteen names and details had known

the individuals personally, it could only be someone who had worked in the Room 40 operation since that operation was top secret and remained so for many years. And, since MacDonnell obtained the information copied to Mitchell after his encounter with Clipperton, he obtained it from a living source in 1965 or 1966. The principal living source at that time was Admiral William James, who had indeed worked with Hall and had at times deputised for him. In 1955 Admiral James published the only biography of Hall, *The Eyes Of The Navy*. (18)

All eighteen names cited in the list copy-typed by MacDonnell are mentioned in the James biography of Hall and many are cited with the details given in that list. This fact cannot be a coincidence if the term is to retain any semblance of meaning.

However, in the biography those names are cited randomly in the text whereas in the typed list, nine are categorised as '*assistants*' and nine as '*helpers*'. This distinction between two categories of those close to Hall cannot be derived from the biography. There can be no doubt that the source of MacDonnell's list was Admiral James himself and not his biography.

Having determined that James was the direct source of the information typed on that single page by MacDonnell, we have also determined that James was the source of the header referring to Clipperton and his medals and to his command of HMS Violent.

Research into the history of this ship confirms that it was launched in 1917 and was scrapped in 1937. In the period up to 1929, no less than twelve commanders were appointed and Clipperton does not appear in that list. Of these twelve commands, the first lasted only two weeks, another two lasted only four or five weeks, and another two lasted around four months.

This writer has attempted to find an explanation for such brief appointments. Research reveals that the post of lieutenant commander is considered a junior rank and such officers are not considered to be commanders. Eleven of the twelve commanders of the HMS Violent up to 1929 were in fact lieutenant commanders. There is also evidence that the post of lieutenant

commander was often nominal and was related to prestige and/or promotion and historically this was the case for non-commissioned officers such as Clipperton.

This suggests that a deserving officer might be given a command for a period merely in order to upgrade his curriculum. He might never step on board the vessel in his command. The anthropology of the Royal Navy in the past shows evidence of both a growing meritocracy and more traditional class-influenced factors. It is therefore possible that Clipperton in the late 1930s was promoted to lieutenant commander as a short-term nominal post in recognition of his service medals and approaching retirement. (Captain Hall himself became admiral only upon his retirement. His elder son became a lieutenant commander five years after his retirement.)

Forces War Records online provides the following information:

"Sydney R. Clipperton J.31169 1914 Royal Navy Leading Telegraphist 1918 Hms Violent."

The year 1918 here refers to his role as telegraphist as verified by his official service record. The reference to HMS Violent refers to his command of that vessel, albeit perhaps nominal, as confirmed in the copy list obtained from Admiral James. Further confirmation of his rank as Commander comes from his rank as Major in the WW2 Home Guard; an army major is the exact equivalent of a navy lieutenant commander.

## 5

At this point a scrupulous and impartial analysis requires an examination of the following possibility: that Kevin MacDonnell invented his report of the crucial conversation with Clipperton. If this is the case, then Clipperton did not state that Hall had "fabricated the Diaries" and did not state that Hall's son had been under investigation and had been killed in a raid. By this

hypothesis, these aspects were invented by MacDonnell.

However, it cannot reasonably be doubted that MacDonnell did meet Clipperton in Sussex on a number of occasions. If the content of the conversation was invented, such an invention would have a motive which ought to become evident from MacDonnell's behaviour following the invention, from how he exploited the story.

However, it is difficult to determine a plausible motive, if only because MacDonnell's correspondence reveals both a lack of prior interest in and sympathy for Casement. As explained above, he was at this time poorly informed about the controversy which fact indicates an absence of prior motivation. Logically, motive precedes action; voluntary action requires prior motivation. Furthermore, his behaviour indicates that he did not know how to verify the story and he certainly failed to do so.

Without a credible motive there are sound reasons for excluding the hypothesis that MacDonnell invented the Clipperton story partly or wholly. These are:

1 – He related the encounter and the revelation in a three-page letter to a close friend in Dublin asking for advice. It is improbable that he would seek to deceive a trusted friend.

2 – He related the revelation in a letter to and at a meeting with President De Valera. It is improbable that he would seek to deceive a head of state whom he obviously respected.

3 – He made efforts to investigate Clipperton and discovered his command of HMS *Violent* and his father's police profession. It is not credible that he tried to externally verify a story which he himself had invented.

