

**THE DAILY EXPRESS  
LONDON  
13 APRIL 1934**

**Woman Tells Of Her Life In Crowley's Temple**

**"IT WAS GROTESQUE AND RATHER MAD"**

**STORY OF LIVING CAT SACRIFICED  
ON MAGIC ALTAR**



MR. ALEISTER CROWLEY

Weird rites involving the sacrifice of a living cat, alleged to have been performed by Mr. Aleister Crowley in his 'temple' in Sicily, were described by a woman author in the King's Bench Division yesterday.

It was the third day of Mr. Crowley's action for alleged libel against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of "Laughing Torso."

The action arises out of a passage in that book referring to black magic. The publishers and printers are also sued.

The woman who told her story was the former wife of the young man, Loveday, who was a member of Crowley's household in Sicily.

She was the first witness for the defence. Her name, she said, was Mrs. Betty May Sedgwick.

She said that she married Mr. Loveday in 1922, and they met Mr. Crowley shortly afterwards.

From time to time, although she very strongly disapproved, her husband met Mr. Crowley, who persuaded him to go to Sicily at the end of the year.

"I did not want to go," she said, "But, I had to be with my young husband—the man I had just married.

"We arrived at Cefalu about seven o'clock one evening. It was dark.

"Raoul knocked at the door. Leah opened it. Crowley was just walking along. I think he did not expect us quite so soon.

"Crowley said, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the will of the law.'"

"Raoul answered, 'Love is the law; love under will.'

"Crowley said to me, 'Will you say it?'

"I said, 'I will not.'

"Crowley said: 'You cannot come into the abbey unless you conform to the rules of the abbey. This is the beginning: the first rule of the abbey.'

"I had eventually to make the reply. Then I was admitted."

### **Refused To Sign Book Of Rules**

In one part of the villa, Mrs. Sedgwick continued, there were five triangular boxes painted in various colors on the floor.

On the floor also was a large red circle, in the centre of which was a pentagram. In the centre of the pentagram was an altar, and in the centre of the altar was a star, painted in red. On the table was a box and, in the table, was a cupboard.

In one corner was a brazier and a bench—an old-fashioned-looking chair. There were "extremely improper paintings" on the wall.

Mrs. Sedgwick then continued her story of the arrival at the villa.

"When we arrived Leah said, 'We must get you some tea.'

"Crowley said, 'Before they have tea, the book must be signed.'

"We were shown a book. You had to conform to the rules of the abbey—and there were some very odd rules.

"I refused to sign. My husband did so. I was ordered out of the abbey unless I signed the book.

"I had no money. Ultimately I had to sign.

"I was told I had always, from that moment, to sleep by myself in a room next to Crowley's bedroom.

"The rules for the day were typed by the secretary of the abbey and pinned on the door. We knew they came from Crowley."

### **Ceremony That Lasted 24 Hours**

Asked about ceremonies at the villa, Mrs. Sedgwick said that there was only one big ceremony, and that had to do with money. It lasted for about twenty-four hours and was the biggest of all.

"About half-past five in the morning," she continued, "the household were aroused and had to go out and face the sun. It was called 'adoration.' Between four o'clock and half-past four every day the children had to stand and put their hands up to the sun.

"The evening ceremony was the great thing of the day. Crowley slept the whole day and lived at night. We had high tea, and Crowley would ask for a pail of water to wash his hands. After tea, during the Pentagram ceremony, the women say on the boxes in the circle.

"It is difficult to remember what happened. Everything was grotesque and rather mad, and it really worries me to think about it."

Mr. Crowley, she continued, was the head of the ceremony, and wore a robe of bright colours.

Leah took part in the ceremony. She wore a red cloak, and was known as the "Scarlet Woman." She was the spiritual wife of Mr. Crowley, and had a magical name which she could not remember.

Mrs. Sedgwick described the ritual.

"There was a sort of hysterical business," she said. "They called on gods. There was an invocation which was first of all done in English.

### **Rule About Use Of The Word "I"**

"It was all done with due solemnity. It was done in a room that had two long closed doors. There were two narrow beds. On one there was Mr. Crowley's sleeping bag.

"There was an enormous painting, too, in the room. It was terrible—most indecent.

"There were places where you could see where to get various things in the way of drugs. They were all marked.

"There was a bottle of hashish in liquid form. There was a bottle of morphia and of ether.

"here was a rule about the use of the word "I." Raoul was told he was on no account to use it. If he did he was to cut himself in order to remember."

Mrs. Sedgwick was asked if she had seen a sacrifice. She replied:—

"I saw a very big sacrifice—a terrible sacrifice—the sacrifice of a cat, in the temple inside the circle and on the altar.

"The cat had wandered into the temple, where animals were forbidden, and it scratched Mr. Crowley. He declared it would be sacrificed within three days.

"Everybody was excited because Mr. Crowley had a knife with a long handle. It was not very sharp.

"The cat was crying piteously in its bag. It was taken out of the bag, and my husband had to kill it. The knife was blunt, and the cat got out of the circle. That was bad for magical work.

"They had to start all over again, with the cat having such a gash in its neck that they could have killed it shortly.

"Finally they killed the cat, and my young husband had to drink a cup of the cat's blood."

Mr. Eddy (cross-examining): I suggest you have given evidence which is untrue and which you know to be untrue?—No.

How many times have you been married?—I think four times.

How many times have you been divorced?—Three.

Before you went to Cefalu were you a decent citizen or not?—I was, I think. Yes, of course I was. Yes I was.

You have written a book called "Tiger Woman"?—Yes.

Does it purport to be an autobiography of yourself?—Yes.

### **Counsel On "An Imputation"**

Is it true?—My whole early life and my latter life is very true, but there is one little thing that is untrue.

