

**THE DAILY MAIL
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**"BLACK MAGIC" ACTION ENDS
IN VERDICT FOR DEFENDANTS**

COSTS AGAINST AUTHOR

**JUDGE AND MAN'S "HORRIBLE AND BLASPHE-
MOUS STUFF"**

A UNANIMOUS JURY

A verdict for all the defendants, with costs, was returned in the King's Bench Division this afternoon in the "black magic" libel action, the foreman intimating that the jury were unanimous in their decision.

Mr Justice Swift, directing the jury, said: "Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible blasphemous, abominable stuff as that produced by a man describing himself as the greatest living poet.

"I have been over 40 years engaged in the administration of the law in one capacity or another. I thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness. I thought that everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me."

"I have learnt in this case that we can always learn something more if we live long enough."

The action was brought by Mr Aleister Crowley, the author, against Miss Nina Hamnett, the authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso." Messrs Constable and Co., Ltd., publishers, and Messrs Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers, were joined as defendants. Mr Crowley complained that the book imputed that he had practiced "black magic," which he said was a libel upon him.

The defence was a plea of justification.

JURYMEN'S QUESTION

As counsel was addressing the court Mr Justice Swift noticed two jurymen talking. He stopped the address, and one of the

men said: "The jury wish to know whether this is a correct time for us to intervene."

Mr Justice Swift: You cannot stop the case as against the defendants. You may stop it against the plaintiff when Mr Eddy has said everything he wants to say.

Mr Eddy finally addressed the jury for Mr Crowley, and then the Judge asked the jury if they were still of the same opinion.

The foreman said that the jury were unanimous. They found a verdict for the defendants.

Judgment was entered for all the defendants with costs, and Mr Justice Swift said that there was no reflection upon the solicitor for the publishers and printers.

When Mr Eddy asked for a stay of execution and referred to the summing up, Mr Justice Swift remarked: "I thought I had followed the instructions of Lord Justice Scrutton. I still think that I did but you can go and point out to him that I did not. Some day another jury will re-investigate this matter."

STORY OF CAT SACRIFICE

Mr Crowley denied that he practiced "black magic" at a villa at Cefalu, Sicily, and which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He admitted that he called himself "Beast 666," out of the Apocalypse.

Miss Hamnett was once a student of his, but he denied that he supplied to her the information of which he book was based.

Mrs Betty Sedgwick, whose former husband, Raoul Loveday, died at the Cefalu villa in Sicily, stated yesterday that on one occasion a cat was sacrificed in the course of a magical ceremony. Her husband then drank a cup of the cat's blood.

Mr Crowley in his evidence, had declared that there never had been any sacrifice of any animal in the ceremony or any drinking of blood.

Mr J. P. Eddy (for Mr Crowley) cross-examining Mrs Sedgwick to-day asked: "Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday would your life be fairly described as drink, drugs and immorality?"

"No," replied Mrs Sedgwick, who said she had not drugged herself for years.

HER HUSBAND'S DEATH What Authoress Told Scotland Yard

She denied that she was living a very fast life in London. "I was a model and I say to keep both of us," she added.

Mrs Sedgwick agreed that on the day of her arrival in England from Sicily she supplied information to a Sunday newspaper.

"I am suggesting," remarked Mr Eddy, "that you are the source of all these stories about 'the worst man in the world.'"

Asked if there was a word of truth in her evidence about the "terrible sacrifice of a cat," she replied "Absolutely true—everything about the cat is true."

Mr Eddy: Are many of the cats in Sicily wild and destructive animals?—I only knew two, and they were very charming cats.

Mr Eddy suggested that the shooting of a wild cat by Mr Crowley was the basis for her story?

Mrs Sedgwick: No, no.

She was turned out of the Abbey a few days before her husband's death.

Mr Eddy: What was he suffering from?—I have no idea. I thought it was laudanum poisoning.

Mr Eddy pointed out that in her book Mrs Sedgwick had said he was suffering from enteric.

