

**THE BELFAST NEWS-LETTER  
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**THE "BLACK MAGIC" LIBEL SUIT  
VERDICT FOR THE DEFENDANTS**

**Mr. Justice Swift's Strong Comment on Case  
STAY OF EXECUTION REFUSED**

The hearing of the libel suit, in which Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, sued Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," in which it was alleged that she imputed that he practised "Black Magic," was concluded in the King's Bench Division, London, yesterday.

"It is absolutely true," declared Mrs. Betty M. Sedgwick, an authoress, when cross-examined concerning her story that a cat was sacrificed and her former husband drank its blood. She was describing a visit to the "Abbey of Thelema," the villa of Mr. Aleister Crowley in Sicily. Mrs. Sedgwick 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. Shortly afterwards they met Mr. Crowley.

Mr. Lilley (for the publishers and printers of the book, who are also sued)—In consequence of a communication which Mr. Loveday received from Mr. Crowley, did you and he go out to Sicily at the end of 1922?—Yes.

Asked about ceremonies at the villa, Mrs. Sedgwick said there was only one big ceremony, and that was for money. It lasted for about 24 hours. "About half-past five in the morning," she continued, "the household were aroused and had to go out and face the sun. The evening ceremony was the great thing of the day. Crowley slept the whole day and lived at night. Everything was grotesque and rather mad, and it really worries me to think about it."

**"RITUAL" AT VILLA**

Mrs. Sedgwick described the ritual at the Cefalu Villa. "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 done with all due solemnity," she added. "It was done in a room that has two long closed doors. There were two narrow beds. On one there was Mr. Crowley's sleeping bag.

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.

Tell us some of the drugs—There was a bottle of hasheesh in liquid form. There was a bottle of morphia and 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 "I." If he did he was to cut himself in order to remember.

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

Mr. J. P. Eddy (cross-examining)—How many time have you been married?—I think four times.

How many times have you been divorced?—Three.

"Immediately before your marriage to Mr. Loveday would your life be fairly described as drink and drugs?" asked Mr. Eddy.

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

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that on the day of her arrival in England from Sicily she supplied information to a newspaper. "I am suggesting," remarked Mr. Eddy, "that you are the source of all these stories about the worst man in the world."

## LAUDANUM

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—When did you marry your fourth?—I have forgotten—about seven or eight years ago.

That fourth husband 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 wicked woman, you are killing my son."

Mr. Eddy—Are you "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 her fourth husband's mother because she annoyed her.

After questions about letters, Mr. Eddy asked, "Did you ever authorise 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 cannot imagine how he got them.

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

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. Merely asking somebody whom you suspect of being in possession of stolen property to produce it does not give you the right to give secondary evidence of the document if that person does not produce it.

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.

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.

### **JUDGE'S COMMENT**

"I have been over 40 years engaged in the administration of the law in one capacity or another" said the judge. "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."

He asked the jury if they were still of the same opinion as they had intimated earlier.

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

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

The Judge refused a stay of execution. As to the documents in his custody, he told the defence, "We will keep the letters in court, and we shall certainly have them in proper custody if you take them to another court."