

**EVENING NEWS**  
**14 April 1934**

**ARTIST'S MODEL WHO HAD FOUR HUSBANDS**

**MORE EXTRAORDINARY EVIDENCE  
IN BLACK MAGIC CASE**

**WILD CATS AND BRIGANDS**

**ALLEGATIONS OF LAUDANUM POISONING**

"I thought perhaps 'Tiger Woman' was rather a good name for me, because I am rather feline in looks.

This extraordinary remark was made by Mrs. Betty Sedgwick during her cross-examination in the Black Magic libel case to-day.

Mrs. Sedgwick is alleged to have written a book with the title *Tiger Woman* and was severely questioned about passages in it relating to Mr. Crowley and her visit to his Abbey in Sicily.

Referring to the fact that she had four husbands, witness said she had forgotten when she married her fourth. "It might have been seven or eight years ago," she said.

Referring to her third husband's illness, Mrs. Sedgwick said Mr. Crowley gave the sick man laudanum and she told Scotland Yard she thought he was suffering from laudanum poisoning.

**VERDICT FOR DEFENDANTS.**

Before Mr. Eddy had addressed the Court a juryman 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.

A verdict was given for the defendants, and judgment, with costs, was entered for all the defendants.

**STRANGE STORY OF SHOOTING.**

The hearing was resumed before Mr. Justice Swift and a

special jury in the King's Bench Division to-day of the "Black Magic" libel action brought by Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled *Laughing Torso*.

Messrs. Constable and Company Ltd., published 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.

Mr. Crowley denied that he practiced "Black Magic" at a villa which he occupied at Cefalù, 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 on which her book was based.

### **DRUGS WHEN SHE WAS A GIRL.**

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, whose former husband Raoul Loveday, died at the Cefalù villa stated to-day 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.

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

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick, who added that she had not drugged her-self for years. She took cocaine when she was 18; but not after she was 25.

### **NOT LIVING A FAST LIFE.**

Mr. Eddy: Living a fast life in London?—No.

When you married Raoul Loveday was he in a poor state of health?—No. He had been very ill six months; but he got quite fit. 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.

### **A SUMMONS TO CEFALÙ.**

Mrs. Sedgwick said that one morning a communication came from Mr. Crowley to her husband summoning him to Cefalù. In her book she had said "It was an invitation—or, rather, a summons—from the mystic to go out to him in Cefalù."

Mr. Eddy. Did your husband tell you that Mr. Crowley wanted to give you both a chance in Sicily and to enable you to lead a clean life there?—No.

This was not an attempt to rescue you and your husband from the life you were leading?—No, nothing of that sort.

After your arrival in Sicily articles about Mr. Crowley appeared?—Yes.

She had supplied information to a newspaper, but she could not remember how much she was paid for it.

### **CLERGYMAN'S WIFE AND DAUGHTER.**

Mrs. Sedgwick said that a clergy-man's wife and daughter visited the abbey.

At the abbey on her arrival there was a woman named Leah and another woman names Jane?—Yes.

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that yesterday she had said that when she and her husband (Mr. Loveday) arrived Leah opened the door.

Mr. Eddy read from Mrs. Sedgwick's book a passage: "Raoul rapped on the door. We waited a few moments. The door was flung open. There stood the mystic in all the glory of his ceremonial robes. He had evidently prepared for our arrival."

Mrs. Sedgwick: I have mixed this up with the clergyman's wife. I am wrong there.

### **A "YOUNG WIFE'S STORY" OF ABBEY.**

Mr. Eddy referred to articles in a London newspaper and said "I am suggesting that you are the source of all these stories about 'The worst man in the world.' " On 4 March 1923 he said, there appeared a story headed "Young wife's story of

Crowley's Abbey."

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that this was the information for which she was paid. The story was written for her by a journalist.

Did you write the book (*Tiger Woman*)?—No.

A few facts—and somebody else has done the rest is that it?—Yes.

Counsel read from the article in the newspaper "We knocked at the door and it was opened by a woman who we were to know later as Jane."

"Which of these stories is right?" he asked.

### ON MATTRESS.

Mr. Eddy: Look at your book again. "We gathered that it was time to get up. Raoul was something of a dandy, and was horrified at the absence of toilet apparatus. 'Monstrous,' he exclaimed several times tramping up and down the room."

"Is that all an invention"? Mr. Eddy inquired.

Mrs. Sedgwick said there were two mattresses in the room, and her husband slept on one. He was not allowed to be husband.

"Rightly or wrongly," interposed Mr. Justice Swift, "the witness is obviously trying to draw a distinction between sleeping with a person and sleeping in the same room."

Mr. Eddy then cross-examined Mrs. Sedgwick on her evidence regarding the "terrible sacrifice of a cat." Is there a word of truth in it? he asked.

Mrs. Sedgwick: Absolutely true—everything about the cat is true.

### THE CATS OF SICILY.

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

I am suggesting that if there is any basis for your story it is that a wild cat was shot?—No, no.

Did Mr. Crowley shoot a cat himself?—No, he shot a dog outside in the court yard.

I am suggesting that at times he shot wild cats?—Never.

Then I am suggesting that this statement of yours about the sacrifice of a cat and your husband, who you agree is a man of refinement, drinking the blood of the cat is pure fiction?—No,

every word of it is true.

Mrs. Sedgwick said she didn't understand anything about the ceremonies at the Abbey. There was a table set up as an altar in the Temple and it was under that the cat ran. It ran over the circle and tried to make for a bedroom, but it was cut so badly that it didn't know what to do or where to go.