4 – Some 32 years after his correspondence with Ó Snodaigh and De Valera, at the age of 78 MacDonnell travelled across London in 1998 to inform Angus Mitchell of the Clipperton conversation. It is not credible that he would persist after such a long time with a story he knew to be invented.

5 – The antipathy he felt towards Casement is incompatible with the invention of a story favourable to Casement's reputation.

The invention of the Clipperton story would require experience of unscrupulous and professional deviousness which Intelligence services excel at – indeed, they have given ample evidence of such activities. MacDonnell had neither motive nor such capability. The above grounds and his reactions recorded in his correspondence support the definitive conclusion that MacDonnell is not a weak link in this history

## 6

Having documented the real existence of Clipperton and his residence on the Sussex coast in 1965, it is necessary to scrutinize the statements about Hall attributed to him by MacDonnell which he reported to De Valera and to Ó Snodaigh. Verification proceeds by seeking to falsify what is said to be true. In this case MacDonnell stated that a conversation about Hall took place with Clipperton. It is vital therefore to first verify or falsify this assertion. The conversation as reported had two aspects: the reference to Hall and the Diaries followed by the reference to the sudden death of Hall's un-named son during WW2. Verification of either aspect would demonstrate that a conversation with Clipperton about Hall took place. Since the purported death ought to be independently verifiable, this aspect can be examined first.

Incontrovertible evidence for the sudden death in WW2 of Hall's elder son, Jack, comes from Admiral Hall himself. Hall had two sons both navy officers. In 1974 Richard, the younger, deposited family papers in The Churchill Archives at Cambridge University. Among those papers there is an undated letter by Admiral Hall:

“Dick just rung me up to tell me that Jack has been killed at Aberdeen; apparently in an air raid he in to try and rescue some one and was killed by falling masonry; Dick is now getting full details and I have to told him that our Jack has no wife, I should like him buried up there; as you know I

don't like funeral bake meats; legally speaking I suppose I am his nearest relative as Mary has control of Pt. I like to think the lad may now be with Essie again".

It is not clear to whom this is addressed but the addressee is someone in or close to the family. This is followed by a letter to Hall from Admiral Robert Raikes (Flag Officer in Aberdeen), expressing sympathy for the loss of his son. Dick is Richard, Mary is unidentified and Essie might be a pet-name for Hall's wife Ethel who died in 1932. (19)

While this is sufficient independent verification of the death, it does not demonstrate that Clipperton was MacDonnell's source of this fact in 1965. However, the death of his older son is not mentioned in Hall's 1955 biography by his former colleague, Admiral James. Therefore this book, available to MacDonnell, was not the source. Likewise, the family papers were not the source since these were private until 1974. Two 1942 Aberdeen newspaper reports of the death and funeral cannot have been the source either since discovery of these required prior knowledge of the death of Hall's son in WW2. There is no reference to Hall's family in his *The Times* obituary of 23rd October 1943.

All possible sources being eliminated it follows that MacDonnell learned about the death from Clipperton. This is sufficient to demonstrate that the conversation with Clipperton was about Hall. It also verifies MacDonnell's report that he was told about the death by Clipperton. Therefore, to the five reasons listed above, this externally verified fact can now be added as number 6 — his report of the death of Hall's son after a raid in 1942 as related by Clipperton is verified.

That the preceding conversation was about Hall cannot reasonably be doubted, since Clipperton had no cause to relate the death of Hall's son *apropos* of nothing at all. The remark about the death of Hall's son was made in the context of prior remarks about Hall. There is no independent documentary

evidence to verify that Clipperton worked ‘at one time’ with Hall, which is the premiss of MacDonnell’s report of the conversation. That the latter aspect concerning Hall’s son has been demonstrated as true does not demonstrate the truth or falsity of what was purportedly said before about the Diaries. At best it contributes to the probability that the prior Diaries remarks are also true.

The immediate context of Clipperton’s statement about the death was his role in an investigation into unspecified activities involving Hall’s son. This demonstrates that, some four years after he had retired from naval service, Naval Intelligence contacted the then Major Clipperton in 1942 with a commission to carry out secret interception relating to Hall’s son. This is a remarkable fact with highly significant implications. That an obscure forty-four year old retired officer, who might have been forgotten, was entrusted with such a task indicates that he had not been forgotten by Naval Intelligence. It further indicates that in 1942 Naval Intelligence knew Clipperton had the technical expertise necessary for such interception work and that they could rely on his discretion. It is a fact that telecommunications technology had considerably advanced in the quarter century since the First World War. Nonetheless, Intelligence knew that Clipperton was both technically up to date and experienced in such work. This indicates that Intelligence knew Clipperton had accumulated interception experience during his career, in which case Clipperton’s name was recorded in Intelligence files. He had not been forgotten. Nonetheless this interception experience cannot be found in his official service record.

