

**THE DAILY EXPRESS
LONDON
14 APRIL 1934**

**JURY STOP ALEISTER CROWLEY'S
"BLACK MAGIC" LIBEL SUIT**

JUDGE SHOCKED BY HIS "BLASPHEMY"

**HAD THOUGHT HE KNEW ALL
THAT WAS BAD AND VICIOUS**

BETTY MAY TELLS OF DRUGS AT 18

"I NEVER TOOK THEM AFTER 25," SHE SAYS



MR. ALEISTER CROWLEY, who lost his action for libel against Miss Nina Hamnett, author of "Laughing Torso," and against the publishers and printers of that book. The jury stopped the case. Full report is on Page Eleven.

Mr. Aleister Crowley's action for alleged libel against Miss Nina Hamnett, author of "Laughing Torso," and against the publishers and printers of the book, came to a sudden end in the King's Bench Division yesterday.

After Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley) had addresses them the jury stopped the case, and, after hearing the judge, gave a verdict for Miss Hamnett and for the printers and publishers.

Judgment was entered accordingly, with costs.

The judge (Mr. Justice Swift) had said:—

"If you think that the plaintiff fails on the ground that he was never libeled, or that his reputation was never damaged, or if you think the defendants have justified what was written, then your verdict should be for the defence.

"I have nothing to say about the facts except this: I have been more than forty 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 that was vicious and bad had been produced at some time or another before me.

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

Stay of Execution Refused

"I have never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous and abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man who describes himself to you as the greatest living poet."

Mr. Eddy asked for a stay of execution.

The judge: No, Mr. Eddy, it was a plain question of fact for the jury.

Mr. Eddy: I was desirous of pointing out, before the jury gave their decision, exactly what had to be done before a verdict could be returned at all. It is no use my doing it now, but I would desire to call your attention to the form of the summing-up to be administered, particularly the need for calling attention to the cross-examination and so forth.

The judge: You shall do that in another place when it seems convenient to you to do it. 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 reinvestigate this matter.

Mr. C. W. Lilley (for the defence) mentioned documents which the judge had in his custody, and which Mrs. Sedgwick had said were stolen from her.

Letters To Be Kept In Court

"You indicated some little difficulty as to the proper ownership of them," he said.

"If you think it right to allow those documents to remain in the custody of the court, pending an application for them to be made on behalf of one party or the other, we should be very glad if they may stay in the custody of the court."

The judge: We will keep the letters in court, and we shall certainly have them in proper custody if you take them to another court.



MISS BETTY MAY (Mrs. Sedgwick) . . . insisted on the truth of her story of a cat sacrificed at Mr. Crowley's villa in Sicily.

Earlier in the day Mr. Eddy completed his cross-examination of Mrs. Sedgwick.

"Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday," he asked, "would your life be fairly described as drink, drugs, and immorality?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick. "I took cocaine when I was eighteen, but not after I was twenty-five. I have not drugged for years.

After her marriage to Loveday, she said she was sitting daily as a model, to keep them both: she was earning £1 a day.

"Did your husband," asked Mr. Eddy, "Tell you that Mr. Crowley wanted to give you both a change in Sicily, and to enable you to live a clean life there?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick.

"This was not an attempt to rescue you and your husband from the life you were leading?"

"No, nothing of the sort."

Mr. Eddy: When you married Raoul Loveday, was he in a poor state of health?—No, he had been very ill months before, but he got quite fir. He had great nervous energy.

Did he have a serious accident at Oxford?—I believe it was rather bad.

Did you try to embark him upon the life you were leading in London, whatever it was?—I was a model, and I sat to keep both of us. I was sitting hard because we had no money. We were living together in a furnished back room and I earned £1 a day. I sat every day until we went to Italy.

Husband Called To Cefalu

Mrs. Sedgwick said that one morning a communication came from Mr. Crowley to her husband summoning him to Cefalu. She did not see the communication.

In her book she had said: "It was an invitation—or rather a summons—from the mystic to go out to him in Cefalu."

She agreed that after their arrival in Sicily she supplied information to the "Sunday Express" and was paid for it.

The articles she said were written by a journalist on information she supplied.

Some one else wrote her book "Tiger Woman" in a similar fashion.

Questioned about differences between her evidence and the newspaper articles, Mrs. Sedgwick said, "The journalist must have written that.

She insisted that the story of the sacrifice of the cat was true, and when asked whether many of the cats in Sicily were wild and destructive animals, replied: "I only n=knew two, and they were very charming cats."

Asked about the children at the Abbey, she said that they were not well cared for, and spent most of their time with the peasants.

Mr. Eddy asked Mrs. Sedgwick if she was the Tiger Woman of her book. She replied:—

"I am rather feline in looks. I thought perhaps it was rather a good name for me."

Mr. Eddy: I put to you plainly that you are here as a "bought" witness.

Mrs. Sedgwick: I am here to help the jury.

I am suggesting—without making any imputation against the solicitors—that you were obviously unwilling to come unless you were paid to come?—No.

Mrs. Sedgwick's Expenses

When letters relating to expenses she had received in connection with the case were mentioned, Mrs. Sedgwick said that they had been stolen from her case.

Mr. Malcom Hilbery, K.C. (for the publishers and printers) asked her:—the suggestion that it was documentary evidence that your evidence had been 'bought,' did you know they had got into Crowley's possession?"

"I did not know at all."

The judge: 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 defendants' solicitors to Mrs. Sedgwick.

Mr. Justice Swift: He clearly has no right to have it. Whoever is in possession of those letters is in possession, according to this lady's evidence, of stolen property.

Later the judge said: "I don't see why we should not use the good old English word 'stolen' if the facts warrant it. We shall never know in this case how, because we shall have no opportunity of finding out, but it would be very interesting to know how Mr. Crowley came to be in possession of these letters."

"This Enlightened Age"

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

Mr. Eddy said he wished to make it clear that he made no sort of imputation against the solicitors.

Mr. O'Connor, opening the case for Miss Hamnett, said it was appalling that "in this enlightened age a court should be investigating magic, which is arch-humbug practised by arch-rogues to rob weak-minded people.

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

He suggested to the jury that the time had come for them to stop the case.