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PROBE OF O.T.O. RITES ORDERED

Voorhies Gets Warrant to Seize Literature; Calls "Equinox" "Degenerate."

Paul W. Voorhies, prosecuting attorney, announced Thursday he will launch an investigation into operations in Detroit of the mystic cult known as the "O.T.O." or "Order of the Temple of the Orient."

This statement from the prosecutor came after he had announced his decision to seize all copies of *The Equinox* placed on sale in the city. Mr. Voorhies said he considered the book, styled official organ of the "O.T.O.," "the most dangerous book" he ever had seen. A search and seizure warrant calling for the seizure of the books was later issued on Mr. Voorhies' recommendation.

Creditor Starts Probe.

The expose of the "O.T.O." was started by Grover L. Morden, counsel for the creditors and trustees of the bankrupt Universal Bookstores, Inc., where *The Equinox* has been on sale. The affairs of that concern have been enmeshed with the operations of the mystic society.

Voorhies' attention was attracted to the "O.T.O." during a recent hearing before the referee in bankruptcy, in which Mr. Morden declared he "would go to the bottom of the 'O.T.O.' if necessary, to expose a group of "prominent Detroiters" said to have been identified with the organization here in 1918. He sent for a copy of *The Equinox* and obtained the key to the book.

"I consider this book the 'most remarkable and most degenerate book' I ever have seen," Mr. Voorhies declared. "I am going to stop the sale of it, and will instruct the police to seize every copy found in bookstores in this city."

"Going to Wipe Out Cult."

"Furthermore, if a chapter of this organization exists in De-

troit, we are going to wipe it out. The rites described in *The Equinox* calls for a sort of conduct we are not going to tolerate in Detroit, if we can prevent it."

Mr. Voorhies referred particularly to that portion of *The Equinox* which explains that the priestess shall divest herself of her robe during a ceremony.

Voorhies was advised by Morden that the 1,000 known copies of *The Equinox* were the property of the Universal Bookstores, Inc., for which a receiver had been appointed, and that its difficulty was still a matter of federal jurisdiction. He suggested that to avoid an embarrassing predicament with the federal authorities it might be well to proceed differently with the seizure.

The prosecutor said later in the day he had arranged with Mr. Morden to have the "O.T.O." literature sealed and stored in the bookstore.

"If the prosecutor wants to seize those books, I'm for him," Paul W. King, referee in bankruptcy declared. "I ordered the sale of the books stopped some time ago. It still is under federal jurisdiction, but I believe we can arrange with Mr. Voorhies for the seizure, if he so desires."

Dr. James W. Inches, police commissioner, declared the police department would await instructions from the prosecuting attorney. If the police were ordered to seize the literature, they would do so, he said.

"Not Do for Detroit."

"The sort of conduct described in *The Equinox* is common in Europe," Dr. Inches said, "but it will not do for Detroit. Anytime Mr. Voorhies is ready to investigate such an organization he will find the police at his disposal."

Detective Lieutenant Quinn inventories the "O.T.O." literature, in the basement of the Universal Bookstores, 335 Grand River Avenue, and the search and seizure warrant was issued.

Grover L. Morden contends the capital of the bookstores was invested in the publication of *The Equinox*. Albert W. Ryerson, head of the stores at that time met Aleister Crowley, author of *The Equinox*, in New York city in 1918. Mr. Crowley later came here and brought the manuscript. It later was printed by the Universal Publishing company, and placed on sale in stores directed by Ryerson.

Denies O.T.O. Here.

Ryerson consistently denies the "O.T.O." has a chapter in this city, but he admitted, in the last bankruptcy hearing, that a group of Detroit men rehearsed the ritual here one night in 1918.

An interesting feature in the life of Albert W. Ryerson has been recalled during the bankruptcy proceedings now in progress.

In his youth, Ryerson came to Detroit to marry. While here, the story came out of Boston that he had sought the hand of the widow of a millionaire casket manufacturer, and that she, to escape his constant attention, had married her coachman.

This, Mr. Ryerson denied. He said the widow had been anxious to marry him, that she had sought his love constantly, and even had offered him \$100,000 and \$200 a month spending money if he would marry her and assume her name.

Married Detroit Girl.

Ryerson, however, married a Detroit girl, and took her to his home in a Boston suburb. She was Miss Vida Marsh, the daughter, of R. J. Marsh, whose home was at 101 Catherine Street, in April, 1893.

Mr. Ryerson recalled the affair to *The Free Press* reporter, Thursday.

"My affair with the Boston widow happened 23 years ago," he said, "and I have only a vague recollection of the matter."

"It is correct, however, that she offered me \$100,000 if I would marry her and take her name. Being a scion of an old New England family, and—" he pondered a moment. "Well, I don't know," he continued, "I suppose she must have fallen in love with me. She was an eccentric, old lady. Five days after my affair with the widow I married Miss Marsh."

Mr. Ryerson says he is being made a victim of an injustice.

"My attorney has advised me to withhold information which would straighten out this entire matter," he said, "but, if I did so I would have to expose many prominent men in this city. I cannot do that."

Mr. Ryerson denies any connection with the O.T.O. as stoutly as he does the report of a chapter's existence in this city.