

**THE COURIER AND ADVERTISER
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WOMAN WINS "BLACK MAGIC" CASE

JUDGE'S TRENCHANT COMMENTS

"DREADFUL STUFF"

Witness Alleges Theft of Letters

The jury stopped the Aleister Crowley "black magic" libel action yesterday after having been addressed by Mr. Justice Swift.

They returned a verdict in favour of Miss Nina Hamnett and the other defendants sued by Mr. Crowley.

Judgment was given for defendants, with costs.

Mr. Crowley brought an action against Miss Hamnett alleging libel in her book, "Laughing Torso," which, he said, imputed to him the practice of "black magic." Other defendants were Messrs. Constable & Co., the publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham & Briggs, printers.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS.

The jury having suggested the possibility of intervention, were told by Mr. Justice Swift that they must hear Mr. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley). After Mr. Eddy's address the judge said to the jury:—

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

"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.

Are you still of the same mind, or do you want the case to go on?"

The jury consulted, and while they were doing so Mr. Eddy rose. Mr. Justice Swift interrupted him with, "Not now, Mr. Eddy, not now."

The foreman asked if the jury might retire, but the judge said, "No. If there is any doubt the case must go on."

JURY UNANIMOUS.

The jury consulted again, and then the foreman said the members were unanimous.

After judgment had been entered Mr. Eddy asked for a stay of execution, but this the judge refused. It was a pure question of fact for the jury, he said.

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 summing up to be administered, particularly the need for calling attention to the cross-examination and so forth.

Mr. Justice Swift—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 and then some day another jury will reinvestigate this matter.

WITNESS'S LETTERS.

A leading figure in the closing stages of the case was Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, one time model for Epstein.

The allegation was made by Mr. Eddy, and denied, that she was giving evidence as a "bought witness."

Then came a surprise. Mention was made of certain correspondence said to belong to Mrs. Sedgwick, but produced in the present case by Mr. Crowley.

Mr. Justice Swift asked her—"Do you know how Mr. Crowley got possession of your letters to the solicitors?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. (for the publishers and printers)—Did you ever authorize Mr. Crowley or any agent of his to take possession of these letters?—No, certainly not.

ALLEGED THEFT.

Mrs. Sedgwick said that when she last saw the correspondence, with the solicitors, it was in a little case which she carried everywhere with her. Everything had been taken from the case.

Mr. Hilbery—Until they were produced, with the suggestion that there was documentary evidence that your evidence had been paid for, did you know the letters had got into Crowley's possession?—No.

You just knew they were stolen?—They were stolen.

Mr. Justice Swift—Where were they stolen?—Either in my little cottage or in a hotel in London. I think it was in London that I missed them.

"It would be very interesting," said Mr. Justice Swift, "to know how Mr. Crowley came to be in possession of those letters between the defendants' solicitors and this lady."

When copies of the missing letters were produced and referred to, Mr. Justice Swift agreed with Mr. Hilbery that they remain in the custody of the Court until the case ended.

Mr. Eddy said he did not make any imputation against the solicitors in the case.

CAT SACRIFICE.

In earlier evidence Mrs. Sedgwick, whose former husband, Raoul Loveday, died at the Cefalu Villa in Sicily, where Crowley resided, stated 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. Eddy—Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday would your life be fairly described as drink, drugs, and immorality?"

"No." replied Mrs. Sedgwick.

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

Mrs. Sedgwick—No.

Questioned regarding the death of Loveday, Mrs. Sedgwick said she thought he was suffering from 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 sick, and Mr. Crowley gave him laudanum, a lot of it, as medicine.

"TIGER WOMAN."

Mr. Eddy quoted from "Tiger Woman," Mrs. Sedgwick's book.

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.

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'm 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 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.

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that she was known as "Bumbletoff," and had received letters signed "Poddlediff" from an old friend.