



March 16, 1993

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RECEIVED 17 MAR 1993

Dear David,

Thanks for your help. As discussed on the phone, I'm researching this for the television company Laurel Productions for a BBC history series Timewatch.

My problem is that despite the mass of detail I have put together about the case, I still do not have the crucial point: in the remarkable nature of the subject, the name of the defendant, has been lost! I hope you may be able to help. Here are the details. Most have been provided by defence barrister John Mortimer, and historian and trial witness Steven Marcus.

In the early 1970s a dustman found proof pages of what appeared to be pornographic manuscript in the bin of a Leeds bookseller.

The dustman took the material to the police.

The bookseller was charged, apparently under the obscenity legislation, with nine counts. The key charge concerned the proof manuscript of a book called My Secret Life, by Walter. The manuscript was a reprint of this Victorian pornographic text - a 4,000 page, 11 volume, erotic memoir - privately published in the 1890s.

The bookseller was tried in the High Court in Leeds, before a jury and judge, possibly Judge VEAL (Veal died December 1971). John Mortimer ran the defence, he believes, shortly after his efforts at the 1971 Oz trial.

The hearings, which continued for weeks, became a debate about the nature of pornography and the value of social history. The most eminent Victorian scholars in the world were brought to Leeds to fight the case for the prosecution and defence.

The barrister/solicitor who ran the prosecution was a guy called GRIFFITH (or it may have been MACGREGOR) who became a member of Thatcher's think tank. He argued that My Secret Life was fiction - not fact - and so any historical/sociological argument was bunkum. Professor PLUM at Cambridge was called as a defence witness, as was American STEVEN MARCUS.

The other characters who should know, but I haven't been able to find are the DR EBERHARD AND PHYLLIS KRONHAUSEN. These are the couple, New York erotica collectors and psychologists, published a book called "Walter - The English Casanova" in 1967. Other Walter theorists include GREG LEGMAN and D. E. J. DINGWALL.

I have gone to the Leeds police, courts, tried various local solicitors, the local library, Leeds University law and history departments, all law books without any luck.

I am hoping that since John Mortimer did it shortly after Oz, news may have been mentioned in perhaps a newsletter from DLAS or elsewhere. The aim of my search is find the date of the trial, and that will lead me to the name of the defendant.

Hope you might be able to help. Best of luck with the campaign.

Regards



David Monaghan