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"BLACK MAGIC" LIBEL ACTION

**Author Declines to Make
Himself Invisible in Court**

WITNESS AND "SACRIFICE" OF A CAT

The "black magic" libel action again came before Mr. Justice Swift and a special jury in the King's Bench Division yesterday.

Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, claimed damages against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," and Messrs. Constable and Co., Limited, the publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

Mr. Crowley complained that the book imputed that he practised "black magic" and he said this was a libel upon him. The defence was a plea of justification.

At the material time Mr. Crowley had a villa on the mountain-side at Cefalu, Sicily, which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He denied that he practised "black magic" there. He also denied that a baby mysteriously disappeared, as the defence alleged, from the "Abbey."

Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett) resuming his cross-examination yesterday, invited Mr. Crowley to try his magic in court. "You said yesterday," said Mr. O'Connor, "that, as the results 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, J.C.). I am sure he will not object." "I would not attack anyone," replied Mr. Crowley. "I have never done wilful harm to any human being."

When invited again Mr. Crowley replied: "I absolutely refuse."

"On a later occasion," continued 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 an imposter?—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. "There was no cat, no animal, no blood, and no drinking," he declared.

In re-examination Mr. Crowley agreed that he had studied black magic, though only as a student. He had never practised black magic, and had always written about it in terms of strongest condemnation.

Definition of Magic

When Mr. Crowley's evidence was concluded Mr. Justice Swift asked him 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 ensuring 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. It does involve the invocation of the holy guardian angel who is appointed by Almighty God to watch over each of us.

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

If the object of the control is good, then is it white 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.

The next witness was Carl Germer, who said that he was a German, at present living in this country. He had known Mr. Crowley since 1925 and Mr. Crowley was his guest at his house in Germany for several months.

Mr. Constantine Gallop (who also appeared for Mr. Crowley): Throughout the time you have known Mr. Crowley has he ever practised or advocated, in your hearing, any black magic?—Not at all. Just the opposite. That is why I invited him to my house as a guest. Mr. Germer said he knew many people

who admired Mr. Crowley very highly in Germany and also in the United States.

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

What spirits?—The Spirit of Magnanimity.

How do you know it was the Sprit of Magnanimity?—I suppose you have got to be sensitive in order to perceive.

Mr. Justice Swift: Can you point to any difference between the Spirit of Magnanimity and the Spirit of Hospitality?—I believe so. I think that is very easy.

You are sure it was the Spirit of Magnanimity which came and not the Spirit of Hospitality?—I believe so.

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.

"Yeas I am," added Mr. O'Connor.

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

Mr. O'Connor: I look upon this as an archpiece of imposture. Where did it go to after the visit?—I don't know where it went to. "I have seen him invoking the sun," said Mr. Germer later.

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

What was the next occasion you heard Crowley invoking?—I don't remember.

Mr. O'Connor: He didn't make much progress in invoking in your time.

The case for Mr. Crowley was concluded.

Defence Opened

Opening the defence of the publishers and the printers, Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., said the question for the jury was whether the passages in "Laughing Torso" of which complaint was made would be read by any reasonable person as worsening the character of Mr. Crowley. What right had a man who had for years been professing contempt for the standards of normal decency to complain of injury to a reputation which he had written about himself as being that of the worst man in the world. Mr. Hilbery asked the jury to say that the whole chapter

in the book referring to Mr. Crowley was nonsense, written in no unkindly spirit and without malice.

The first witness called 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 was married to Mr. Loveday in 1922, and shortly afterwards they met Mr. Crowley. Up to the end of 1922 Mr. Loveday saw Mr. Crowley from time to time.

Mr. Lilley (for the publishers and printers): With or without your approval?—With my very strong disapproval. The witness said that she and Mr. Loveday went out to Sicily, although she did not wish to go.

They arrived at the villa about seven o'clock one evening, she said, and Mr. Crowley came to the door.

"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,' " The witness added that Mr. Crowley said she would not be allowed in the abbey unless she conformed to the rules, and eventually she had to make the reply and was admitted.

"24 Hours' Ceremony"

After describing a part of the villa, in which, she said, there was a red circle on the floor and a pentagram and an altar, the witness was asked about ceremonies at the villa, and said, "There was only one big ceremony and that was for 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."

Mrs. Sedgwick said Mr. Crowley was the head of the ceremony and wore a robe of bright colours. A "scarlet woman" took part in the ceremony. She was the spiritual wife of Mr. Crowley and had a magical name which the witness could not remember. There was an enormous painting in the room which was most indecent.

Mr. Lilley: 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 "I." If he did he was to cut himself in order to remember.

"People assembled in the room." continued the witnesses, "and there were little triangular boxes on which they sat. In one corner was a chair in which Mr. Crowley sat in front of a brazier in which incense was burned. There was a special ceremony which ran longer. The scarlet women then wore under her robe a jewelled snake. "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. It was all done with due solemnity," she added.

Witness and a "Sacrifice"

Mr. Lilley: Did you see any sacrifice at all?—I saw a very big sacrifice—a terrible sacrifice—the sacrifice of a cat.

Where was it sacrificed?—In the temple inside the circle and on the altar. Mrs. Sedgwick explained that the cat had previously scratched Mr. Crowley, who declared it would be sacrificed within three days. "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." The witness added that finally the cat was killed and some of its blood was drunk.

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.

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.

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