

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

**A "TERRIBLE" CEREMONY**

**"Magic" Challenge In Court**

**OFFER REFUSED**



Yesterday's picture of  
Mr. Aleister Crowley, the plaintiff.

Allegations that a cat was sacrificed during a ceremony at an author's villa in Sicily were made by a woman witness in the "black magic" libel action in the King's Bench Division yesterday.

The author, Mr. Aleister Crowley, claims damages from Miss Nina Hamnett, complaining that her book, "Laughing Torso," imputed that he practised black magic.

Other defendants are Constable and Co. Ltd., publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers.

Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett), resuming his cross-examination of Mr. Crowley, remarked: You said yesterday 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 would not attack anyone. I have never willfully done harm to any human being. I absolutely refuse.

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

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

He denied that in the ceremonies at his villa at Cefalu, Sicily, a cat was killed in the ceremony and that part of the cat's blood was drunk by a person taking part.

### **Judge's Request**

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley) quoted the following from a newspaper article written by Mr. Crowley: "I have been accused of being a black magician. No more foolish statement was ever made about me. I despise the thing to such an extent that I can hardly believe in the existence of people so debased and idiotic as to practise it."

Mr. Crowley said that represented his true view, and that he had always written about black magic in terms of strongest condemnation.

When Mr. Crowley's evidence was concluded, 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.

Does it 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.

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.

The next witness was Herr Carl Germer, who said that Mr. Crowley was his guest in Germany for several months.

Mr. Constantine Gallop (also appearing for Mr. Crowley): Has Mr. Crowley ever practised or advocated in your hearing any black magic?—Not at all. Just the opposite.

Mr. O'Connor: Have you ever seen sir, Crowley invoke spirits?—Yes, the spirit of magnanimity.

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

### **"Abbey" Rules**

The first witness for the defence was Mrs. Betty May Sedgwick. She said she was formerly the wife of Frederick Charles Loveday, who had been referred to in the case as Raoul Loveday.

She and her husband went to Sicily at the end of 1922. They arrived at Mr. Crowley's villa after dark. When Mr. Crowley came to the door he said: "Do what thou wilt shall be the will of the whole."

"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. This is the beginning; the first rule of the abbey.' I had eventually to make the reply. Then I was admitted."

Asked about ceremonies at the villa, Mrs. Sedgwick said that Mr. Crowley wore a bright robe. A scarlet woman took part in the ceremony. She was Mr. Crowley's spiritual wife, and had a magical name.

"There was a sort of hysterical business. They called on gods. There was an invocation. There was an enormous painting, too, in the room.

Mr. Lilley: What was it like?—It was terrible.

Do you mean it was indecent?—Most.

There was a medicine chest?—I don't think it was a medicine chest, but there were places where you could see where to get various things in the way of drugs.

### **"Everybody Excited"**

Tell us some of the drugs.—There was a bottle of hasheesh in liquid form. There was a bottle of morphia and of ether.

Was there a rule about the use of any particular word?—Yes, the word "I." Raoul was told he was on no account to use the word. If he did, he was to cut himself, to remember.

Did you see any sacrifice?—I saw a very big sacrifice—a mean terrible sacrifice—the sacrifice of a cat.

Mrs. Sedgwick said that the cat had previously scratched Mr. Crowley, who declared it would be sacrificed within three days.

"Everybody was excited because they were going to have the big sacrifice. 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 the cat. 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.

### **Counsel's Question**

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley): I suggest you have given evidence 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.

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

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

Mr. Eddy: I shall not put any suggestion that cannot be supported by documents.

The cross-examination of Mrs. Sedgwick was not concluded when the hearing was adjourned to-day.