**SIGHTINGS BY BEN ALLEN OF CASEMENT DIARIES IN 1916**

**PAUL HYDE BOOK ASSERTIONS**

**The NLI Ben Allen files:**

MS 17601/1/1 – has Ben Allen letter of 29 October 1932 to Maloney

MS 5588 and MS 17601/1/4 - both have Ben Allen letter of 2 December 1932 to Maloney

MS 17604/1/13 – has Maloney letter to Bulmer Hobson of 7 December 1932 quoting what Ben Allen saw

MS 13542 – has Ben Allen affidavit in Dublin of 19 August 1960

Paul Hyde attacks Roger Sawyer, Brian Inglis and B.L. Reid in his *Anatomy of a Lie* book for misinformation and worse.

On pp. 91 and 153-4 - Hyde relies on Ben Allen’s description of what he was initially shown by Hall and the fact that the pages were in form quite unlike the 1903 diary from which it has been suggested they were torn. He quotes Sawyer p. 140 of ‘Flawed Hero’.

Allen is rather vague about the contents he saw in the untyped rolled up manuscript speaking only of passages confirming ‘gossip’ heard and that “the diary was in manuscript in what I recall as finely written in the handwriting of a person of culture and originality”. Only later was he shown typescript diary excerpts which he wrote were “designed to illustrate the innuendo of perversions”.

Why so vague the first time around?

NLI MS 46064/1 19 August 1967 Peter Singleton Gates letter to The Times on Rene MacColl, Joseph Bigger find and diaries’ copyright dispute with Parry relatives – my note ‘Ben Allen appears to contradict himself in his descriptions of the diaries that he was shown’.

NLI 17601/1/1, letter of 29 October 1932, 3 p. NLI “from Ben S. Allen [Benjamin Shannon Allen] to William J. Maloney regarding his decision not to use Roger Casement's 'Black Diaries' when they were presented to him for publishing.”…“Benjamin Shannon Allen also defends the Associated Press saying “I do not believe that it could be accused of deliberately wrecking any person’s character or of publishing any report which did not have completely authentic foundation and in which and honest endeavor has not been made to ascertain all of the facts”.

“I profoundly regret that I did not keep a diary myself at the time, because I find that my memory becomes a bit treacherous, but I am under the impression that other correspondents also declined to use the diary. My other motives were both professional and personal. I had known Sir Roger Casement and admired him tremendously.”

-Says nothing about the contents or seeing the diaries in regard to “the Casement incident”.

**Verso handwritten note, presumably by Maloney, about Adler’s wives and children.**

“McGarrity’s report on Adler Christensen

Married 1. Indian had a boy

2 Then married a German had 2 children – 1 died – girl lived went back to Germany

3 Jailed for dope importing in N.Y.

4 Strike breaker in San Francisco”

NLI 17601/1/4 has the 2 December 1932 letter (MS 5588 has all four pages of the letter, all in negative form) “from Ben S. Allen [Benjamin Shannon Allen] to William J. Maloney regarding the attempts made to publish Roger Casement’s “Black Diaries” before his execution”. The file has seven sheets but three are positives - p. 1, p. 2, and p. 4. Four are negatives, three being duplicates of pp. 1, 2 and 4 plus a p. 3 which exists here only in negative form. He wrote that he saw a rolled up manuscript but does not quote any specific content.

Allen calls himself a “rabid nationalist” and “just Irish enough”.

On p. 4 at end is hand written: “N.B. Please note insert on page 3 chap six of mss BSA”.

A Lonergan to Maloney letter about finding Ben Allen of 2 November 1932 exists uncatalogued and is presumably in 17601/1/4.

NLI 13542 (not 13452 as stated by Paul Hyde on p. 114 in ‘Anatomy of a Lie’, see also the confusion with NLI 33068/1), is a 2p. photocopy of the 19 August 1960 affidavit “by Ben S. Allen concerning the alleged Roger Casement diaries exhibited by Capt. Reginald Hall in 1916”; sworn before J. Noel Tanham, Commissioner for Oaths, City of Dublin” [photographed]. Acc 2395.