Scrutiny of that record reveals further anomalies: it shows that he was allocated to onshore training establishments: HMS Ganges, HMS Impregnable, HMS Vernon and HMS Pembroke. It appears that his first sea-going experience was on the HMS Iron Duke from 29th June 1916 until 15th February 1917. According to the record he was in continuous service onshore and at sea from 29th May 1914 until 16th January 1923, a period

of eight and a half years, without any break recorded for shore or home leave. Clearly this interpretation of the record cannot be correct. Yet another interpretation produces three gaps between allocations which amount to some thirty months before 1st March 1918. The record does not show where he was during these gaps. In particular there appears to be a gap from 3rd May, 1915 to 29th June, 1916, a period of *circa* fourteen months which might have included a secondment elsewhere. The official record is of very limited use for determining Clipperton's movements during the period.

Since the reference to the 1942 death of Hall's elder son has been demonstrated to be true, the earlier part referring to MacDonnell being told that the Diaries were fabricated by Hall remains to be examined for truth or falsity. It remains to be seen if external verification can be found for this. To this end, eight words cited by MacDonnell deserve particular scrutiny because of what they imply. "Just a few of us knew about it." This indicates that the knowledge – 'it' – was at that time shared between a small group of persons and was not exclusive to the speaker. The 'us' referred to in that brief sentence indicates a shared identity and can only refer to a category of colleagues, rather than an indiscriminate group of persons. Of that unidentified category, only a small number shared the 'insider knowledge'. Research has demonstrated that Clipperton was a telegraphist, a communications technician. The category which 'us' refers to is therefore the category of telegraphists. At the time of the conversation in 1965, MacDonnell certainly did not know this. Indeed, there is no evidence in his correspondence that he ever knew Clipperton had been a telegraphist. That sentence does not indicate that Clipperton communicated the knowledge to a few colleagues, but rather he was aware that the knowledge was shared by some colleagues. Either they discovered the knowledge independently of each other or they were informed of the discovery and shown the evidence.

MacDonnell reported in his letter of 17th January 1966 that

Clipperton's knowledge was shared by others whom MacDonnell assumed to be Room 40 Intelligence staff. This spurred him to contact Admiral James, a known authority and author of Hall's biography, with hopes of learning the identities of Clipperton's colleagues. Obviously he could not ask the Admiral to confirm that Hall had 'fabricated the Diaries'; there would have been no response.

On 22nd January, MacDonnell wrote to De Valera:

"Regarding the Diaries, I am trying hard to obtain names, dates, in short, proof ... he [Clipperton] may put me in touch with other people who worked with Hall ..."

James supplied him with a list of eighteen names of those close to Hall and Clipperton's name was not listed. It is this attempt to externally verify the identities of his colleagues which demonstrates that MacDonnell was indeed told by Clipperton that 'Just a few of us knew about it', where 'it' refers to Hall and the Diaries. If MacDonnell had not been told by Clipperton that he had "worked with Hall" and "a few of us knew" that Hall had "fabricated the Diaries", he had nothing to research and no questions to ask Admiral James or anyone else. It is untenable to propose that MacDonnell invented "the few of us" *ex nihilo* and then, knowing this was false, hoped that Admiral James would verify his invention.

It is clear that MacDonnell's question to Admiral James mentioned Clipperton's name, otherwise James would not have identified Clipperton as he did. It is also clear that MacDonnell asked for the names of Hall's colleagues, otherwise James would not have given the list of names in Hall's circle.

Thus also the first aspect of MacDonnell's report of the conversation is logically and definitively demonstrated as true – he was told by Clipperton that Hall had "fabricated the diaries".

This confirms that MacDonnell was told by Clipperton as reported but that fact does not confirm the truth of what he was told; Clipperton might have been lying. Against this, however,

there is Clipperton's stated admiration of Hall which conflicts with such a malignant lie. Although there are no grounds for holding that Clipperton was lying, this possibility must nonetheless be examined.

