

# Handbag attack by sex-change actress over Pc's 'he' jibe

MISS APRIL ASHLEY, 45, the actress and sex change pioneer, was infuriated the night police referred to her as a "he."

She hit a policeman with a handbag and lashed out with her fists, magistrates at Wells Street heard yesterday.

Eventually, Miss Ashley, Britain's first person to have a sex change operation, was put in a cell in the male block.

"I was intensely annoyed by that," said Miss ASHLEY. "After 21 years, at least one can be treated as a woman."

"But some of the policemen were saying 'he' and some were saying 'this person'."

She added that for 21 years the Home Office, who had given her a passport in the name of Miss April Ashley, had recognised her as a woman "and I don't see why a Pc shouldn't."

Miss Ashley, of Hendre, Bear Street, Hay-on-Wye, Powys, Wales, was found guilty of assaulting Pc Martin Sims at West End Central police station on Aug. 21 and was fined £10.

She was also fined £5 at Marlborough Street yesterday after admitting being drunk and disorderly outside Morton's Club in Berkeley Square, Mayfair on the night she assaulted the police officer.

## No more 'he' or 'she'

Giving his evidence at Wells Street, Pc SIMS referred to Miss Ashley as "the defendant" and "he", but was interrupted by the bench chairman, Mrs SYLVIA CRITEMAN, who, after consulting her clerk, announced:

"We have in our register 'April Ashley, actress.' I think it will be helpful for all of us if you refer to her as just April Ashley, and not he or she."

(On the charge sheet, the column stating sex had been left blank, and Miss Ashley was charged as "Mr.")

## Stream of abuse

Pc SIMS said the actress used a stream of abuse after being ejected from Morton's club, and declared: "F... off. I am not going anywhere. Nobody tells me, April Ashley, what to do."

At the station, he said, she swung her shoulder-bag once over her head and hit him on his head. "The bag bounced off me to the far side of the charge room."

Then, as he was talking to the station sergeant, Miss



April Ashley.

Ashley was said to have screamed: "You call me a woman, not 'this person.'" She then "lunged across the desk and hit me on the left-hand side of my face with the flat of her right hand. She was physically restrained and placed in a cell."

Later, when charged, she said: "Da de da de da da!"

## Black boots

Miss ASHLEY, who wore a red quilted jacket over a blue blouse and a long grey skirt with high black leather boots, admitted that she had been drunk and "in the most tremendous mood, but when she went for a drink in Morton's the manager told her 'get out.'"

She claimed the officers twisted her arm up her back.

She denied hitting the officer with a handbag in the station, but said she had assaulted him in a similar fashion outside the club after her arm was twisted.

Asked why she refused to leave the club when requested, she said: "I wanted to know why . . . I also resented being told that 'We don't like your kind in here.' I wanted to know what my kind was."

She added: "The police were referring to me as 'he' and 'him.' I take great offence to that, I think it is totally unnecessary."

Miss Ashley said she was sure she had spent all night in the male cell and was not moved to a woman's cell as police claimed.

She added: "I was abusive at the police station. I felt as if I was being baited and that it was all rather good fun for the policemen."