Allen writes in 1960 in his affidavit he was shown what Hall described as the “Casement diary” on “three or four occasions” and he (Allen) unrolled it more than once. It was in loose sheet form, buff coloured pages with blue lines, torn at the top with ragged edges, of considerable thickness, approximately foolscap size, closely written in ink, contained no definite locations, dates or names and no spaces for dates. No mention of shocking contents. He compares it to the 1903 diary at Kew which he had since seen and saw no resemblance especially as the 1903 diary had pages torn out at the side not top.

Very good memory after 40 years and so very specific.

If accurate, it was plainly not a diary so why did Blinker Hall show it initially and call it a diary?

Allen saw or reports nothing specifically untoward in the text and he had time to read some of it, while no juicy bits were apparently pointed out. Possibly he was shown some other document written by Casement as a tease. There is no mention in the 1960 affidavit of typescripts or their contents illustrating “the innuendo of perversions”.

BL Reid, pp. 382-3, has a good account of the events. He references Montgomery Hyde, pp. 74-75, for Mary Boyle O’Reilly’s letter of 3 June 1916 to Alice Stopford Green. [See also the NLI 10763/6 letter from O’Reilly to Gavan Duffy, also of 3 June, which ends “My answer was that the horrid charge was probably false”.]

O’Reilly speaks of “letters and a diary” being shown to “a group of important American journalists” proving Casement to be “a moral offender unworthy of public sympathy”. Reid reckons Ben Allen was not one of the original group of journalists but does not say why. Reid also says Allen was shown “at a late stage ‘typewritten extracts’…but both forms were “evidently designed to illustrate the innuendo of perversions”.

Allen however in his letter of 2 December 1932 speaks of perversions only in relation to the typewritten excerpts. It was confirmatory gossip in the handwritten item. “I glanced it over rather perfunctorily until my eye caught passages tending to confirm the gossip I had already heard concerning the document”

Angus Mitchell (AM) wrote in pp. 29-30 of his *Amazon Journal* book, “A little later thediaries were shown by Hall to a representative of the Associated Press, Ben S. Allen”.

NB Mitchell wrote “diaries”. He has also mixed up the order of the sentences as between page 1 and 3 of the 2 December 1932 Ben Allen letter.

AM footnote 27, p. 29 “I have stuck here to the story as told by Reid in *The Lives of Roger Casement,* p. 382, “Early in May 1916 Captain Reginald Hall…”. Henry Nevinson tells a different story in *Last Changes Last Chances*, “Early inJune, a member of the Government had called various London editors together, and informed them…”

AM footnote 28, p. 30: No reference for this Ben Allen “statement” is given although it is from NLI 5588 pages 1 and 3 of 2 December 1932. NLI 17601/1/4 has no p. 3:

p. 3 - “Hall showed it to me at first at the conclusion of the regular Wednesday weekly interview with the American correspondents, and told me the Associated Press could have it for exclusive publication if it wished it. I glanced it over rather perfunctorily until my eye caught passages tending to confirm the gossip I had already heard concerning the document. It was a rolled manuscript that Hall took from a pigeon hole in his desk…

p. 1 – “The diary was in manuscript in what I recall as finely written in the handwriting of a person of culture and originality…”

p. 3 – “I told Hall that, while the A.P. was not interested in scandal for its own sake, because of the importance of the individual and the events in which he was playing such an important role, we might use it. However, I told him it must be authenticated completely before we would use it, and I saw only one way of doing so, and that was by permitting me to show it to Sir Roger Casement then in Pentonville. If he were to acknowledge it as authentic I would then submit the document to my chief in the London Bureau of the A.P. Hall neither assented to nor denied this request, but replaced themanuscript in his desk. For several weeks thereafter he showed me the diary repeating the offer, and on each occasion I made the same stipulation. On one occasion he showed me some typewritten excerpts and I told him under no conditions would I use these unless I was given access to the complete diary…”

p. 1 – “Late in the negotiations [Captain] Hall showed me some typewritten excerpts from the diary, evidently designed to illustrate the innuendo of perversions. Nothing in the copy I read showed anything except the ravings of the victim of perversions.