Independent corroboration from his colleagues – the “few of us” – would suffice to prove he was not lying but they remain unidentified. However, MacDonnell reports that after revealing the fabrication, “He [Clipperton]... became very agitated indeed. He said he had told me much more than he should have done... I quietened him down and I haven't seen him since...” Therefore, if Clipperton was lying his agitation would be feigned. It is not credible that he would choose to feign agitation rather than simply deny or even revise his statement and describe it as mere opinion or hearsay. His agitation serves to confirm that he was telling the truth. Moreover, if feigned, his theatrical agitation was a futile and counter-productive charade which served only to demonstrate to MacDonnell that he had indeed told the truth. Further confirmation that his agitation was genuine and spontaneous comes from the fact that MacDonnell never saw him again after the revelation. Therefore no grounds can be found to support the hypothesis that Clipperton was lying.

The following aspects have now been verified:

- 1 – that Clipperton was a telegraphist and later a naval commander;
- 2 – that he spoke about Hall with MacDonnell;
- 3 – that he told MacDonnell about the death of Hall's son;
- 4 – that he told MacDonnell that others knew of Hall's fabrication;
- 5 – that MacDonnell later received a list of Hall's close colleagues from Admiral James;
- 6 – that Clipperton told MacDonnell the truth.

That Clipperton existed has been demonstrated, and that he reached the rank of lieutenant commander has been demonstrated. MacDonnell did not publish anything about the Clipperton story and his rudimentary research failed to clarify the link between Clipperton and Hall during WW1. Nonetheless MacDonnell remained convinced of its truth over thirty years later in 1998, shortly before his death in 2001.

This writer has been unable to find documentary evidence of Clipperton's service with Hall. It is quite possible that such evidence does not exist. Clipperton's reported claim that he "worked with Hall" is misleading; many scores of people in Admiralty Building "worked with Hall", if only in the sense that he was Director of Naval Intelligence. Clipperton was merely a young telegraphist during WW1, not a naval commander. A secondment to Admiralty Old Building as a telegraphist during an unexplained gap in his service record would not have been registered as Intelligence work within the ambit of Room 40. (The fact that he did later become a Lieutenant Commander is not recorded in his service record.)

MacDonnell's report of the conversation shows that Clipperton did not say how he learned of the plot. It is wise to avoid speculation, however tempting. That MacDonnell himself did not speculate later on this aspect indicates that he did not know that Clipperton had worked as a telegraphist. Thus MacDonnell remained under the misguided impression that Clipperton had been an Intelligence Officer close to the inner circle of the Room 40 operation. This erroneous impression explains also why his attempts to corroborate failed.

The pool of telegraphists in the basement of Admiralty Old Building was the nerve centre whose role was to send and receive telegrams both coded and in English, to receive radio intercepts from the hundreds of Y stations throughout the UK, to intercept encrypted communications from German and neutral sources, in short to deal with all telecommunications. (20)

This author has spent five months stress-testing MacDonnell's report of what was said, for veracity. This is the first and only analysis of the almost unknown Clipperton story. It has been conducted with the maximum rigour and impartiality and the conclusion is reached by process of natural deduction. This chapter is as much about the methodology of this analysis as it is about the conclusion.

The author presents this analysis as comprehending historical inference to the requisite standard, which is that it leaves no reasonable doubt of its truth. (This is a different standard from that of proof beyond all reasonable doubt, or proof on the balance of probabilities – favoured by lawyers; or proof by deduction and induction favoured by philosophers, scientists and mathematicians.)

This truth is wholly corroborated by the fact, first published as *Dis-covering Casement in Village*, October 2016, where it was demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that there is no evidence for the material existence of the bound diaries in 1916 since only police typescripts were shown.

These two demonstrations taken together leave no reasonable doubt that the Black Diaries were fabricated and that Captain Hall was the mastermind behind the plot. In plain words, MacDonnell, a man with no interest in and little time for Casement, found himself by chance listening to insider knowledge, spontaneously related to him by a man who otherwise admired and esteemed Hall but who, after almost fifty years, felt that "this was an evil piece of work".

Indeed this was the crime of an "honest Iago":

There are many events in the womb of time  
which will be delivered.

*Othello*, Act 1, Sc. iii.