"That is true," Mrs Sedgwick explained. "After he drank the cat's blood he was violently ill and sick, and Mr Crowley gave him laudanum, a lot of it as medicine. I told Scotland Yard I thought it was laudanum poisoning at the time."

SLAPPED HER "MOTHER-IN-LAW"

Raoul was her third husband.

Mr Eddy: When did you marry your fourth?—I have forgotten. About seven or eight years ago.

That fourth had a very serious illness, didn't he?—The fourth. I don't think so.

Mr Eddy quoted from "Tiger Woman" (Mrs Sedgwick's book) the fourth husband's mother as saying: "You foul, wicked woman. You are killing my son."

Mr Eddy: Are you a "Tiger Woman"—Yes.

Why?—Because I am rather feline in looks. I thought perhaps it was rather a good name for me.

Mrs Sedgwick said she slapped the fourth husband's mother because she annoyed her.

FOUND HERSELF IN GUTTER

Mr Eddy quoted from the book a passage describing how she aroused the resentment of a man's female companion by sitting at the same table.

"She became insulting," the passage continued. "My nostrils dilated, as they do when I am angry. At last she got up and danced with the man. As they passed by she looked backwards at me and said. 'She is a pretty little thing, but it is a pity she has false teeth.'

"I jumped up and slapped her as hard as I could on the face. Waiters immediately bundled us upstairs into the street, fighting all the time.

"I meant her paying dearly for that insult. False teeth indeed!

"I plunged my fingers into her hair and pulled hard. The result was not what I had expected. I found myself lying in the gutter, and clutched in my right hand—I could hardly believe my eyes—was a chestnut wig."

"You have got a very violent nature?" asked Mr Eddy. Mrs Sedgwick—No.

After questions about other letters Mr Eddy asked: "Did you ever authorize anyone to extract those letters from your case and give them to Mr Crowley?"—No.

Mr Justice Swift: Are these produced by Mr Crowley?—Yes.

Do you know how Mr Crowley got possession of your letters?—I can't imagine how he got them.

CONTENTS OF CASE STOLEN

Mrs Sedgwick declared that all the contents of her case were stolen.

Mr Justice Swift: Where were they stolen from?—From my cottage or from the hotel when I was in London. I always took the case about with me everywhere.

Mr Hilbery called on Mr Eddy to produce a letter of February 24, 1933, from the defendant's solicitors to Mrs Sedgwick.

Mr Justice Swift: He clearly has no right to have it. Whoever has possession of those letters is in possession, according to this lady's evidence, of stolen property. They have no right to have it. Merely asking somebody whom you suspect of being in possession of stolen property to produce it doesn't give you the right to give secondary evidence of the document if that person doesn't produce it.

Mr Hilbery: The witness says she has been permanently deprived of the possession of the letters against her will.

When some of the copies of the missing letters were produced and referred to, Mr Justice Swift agreed with Mr Hilbery that they should remain in the custody of the court.

He instructed the Associate of the Court to keep them until the case was over. "Then remind me to discuss them again, please," he added.

MONEY—AND WITNESSES

Mr Hilbery said this was all his evidence. He wished, however to refute any suggestion that the solicitors instructing him had been a party to purchasing any evidence.

Mr Eddy: My suggestion was, is and will be that money explains the presence of Miss Betty May (Mrs Sedgwick) in the witness box. I do not make any sort of imputation upon the solicitors.

Mr Justice Swift: Does not money play a very important part in producing in the witness box most witnesses who have no interest whatever in the case? They all expect to get their expenses.

Mr Eddy: I am not prepared for a single moment to assume that the money paid this woman really represented expenses. My position is that she was, in fact, demanding money, and getting it.

Mr Martin O'Connor, for Miss Hamnett, referring to Mr Crowley's refusal to accept his challenge to try his magic in court, said it was appalling that "in this enlightened age a court should be investigating magic, which is arch-humbug practiced by arch-rogues to rob weak-minded people."

"I hope this action," he added, "will end for all time the activities of this hypocritical rascal."