

**DAILY MAIL  
LONDON, ENGLAND  
12 APRIL 1934**

## **"BLACK MAGIC" LIBEL SUIT DISCLOSURES**

### **rites at a villa**

#### **INMATES WHO CUT THEMSELVES**

Evidence about strange ceremonies in an author's villa, and about inmates who cut themselves when they used a forbidden word, was given in Mr. Justice Swift's court in the King's Bench Division yesterday.

Mr. Aleister Crowley, an author, is suing Miss Nina Hamnett for alleged libel in her book "Laughing Torso," which he contends, imputed that he practised "black magic."

Other defendants were Constable and Co., Ltd., publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers. The defence is a plea of justification.

In cross-examination on Tuesday Mr. Crowley admitted that he assumed the designation of "Beast 666."

Resuming his cross-examination of Mr. Crowley yesterday Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. (for the publishers and printers of Miss Hamnett's book), read a poem from Mr. Crowley's book "Clouds Without Water," and asked: Is that not filth?

Mr. Crowley: You read it as if it were magnificent poetry. I congratulate you.

Is the meaning of it filth—In my opinion it is of no importance in this matter. You have read a sonnet out of its context, as you do everything.

#### **War-time Article**

Before the United States came into the war, when the affairs of the Allies were in great jeopardy, did you contribute to a Chicago magazine?—I did.

Mr. Hilbery read an extract from an article in the magazine, and asked: Did you write that against your own country?—I did, and I am proud of it. I suggest that you should understand a little of the context and why I wrote it.

Was it part of the German propaganda in the United States?—Yes.

And written as such?—I endeavored successfully to have it accepted as such. What I wanted to do was to over-balance the sanity of German propoganda, which was being very well done, by turning it into absolute nonsense. How I got Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ that rubbish I cannot think. He must have been in his dotage.

Asked about a newspaper article, Mr. Crowley admitted that he wrote: "I have been shot at with broad arrows. They have called me the worst man in the world."

"The first part meant," he said, "that my principal assailant was sent to penal servitude."

Mr. Hilbery (reading from the article): "They have accused me of doing everything from murdering women and throwing their bodies in the Seine," Is that true?—I hear a canard about me every week. Any man of distinction has rumours about him.

Did you say, "Horatio Bottomley branded me as a dirty degenerate cannibal"?—Yes.

With the article is there a portrait of you in a magical position, with the thumbs in a particular position?—Yes, representing the horns of a ram.

Mr. Crowley admitted that he formerly had a flat in Chancery-lane in which he had a "temple," and that in his "Confessions" he had said that once in Mexico he walked in the street in a scarlet robe and jeweled crown without anyone seeing him.

Mr. Hilbery: Was that because of your magic?—Yes.

As a part of your magic, do you believe in a practice of blood sacrifice?—I believe in its efficacy. I do not approve of it.

You say (in his book on magic), "For nearly all purposes human sacrifice is best"?—Yes, it is.

### Drugs at the Villa

Referring to the villa at Cefalu, Sicily, which Mr. Crowley occupied, Mr. Hilbery asked whether there was an altar there.

Mr. Crowley: There was a sort of squarebox on which were kept things, and there was a cupboard.

Was it an altar for the purpose of ceremonies?—If you like, yes.

Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalu?—There was no hasheesh.

Opium and strychnine?—Yes.

When do you advise the use of drugs?—Under skilled supervision, but to a very limited extent.

Are you skilled to administer hasheesh?—Yes. I can get the desired result in 10 minutes.

I suggest to you that one of the rules that you enjoined was that nobody should use the word "I" except yourself as master?—It is not true.

With your approval, an inmate had a razor or knife with which to cut himself if he stumbled into using a forbidden word, whatever it was?—They were not gashes but minute cuts. You can see marks of them on my own arm.

"This is a general practice by which any man may learn to control his actions and thoughts," added Mr. Crowley.

He agreed that there were drawings on the walls at the villa.

Were some of them, at any rate, frescoes which may technically have been obscene?—Not in my opinion.

Mr. Crowley said he had never performed a ceremony naked—not in the presence of another person.

### **Took No Action**

Mr. Hilbery referred to articles in which Mr. Crowley was described as "The king of depravity," "The wickedest man in the world," "The man we would like to hang," "Another traitor trounced," and "The notorious Aleister Crowley."

Mr. Justice Swift: It is said of you "It is hard to say whether he is man or beast." When that was said in the public Press did you take any steps to clear your character?"

Mr. Crowley said he took no action because he was advised that his action would last 14 days and that he would have to find £10,000 to fight it.

Mr. Justice Swift: You see how foolish the advice was which has left you resting under the stigma of these attacks for 14 years.

Cross-examined by Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett). Mr. Crowley said he did not know of any women in whose houses he had stayed and to whom he owed money for board residence. He stayed at a West End hotel with a woman as the guest of a man he knew.

The hearing was adjourned until today.