## Post-script: A 'Smoking Gun'

Those who require what is commonly called a 'smoking gun' to overcome their belief in authenticity (which usually poses as uncertainty), do so knowing full well that their request can never be met. The 'smoking gun' is conceived to be sufficient and no further evidence or testimony is needed for judgment. But this is a misconception deriving from confusion between circumstantial evidence and direct evidence.

The ever-popular 'smoking gun' is itself a proof from circumstantial evidence and is not a direct proof. It is a common misconception that it constitutes the strongest proof. It is also a common misconception that circumstantial evidence is qualitatively inferior to direct evidence. It is a fact that, in the absence of direct witness evidence, the vast majority of cases are judged on the quality of circumstantial evidence.

We must presume that a satisfactory 'smoking gun' would have to be a written, signed confession from Admiral Hall of his guilt. No other document would suffice. While confessions can be extorted, forged or made to protect the true culprit, there is no such document and there never was. It is axiomatic that Intelligence services do not provide 'smoking guns' in the form of written confessions. It is therefore irrational to require one in this case. However, the request is made in bad faith in order to conceal that it is a strategy intended to declassify the accumulated evidence against authenticity as permanently insufficient and to set it aside. To ask for evidence which is known to be non-existent is therefore an evasive tactic intended to exclude due consideration of the evidence presented; as such it is a motivated refusal to examine the merits of the case. No evidence will be sufficient, none save the non-existent but misunderstood 'smoking gun'.

The motive for the evasion can be found in the fact that the evidence against authenticity is vastly superior in quality and quantity to the evidence for authenticity, much of which has been demonstrated to be false, therefore inadmissible.

## Notes

- 1 – The MacDonnell-De Valera correspondence is in the De Valera Papers at UCD. Ref P150/3608
- 2 – MacDonnell's letter to Ó Snodaigh is in NLI. Ref Ms. 18776.
- 3 – Clipperton's naval record is held by The National Archives UK. Ref ADM 363/50/115; ADM 188/709/31169.
- 4 – The legend of Room 40 largely ignores the founding role of Professor Sir Alfred Ewing who was appointed on August 4, 1914 on account of his knowledge of codes and decrypting. Ewing was the principal recruiting officer for Room 40 which was under his leadership until 1917 when he 'handed over command to Admiral Hall'. In 1927 the 72-year-old Ewing broke the tacit secrecy rules and gave a public lecture on his Room 40 experience. He was at once rebuked by the Admiralty; only the fear of negative publicity prevented his criminal prosecution. Publication of his lecture was banned until 1979. The text is now online. His son's biography, *The Man of Room 40, The Life of Sir Alfred Ewing* (1939) tells the complete story.
- 5 – *Spies at work* by Mike Hughes. lulu.com. 2012. Hall's leading conspiratorial role in National Propaganda with prominent industrialists aimed to combat the post war 'socialist infection'. A complex little-known story of right-wing plotting against the entire labour movement in which Hall was a founder and key figure. These organisations were to replace Hall's failed plan to set up with Basil Thomson a single super Intelligence service unaccountable to government or parliament – a secret state within the state financed by the state. Lloyd George objected and summarily dismissed Thomson at the end of 1921.
- 6 – *The Missing Dimension, pp 54-77. British Intelligence in Ireland, 1914-1921.* Eunan O' Halpin. Andrew C., Dilks D. (eds) Palgrave, London, 1984.
- 7 – *The Eyes of the Navy*, Admiral William M. James. 1955, Methuen.
- 8 – ibid.
- 9 – Cited in *Aaronsohn's Maps* by Patricia Goldstone. Counterpoint. 2015. Also cited in *Room 40* by Patrick Beesly, 1983.
- 10 – *The Eyes of the Navy*, Admiral William M. James. 1955, Methuen.
- 11 – *Roger Casement: A New Judgment*. René MacColl. Hamish Hamilton, 1956.
- 12 – *The Accusing Ghost or Justice for Casement*, Alfred Noyes. 1957, Victor Gollancz.
- 13 – Evidence that MacDonnell was a lifelong practising Catholic is found in his letter to Angus Mitchell of March 1998 where he indicates that he still, at age 78, observes Lenten abstinence.
- 14 – Evidence of disinterest is found in MacDonnell's letter to Ó Snodaigh which indicates that he held to the long discredited Normand translation theory of the origin of the Diaries. Moreover, MacDonnell reveals his poor opinion of Casement with "he got a kick out of reading it [the translation]. He carried it around with him for this reason". In his letter to Ó Snodaigh,

MacDonnell refers to the farmer and the holy well, a detail mentioned only in MacColl's biography.

