**[My 1,000 word response sent to Paul Hyde’s *Decoding-Casement* website via email on 3 December 2016. On the website, under ‘Visitor Comments’, only the last paragraph was to be published.**

**“The fact remains that there is no evidence of how, when and by whom the diaries were fabricated, in part or in whole. Its absence speaks volumes while no reason exists for any such incredibly extensive forgery.”]**

<http://www.decoding-casement.com/research-papers/decoding-casement/>

**The Hotel Le Cosmopolite in Iquitos (31 August 1910) – Paul Hyde’s 10th diary discrepancy**

**by Jeffrey Dudgeon**

There are thousands of details recorded in Casement’s 1910 Dollard’s diary, not to mention those in the 1903 and 1911 journals. Many of them are potentially verifiable and have been, albeit with effort. To find only ten that are suspect or odd suggests most of the many others are genuine and accurate.

Here I deal with one: the disappearing Hotel Le Cosmopolite.

When writing and diarying so assiduously, as Casement did, he would inevitably make some mistakes while the narrative, as so many facts are omitted, would often only be apparent to the author. Indeed it is sometimes unclear when he wrote up his diary and in what order the events that he recorded actually happened, making things hard to follow.

If a forger was able to gather up the thousands of necessary facts to write such extensive diary entries on Casement’s life over three years, and often in obscure places like Iquitos, why in this instance, would he introduce the taking of a room in a hotel there on 31 August 1910 and never mention it again?

A perfectly reasonable and plausible explanation for the entry is that Casement switched to staying with the British Consul, David Cazes and his wife because the Cosmopolite was, as he wrote, “dreadful”.

That possibility is certainly not contradicted in the diary.

Tim O’Sullivan, former secretary of the Roger Casement Foundation and a diary sceptic, gives a similar if not entirely convinced view when addressing the same diary entry.

He wrote: “One can argue that what happened here was that Casement had accepted a room at the hotel and then rejected it on closer inspection. However, no text describes this turn of events. Such a happening would be better described by a different choice of words, such as “found room unsuitable, left…” or suchlike. Yet, this explanation which preserves the plausibility of the diary can be, just about, with some pain, squeezed in.” (*Dublin Review of Books*, No. 51, 10 March 2014)

Here then is the contentious entry for 31 August 1910:

*Wednesday Arrd. Iquitos at 8. All on shore. To Booth’s office & then Consul Cazes. Lunched his wife & he. Took room “Le Cosmopolite”. Hotel dreadful. Called on Prefect Dr Paz Soldan at 4 to 5.45. Talked fully. He declared the stories ‘fables’ – but much that he said confirmed to my mind their truth. Very hot at Iquitos, & lots of mosquitoes. The town is very well situated, but horribly neglected & dirty. The ‘streets’ atrocious, the houses poor. Hundreds of soldiers in blue dungaree – splendid looking Indians & Cholos. Nearly all are Indians – a conquered race held by “blancos”. They are finer men than the “blancos” & with gentle faces, soft black eyes with a far off look of the Incas.*

We know from Casement’s later Dollard diary entry of 3 September 1910 that he wrote to Sir Edward Grey of the Foreign Office saying that, “On arrival at Iquitos, the members of the Commission took up their quarters in the house of the Peruvian Amazon Company while I became the guest of David Cazes the British Consul here” – as I quote in my book: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Roger-Casement-background-sexuality-political/dp/1916019404/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr>=

That fact is confirmed in an item in The National Archives at Kew (TNA FO 371/968) with a copy in Dublin’s National Library (NLI 13087/5). It is not disputed. The NLI catalogue description is,“Foreign Office correspondence, memos, and copy letters from Casement: 8 items Sep-Dec 1910”.

You wrote on *Decoding Casement* that, “Upon arrival in Iquitos on 31st August Casement became the guest of Cazes for two weeks. He recorded this fact in a letter written to Colonel Bertie dated 4th September in which he also stated that the Commission members resided in a house provided by the Peruvian Amazon Company” adding, “In November, Casement returned to the Cazes’ house in Iquitos as recorded in the Putumayo Diary.” **[This 1910 letter is unreferenced – where is it? It is not in the NLI. Is it in TNA FO 371/968 Peru?]**

In a remarkable way, the 1910 Dollard’s diary confirms that Casement wrote such a letter to the Colonel. On the pink blotter opposite these early September entries, by using a mirror, the name “Col. Hon. R.H. Bertie” and his Chepstow address can be made out. Col. Bertie had a house ‘The Grondra’ in Shirenewton just outside Chepstow. After, very typically, precisely titling Col. Bertie, Casement had blotted the envelope!

Why would any forger go to such lengths to confirm an irrelevant fact? It is inconceivable.

A small but important correction can also be made to your statement: “A letter of 4th September records that Casement stayed as a guest in the home of Mr David Cazes, the Honorary British Consul, whereas the Dollard does not mention this undisputed fact.”

Actually there is a Dollard diary entry revealing Casement was staying with Cazes. That occurs when one Stanley Lewis called on him there: On 10 September 1910 Casement wrote: *Informed that Stanley J. Lewis, a Barbadian referred to in Declarations is on board “Liberal”. Sent for him twice. He came to Cazes' first in forenoon, but as soon as Cazes told him that I wished to see him he bolted C. says. Said he had to go to Prefectura with a paper & that he wd. come back. At 3 I sent Bishop for him & he returned saying Lewis would not come!*

Indeed you contradict yourself later in your ‘Summary’, thus confirming my contention, by accepting that the Dollard’s diary does evidence Casement staying in Cazes’s house: “Hypotheses 1 and 2 contain a direct contradiction. This is supported by an entry contradicting the reference to Le Cosmopolite: a 3rd September reference in the Dollard – “In house all day getting things unpacked & writing to F.O.””

The 4th hypothesis which you neglect to offer is quite simply that Casement took a room in the hotel but cancelled it and did not stay there (or pay for it). He however diaried only the first fact.

That credible option is perfectly plausible in dealing with reasonable doubts over this discrepancy. Similar alternate hypotheses can deal with the small number of other discrepancies adduced in your article.

The fact remains that there is no evidence of how, when and by whom the diaries were fabricated, in part or in whole. Its absence speaks volumes while no reason exists for any such incredibly extensive forgery.

**Jeffrey Dudgeon**

**3 December 2016**