I recall my horror at those revelations. I cannot recall that any vigorous effort was made to press the diary on me, but the effort was repeated several times, and it was stated that the contents were of such significance that its publication would prove of great news interest. After the execution of Sir Roger the subject was dropped and I heard of the diary only casually until several years after.”

AM footnote 29 p. 30, also from MS5588 or 17601/1/4 of 2 December 1932. It reads “Statement held in the NLI” and refers to this text on p. 30, “It was a rolled manuscript which Hall took from a pigeon-hole in his desk…The paper was buff in colour, with blue lines and the sheets ragged at the top as if they had been torn from what, in my school days, we called a composition book. The paper was not quite legal size”. “The paper was not quite legal size” actually comes earlier, being from p. 1 of the 1932 letter.

This description is also repeated in 17604/1/13 a letter of Maloney to Hobson 7 December 1932, “The diary was in manuscript. The paper was not quite legal size and with sheets having ragged tops bore the appearance of having been torn from a lined composition book…It was a rolled manuscript which Hall took from a pigeon hole in his desk. As I recall the paper was buff in color with blue lines…”. The rest of his fascinating account consists of a description of his weekly meetings interviews with Hall, of Hall repeatedly refusinh to send the story to America unless he were allowed to confront Sir Roger with it.

Now did Duggan see ragged edged paper? Did he see buff paper with blue lines in the two volumes shown to him. Can you find out…”

See also 17604/1/13, 7 December 1932, 2p. “letter from Dr. William J. Maloney to Bulmer Hobson regarding Ben "Allen's" account of Roger Casement's 'Black Diary', and on tracking down another American correspondent who saw the diary that was found on Casement at his capture. [No in 1923 - ‘consists solely of episodes in Germany’] In this letter Maloney concludes that there were three forgeries made: "(a) the Allen loose sheets: (b) the Duggan Collins bound volume and (c) the diary ‘Casement had on him when he came from Germany’. In view of these facts perhaps Mr Duggan would be more communicative"…it was for some of them [NY elite] the first inkling Ireland was not merely an incubator of domestic servants”.

Jeff Dudgeon (putative 4th edition) –

“When a defence against the Black Diaries came to be mounted there were very few people available or willing to provide critical details about them. This was to be a lucky stroke of fate, enabling Casement’s friends and supporters to develop an imaginative series of explanations for their existence. Only a couple of people came forward publicly to say they had ever seen something of them or knew of their contents. The details provided were limited and confusing; one journalist, Ben Allen of Associated Press, said he saw torn out original pages in a rolled-up manuscript, not, he later stated, the first days of the 1903 diary which remain missing, although he never was precise about what was written on them. In 1932, he stated, “I glanced it over rather perfunctorily until my eye caught passages tending to confirm the gossip I had already heard concerning the document” while warningly describing himself as a “rabid nationalist”. Calling it a diary several times as Blinker Hall also described it, he notioned it was one “copied by Sir Roger Casement during the Putumayo investigations”. He did, in 1960, also specify the pages were foolscap size, closely written in ink, contained no definite locations, dates or names and no spaces for dates.

**Footnote m** Ben Allen described the rolled-up manuscript in an affidavit sworn in Dublin on 19 August 1960 (NLI 13542). Brian Inglis, in a Spectator article of 13 April 1956, wrote of unimpeachable witnesses to Casement telling them of copying “out a diary recording the perversions of one Armando Normand.” He also quoted Ben Allen in similar support, while adding, as “guesswork”, that the diaries “were probably not Normand’s alone” but partially Casement recording “other erotica”. It was his view that there are “misers of pornography, just as there are spendthrifts: men who collect and horde dirty stories, as others collect and distribute them.” A visit from Singleton-Gates later that year, touting his typewritten copies of the diaries, disabused Inglis of any further notion of them being forged. Ben Allen did however write later to Maloney, “Hall showed me some typewritten excerpts from the diary, evidently designed to illustrate the innuendo of perversions. Nothing in the copy I read showed anything except the ravings of the victim of perversions. I recall my horror at those revelations” (NLI 5588 and 17601/1/4, 2 December 1932).