15 – *Amazon Journal*, Foreword by Editor Angus Mitchell. Lilliput Press, 1997. This is the only publication of Casement's 1910 diary relating in detail his experience in the Putumayo. It contains no compromising references. The very long handwritten original is held in NLI.

16 – The error in the initial B for S is in the header of the page typed by MacDonnell. It is possible that the error was made in a handwritten original by Admiral James who was about 84 years old in 1965. It is also possible that the error of transcription was made by MacDonnell.

17 – MacDonnell's letters to Mitchell are held by the recipient and were generously copied by him to this author. Details of the 1998 meeting in London were also provided by Mitchell, to whom the author is indebted.

18 – *The Eyes of the Navy*, Admiral William M. James. 1955, Methuen. The only biography of Hall revealed that he was responsible for the showing of the police typescripts purporting to be official copies of the Black Diaries.

19 – Churchill Archives reference is HALL 7/4 7/133. The text is cited verbatim; the small errors were made by Hall.

20 – The British built up great expertise in the new field of Signals Intelligence and codebreaking. On the outbreak of war, Britain cut all German undersea cables. This forced the Germans to use either a telegraph line that connected through the British network and could be tapped, or through radio which the British could then intercept. An interception service known as 'Y' service, together with the Post Office and Marconi Stations grew rapidly to the point where the British could intercept almost all official German messages.

*Irish Political Review*, November 2020

# Who's Who

**Christopher Andrew** – British Professor of History and noted expert in Intelligence matters. Official historian of the British Secret Services.

**Ben Allen** – US journalist, UK representative of Associated Press, he was unconvinced by handwritten pages shown to him by Captain Hall.

**F. J. Bigger** – Belfast solicitor, noted antiquarian, Irish revivalist whose home was a cultural meeting place.

**Joseph W. Bigger** – nephew of F.J. Bigger, Joseph became Professor of Preventative Medicine and Bacteriology at TCD; a convinced Unionist he nonetheless took a seat in the Irish Seanad.

**Ernley Blackwell** – legal advisor to the Cabinet, one of those responsible for showing police typescripts, alleged copies of the diaries.

**R. A. Butler** – UK Home Secretary, “*a child of Empire*”, he gave restricted release to the Black Diaries in 1959.

**Adler Christensen** – young Norwegian hired by Casement in New York as his servant on his secret trip to Oslo and Berlin. From Inglis onwards most biographers portray Christensen as treacherous and as plotting to betray Casement. He did not betray him during his year of service and Casement remained grateful to him.

**Sydney Clipperton** – a leading naval telegraphist, later a lieutenant commander who in 1965 spontaneously revealed that Captain Hall had fabricated the diaries.

**Charles Curry** – US doctor resident in Munich who befriended Casement and who took custody of his German papers.

**Eamon de Valera** – legendary figure in 20th century Ireland, combatant in 1916, then President of Dail Eireann, he opposed the 1921 Treaty, founded Fianna Fáil and proceeded to dismantle the Treaty, abolish the Oath of Allegiance and draw up a new constitution. By 1932 he was elected President of the Executive Council, later renamed Taoiseach, and became President of Ireland in 1959. He had known Casement personally and held him in the highest regard.

**John Devoy** – legendary nationalist figure exiled to the US, he was leader of Clan na Gael, editor of *The Gaelic American*; he arranged and financed Casement’s mission to Germany.

**Gavan Duffy** – solicitor who assembled Casement’s defence team and consequently was forced to resign his legal partnership in London.

**Mansfeldt de Cardonnel Findlay** - Minister to the British Legation in Oslo, originator of the scandal insinuation, he was obsessed with Casement’s capture or assassination and issued to Christensen a written bribe promising a reward of £5,000.

**Edward Grey** – Foreign Secretary whose admiration for Casement led to

his knighthood in 1911.

**Captain Reginald Hall** – Head of Naval Intelligence in WW1, one of Casement's interrogators and a man of strong convictions.

**Major Frank Hall** – MI5 Intelligence Officer, one of Casement's interrogators. An Ulster Unionist and Secretary of the UVF in 1914.