Mr. Eddy: You were living in the house from November 1922 to March 1923?—Yes.

With your husband?—Not altogether because I was turned out.

When were you turned out?—I can't remember. It was near his death anyway. A few days before.

Were the children of the Abbey well cared for?—No.

Were they ill-treated?—No; I don't think they were well brought up and well looked after. They had to fend for themselves as it were. They were with peasants most of the time.

Mr. Eddy referred to a passage of her book in which Mrs. Sedgwick wrote "They were delightful children. Healthy and well fed and with no appearance of being oppressed by their unconventional surroundings." "Is that true?" he asked.

"I didn't say they were underfed/ I didn't approve their upbringing," Mrs. Sedgwick replied.

### **GIVEN MEDICINE BY MR. CROWLEY.**

Was your husband well treated in his illness?—I suppose he was in a way.

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.

Mr. Eddy referred to another passage describing an occasion when Mr. Loveday drank some spring water despite a warning from Mr. Crowley not to do so.

"Had the drinking of this water anything to do with the illness?" he asked.—No.

### **"STATEMENTS NOT WILD."**

Are you utterly reckless as to what stories are communi-

cated to the public as representing the facts?—No.

You saw these wild statements in the original articles?—They are not wild. They are true.

But the statements about the under-graduate at Cambridge?—That was not true.

It was in the original article?—Yes.

Why did you allow that utterly untrue story to be reproduced in a book which goes out to the public as your story?—It didn't seem to me to matter much, and as it had appeared in the article it didn't matter if it appeared in the book. It certainly made the book a little more exciting.

Is it to make your evidence a little more exciting that we are hearing these things now?—No.

Were you ordered to leave Cefalù or did you leave of your own accord?—I asked to go.

### **"FIRED AT THE MYSTIC AND HE LAUGHED."**

Mr. Eddy referred to a passage in the book in which Mrs. Sedgwick said:

"He (Mr. Crowley ordered me to go and there was a terrific scene. I should have said before there were several loaded revolvers which used to lie about the Abbey. They were very necessary for we never knew when brigands might attack us.

. . . I seized a revolver and fired it wildly at the mystic. It went wide of the mark and he laughed heartily. Then I rushed at him, but couldn't get a grip on his shaven head. He picked me up in his arms and flung me bodily from the front door."

Mrs. Sedgwick said she didn't see any brigands, but was told they were about. When dogs came Mr. Crowley shot at them.

Raoul was her third husband said Mrs. Sedgwick.

Mr. Eddy—How soon after March, 1923, did you marry your fourth?—Many years.

### **ALWAYS AN ARTIST'S MODEL.**

In the meantime were you leading an immoral life?—No.

What were you doing to earn a living?—I was a model. It has been my work all my life.

When did you marry your fourth husband?—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 read a passage from *Tiger Woman* in which it was related the fourth husband's mother was saying, "Oh, you foul, wicked woman. You are killing my son."

Mr. Eddy: Was he ill then?—Yes. Seriously ill?—No.

Being attended by a doctor?—I am not sure. I think the doctor used to drop in as a friend anyhow.

### **SLAPPED HER MOTHER-IN-LAW**

Mr. Eddy (reading again from the book): "I felt this was the last straw, and on an earlier occasion I had refrained from attacking her with violence."

Mrs. Sedgwick: Yes, because she was interfering with me so much.

Mr. Eddy: This book is called *Tiger Woman*. Are you "Tiger Woman"?—Yes.

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

Nothing to do with your violent nature?—I am not violent.

Mr. Eddy (again reading): "This time I was too strung up. . . And I did."

"I slapped her. She annoyed me," was the reply.

### **BUNDLED INTO STREET FIGHTING**

"Is this a typical thing," asked Mr. Eddy who went on to read a passage in the book which described a scene with another woman.

"In the room. . . . I saw only one vacant chair on which, after politely obtaining the permission of the man at whose table it was opposite, I sat down. My intrusion aroused the resentment of his female companion. She began to try to make me appear ridiculous. My wits were far sharper than hers. She became insulting. My nostrils dilated as they do when I am angry. Still she continued to jeer at me. This went on for some time. At last she got up and danced with the man who would no doubt have preferred to remain at the table. 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 in to the street fighting all the time. I meant paying dearly for that insult. False teeth indeed. "I plunged my Singers 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."

Continuing his questioning of Mrs. Sedgwick, Mr. Eddy asked in regard to your position in this case put it to plainly that you are here as a "bought" witness.

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

She admitted having written to Messrs. Waterhouse and Co., solicitors for the printers and publishers asking for £5 "on account of my personal expenses incurred in connection with my recent services in regard to evidence."

At that time she had been paid between £15 and £20 from the solicitors for her expenses of coming up from the country and staying in London for a few days in connection with the case.

In reply she received a letter stating.

I am afraid I cannot send you as much as another £5. I am grateful for your help but I thought previous remittances covered a great deal."

### **£5 for Expenses.**

Mrs. Sedgwick admitted that she eventually received a letter from Messrs. Waterhouse enclosing £5 for expenses incurred in coming to London about the case.

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 can't imagine how he got them.

Mr. Hilbery: Were there others letters in the case?—Yes. Everything was taken from the case. The contents were all stolen.

Until they were produced here with the suggestions that it was documentary evidence, that your evidence had been bought, did you know they had got into Crowley's possession?—I didn't know at all.

## **"Stolen Property."**

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 24 February, 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 it.