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Aleister Crowley Libel Case: Third Day

BLACK MAGIC CHALLENGE

"Vanish from Court," Says Counsel

WOMAN TELLS OF VILLA ORGIES



Mr. ALEISTER CROWLEY making the mystic "sign of silence" yesterday. When asked by Mr. O'Connor to try his magic on Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, Mr. Crowley refused.

A challenge to make himself invisible in court, weird stories of the invocation of spirits and of the sun. Black and White Magic, the drinking of cat's blood and the slaughtering of babies

...
These were a few of the startling things discussed in Author Aleister Crowley's "Black Magic" libel action, which was continued in the King's Bench Division yesterday.

An amazing story of magical rites in Mr. Crowley's villa at Cefalu, Sicily, was told by Mrs. May Sedgwick, who stayed at the villa.

"TOM-TOM IN TEMPLE"

Mr. Aleister Crowley claims damages against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book, "Laughing Torso," and Messrs. Constable and Company, Ltd., the publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

Mr. Crowley complains that the book imputes that he practised "black magic," and he says this is a libel upon him.

The defence is a plea of justification.

Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett) yesterday invited Mr. Crowley to try his magic in court.

"You said yesterday," said Mr. O'Connor, "that, as the result of early experiments, you invoked certain forces, with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants.

"Try your magic now on my learned friend (pointing to Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C.). I am sure he will not object."

Mr. Crowley: I absolutely refuse.

Mr. Justice Swift: We cannot turn this court into a temple, Mr. O'Connor.

Mr. O'Connor: You said you succeeded in rendering yourself invisible. Would you like to try that on now, for if you don't, I shall pronounce you as an impostor?—You can ask me to do anything you like. It won't alter the truth.

Counsel then dealt with the ritual observed in the ceremonies at the villa at Cefalu.

Mr. Crowley denied that a cat was killed in the ceremony and that part of the cat's blood was drunk by a person taking part.

Mr. Crowley agreed that he had studied Black Magic, though only as a student.

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Crowley): Have you at any time practised Black Magic?—No.

Mr. Crowley said he merely kept opium and strychnine in his medicine chest for medicinal purposes when traveling in the tropics. He did not keep it for any magical purposes.

Mr. Eddy: Have you ever regarded it as a joke to be charged with Black Magic?—Never.

When Mr. Crowley's evidence was concluded and he was about to leave the witness-box, Mr. Justice Swift asked him to tell the Court, the shortest and, at the same time, most 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.

Mr. Justice Swift: Does that involve the invocation of spirits?—It may do so.

Is it the art of controlling spirits 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.

BELIEVE IN MAGIC

Mr. Carl Germer, a German now living in England, next gave evidence that he had known Mr. Crowley since 1925.



MR. CARL GERMER.

"I am a believer in magic in the sense in which he has defined it," said Mr. Germer.

Mr. Constantine Gallop (for Mr. Crowley): Have you known Mr. Crowley to advocate or practise Black Magic?—Not at all.

Mr. Martin O'Connor (cross-examining): Have you ever seen Mr. Crowley invoke spirits?—Yes.

What spirits?—The spirit of magnanimity.

How did you know it was the spirit of magnanimity?—I suppose you have to be sensitive in order to perceive.

"FROM HEAVEN"

Mr. O'Connor: Where did the spirit come from?—It probably came from Heaven.

How long did it stay?—I don't know. I did not have a stop-watch with me.

Mr. Germer said he had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the sun.

Mr. O'Connor: What was the result of the invocation?—None.

I should like to learn black magic. Tell me how I can:--I cannot instruct you.

Do you, know any black magician in England who specialises in killing babies?—No.

Mrs. May Sedgwick, formerly the wife of the late Mr. Frederick Charles (Raoul) Loveday, was then called for the defence.

She said she went to the villa at Cefalu in 1922.

"FILTHY PAINTINGS"

She described a square room in the centre of the Abbey.

It was furnished with five triangular boxes, painted in various colours, she said.

Mr. Lilley (for the printers and publishers): Were there decorations on the wall?—Yes. Many indecent and filthy paintings.

Did any ceremonial take place during the course of the day in the ordinary way?—At 5.20 a.m. we had to go out and face the sun. It was called adoration. A tom-tom was banged in the temple to wake us.

"One day," said Mrs. Sedgwick, "a notice was put up that a sacrifice was happening at eight o'clock.

"My husband had to do it. The cat was piteously crying out. It was in a bag on the altar.

"Leah, the scarlet woman, had a bowl and a cup.

"CUT OWN FINGER"

"The sword was blunt, but the top was so sharp that it nearly cut my husband's finger off, and he was frightened, and dropped the cat.

"When they did kill the cat, the blood burst from its neck, and it fell into the bowl, and my husband had to drink it."

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that she had written an autobiography called "Tiger Woman."

Mr. Eddy: Are you here as a simple witness of truth or are you here to sell your evidence at a price?—Certainly not. I have been subpoenaed.

The hearing was adjourned.