**Francis Hackett** – prolific Irish author who also lived in Denmark and the US.

**Bulmer Hobson** – from a Belfast Quaker family, Hobson was a leading figure in the IRB and a founder of the Irish Volunteers. He was close to Casement for many years and greatly admired him.

**John J. Horgan** – lawyer and coroner in Cork who disagreed politically with Casement but defended his reputation.

**Travers Humphreys** – Cambridge-educated criminal lawyer with experience of many high-profile prosecutions, he was junior counsel to F. E. Smith at Casement's trial.

**H. Montgomery Hyde** – Belfast born barrister, author, Unionist MP, MI6 intelligence officer, he was the first person to see the Black Diaries in 1959 at the Public Records Office.

**Brian Inglis** – journalist, popular historian and author of *Roger Casement*, 1973, the most influential biography which set the pattern for many later works.

**William James** – Room 40 colleague of Captain Hall. Later an Admiral, he published the first biography of Hall in 1955.

**Artemus Jones** – Welsh lawyer on Casement's defence team.

**Robert Kee** – popular historian with special interest in Ireland.

**James Landy** – New York estate agent and nationalist sympathizer whose passport Casement borrowed for his trip to Oslo.

**René MacColl** – influential journalist and author of *Roger Casement, a New Judgment*, 1956.

**Kevin McDonnell** – Irish born press photographer who first heard Clipperton's revelations at a chance encounter in 1965.

**Herbert O. Mackey** – Dublin doctor, chairman of The Casement Repatriation Committee and author of several books on Casement.

**William J. Maloney** – neurologist, lawyer and author of *The Forged Casement Diaries*, 1936.

**Charles Mathews** – lawyer and Director of Public Prosecutions in 1916.

**Roger McHugh** – Irish academic, one of the first to view the Diaries after their restricted release in 1959.

**Angus Mitchell** – pre-eminent Casement scholar, his many authoritative works locate Casement's life and career in a worldwide geo-political context which embraces anti-slavery, colonial expansion, economic rivalry and anti-imperialism.

**John H. Morgan** – distinguished Professor of Law, friend of Casement who assisted his defence in 1916.

**Von Nordenflycht** – German diplomat in both North and South America, he befriended Casement in Rio de Janeiro.

**Alfred Noyes** – Professor of Literature and poet, author of *Justice for Casement*, 1957. Noyes was convinced by the police typescripts in 1916 but Yeats' 1937 poem caused him to rethink.

**Gustav Olsen** – reception clerk at Grand Hotel, Oslo, he collaborated with Findlay's plotting against Casement.

**Gertrude Parry** – Casement's cousin and devoted supporter.

**B. L. Reid** – US academic and author of *The Lives of Roger Casement*, 1976.

**Roger Sawyer** - author of *Casement, The Flawed Hero*, 1984; and *Roger Casement's Diaries*, 1997. A leading proponent of authenticity.

**Clement Shorter** – literary journalist, editor of *The Sphere*, he organised a reprieve petition in July 1916.

**Séamas Ó Síocháin** – Irish academic and author of *Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary*, 2008.

**F. E. Smith** – Attorney General, member of the Cabinet and Casement's prosecutor. Ardent Unionist and devout imperialist, with a personal antagonism towards Casement. One of the cleverest men of the period, Smith rose from modest origins to become Attorney General and Lord Chancellor. He appointed himself as Casement's prosecutor and personally blocked Casement's appeal to The House of Lords and threatened the government with his resignation to prevent a reprieve, thus ensuring his execution. Another man of 'strong convictions', in his imperial delirium he was considered extreme by fellow reactionaries. "...it is for us, who, in our history have proved ourselves a martial... people... to maintain in our own hands the adequate means for our own protection and... to march with heads erect and bright eyes along the road of our imperial destiny", 7 Nov. 1923.

**A. M. Sullivan** – Casement's Defence Counsel in 1916, he took the case on for a large fee and for career advancement. Anti-republican and strongly pro-British, he made his abhorrence of Casement public in the 1950s.

**Basil Thomson** – head of Metropolitan Police CID, alleged discoverer of the Diaries. Coming from a background of colonial administrator and prison governor, he had no police experience. He fell from favour in 1921 in unclear circumstances and left the Metropolitan Police, taking with him considerable quantities of official papers, photographs, records. His contradictory accounts of the Diaries' provenance have undermined claims for authenticity.

**Alfred Ward** – chief inspector in Metropolitan Police, he went to the US in 1916 to interview Christensen.

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