Are you here as a simple witness of truth or are you here to sell your evidence at a price?

Mr. Hilbery: Does that mean to be an imputation that we have bought this evidence because, if so, I resent that.

Mr. Eddy to the witness: I shall not put any suggestion that cannot be supported by documents. Are you here just to assist the course of justice?—Yes.

Are you here because you wanted to make money out of this case and to sell your evidence?—But I have been subpoenaed to come here.

Mrs. Sedgwick admitted that part of her book was written as "padding" and was not true.

Earlier in the day Mr. Martin O'Connor for Miss Hamnett completed his cross-examination of Mr. Crowley.

He pointed to Mr. Malcom Hilbery, K.C. (for the publishers).

"Try your magic on my learned friend," he said. "I am sure he won't object. You said yesterday, you know, that you invoked certain forces with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants."

"I will attack no one," replied Mr. Crowley. "I have never yet done wilful harm to any human being."

"Try your magic," pressed Mr. O'Connor.

"I absolutely refuse."

### **Refusal To Make Himself Invisible**

"You have said that you succeeded in rendering yourself invisible. Try that on now. If you don't I shall denounce you as an imposter."

"You can ask me to do anything you like," retorted Mr. Crowley. "It won't alter the truth."

Later Mr. Crowley denied that during magic rituals at the Cefalu villa a cat was killed and some one taking part drank some of its blood.

"There was no cat, no animal, no blood, and no drinking," he declared.

Re-examined. Mr. Crowley said that no objection had ever been taken on moral grounds to any of his books "except in the case of Mr. James Douglas' disgraceful attack on his drug fiend book, which was published by one of the strictest publishers from the moral point of view."

If he had enemies, he also had friends. One man wrote a book in his defence.

Mr. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley) next asked Mr. Crowley about a passage in his "Confessions" (on which he had been cross-examined). It referred to a village girl and showed that Mr. Crowley "went roaming with her amid the heather."

"How old were you?" asked Mr. Eddy.

"I was a boy; fifteen or sixteen. Roaming the heather with anyone is a terrible offence in itself in the surroundings in which I was brought up," he added. "Merely to look at a girl across

the street was considered an offense and dealt with in the most severe way."

(Mr. Crowley's family were Plymouth Brethren.)

Mr. Crowley agreed that he had studied black magic though only as a student.

"I was just coming out from years of abominable torture," he explained. "I wanted to find out what a church was like, and I sneaked secretly into a church at the danger of incurring the severest penalty, because among the Plymouth Brethren even the idea of entering a church might have incurred damnation.

Have you at any time practised black magic?—No.

Mr. Eddy then asked Mr. Crowley about German propaganda articles he wrote in America during the war.

"If there was German propaganda, why did you indulge in it?" he asked.

"In order to destroy it," he replied. "I reported my activities to the chief of our organization, Captain (later Commodore) Guy Grant, and was in communication with the Hon. Everard Fielding. I came back immediately after the war, and, if I had been a traitor, I should have been shot—and a good job too.

The judge (Mr. Justice Swift) asked Mr. Crowley to tell the court, "the shortest and, at the same time, comprehensive, definition of magic which he knew."

Mr. Crowley" Magic is the science of the art of causing change to occur in conformity with the will. White magic is if the will is righteous, and black magic is if the will is perverse.

### **Evil Spirits And The Good Spirits**

The judge: Does that involve the invocation of spirits?—It may do so. It does involve the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel who is appointed by Almighty God to watch over each of us.

Then it does involve invocation of the spirits?—Of one spirit. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Is it, in your view, the art of controlling spirits so as to affect the course of events?—That is part of magic—one small branch.

If the object of the control is good, then it is white magic?—Yes.

If the object of the control is bad then it is black magic?—Yes.

When the object of the control is bad, what spirits do you invoke?—You cannot invoke evil spirits. You must evoke them and call them out.

When the object is bad, you evoke evil spirits?—Yes. You put yourself in their power. In that case it is possible to control evil spirits or blind spirits for a good purpose as we might if we use the dangerous elements of fire and electricity for heating and lighting, etc.



CARL GERMER said he saw Mr. Crowley "invoke the Spirit of Magnanimity."

Mr. Carl Germer, a German merchant and writer, was the next witness. He said that he had known Mr. Crowley since 1925, and entertained him at his home in Germany for several months.

He believed there was such a thing as black magic, but Mr. Crowley had always opposed it.

### **"Written In No Unkindly Spirit"**

Cross-examined by Mr. Martin O'Connor, he said that he had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the Spirit of Magnanimity.

Mr. O'Connor: Where did it come from? How long did it stay? Where did it go to? Tell me: Where did it come from first?—It probably came from Heaven: I don't know.

How long did it stay?—I didn't have a stop watch.

Is that the only answer you propose giving?—I think you are joking.

"Yes. I am." said Mr. O'Connor.

"Well, I have to give you a joking reply," answered Mr. Germer.

Mr. O'Connor: I look upon this as an archpiece of imposture. Where did it go to after the visit?

Mr. Germer: I don't know where it went to.

"I have seen him invoking the Sun," said Mr. Germer later.

"I hope the invocation was on a very foggy day," commented Mr. O'Connor. "What did he say to the Sun, and to what effect?"

Mr. Germer: I don't remember the words.

Mr. O'Connor: What was the result of the invocation?—Nothing.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery then opened the defence of the publishers and printers.

Mr. Crowley, he said, in his own writings had said that his reputation was that of being the worst man in the world.

For years he had professes contempt for ordinary standards of decency. What right had he to complain?

He asked the jury to say that the whole chapter in "Laughing Torso" which referred to Mr. Crowley was nonsense—written in no unkindly spirit and without malice.

The hearing was adjourned until to-day.