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AN EPSTEIN MODEL IN CROWLEY CASE

QUESTIONED ABOUT
“LIVING A FAST LIFE IN LONDON”

SAYS “MYSTIC” GAVE LAUDANUM
TO HER SICK HUSBAND

Mr. Aleister Crowley is suing Miss Nina Hamnett for alleged libel in her book, *Laughing Torso*. He alleges that passages in the book impute that he practiced black magic. Messrs. Constable & Co., the publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers, are also defendants. They plead justification.

The Judge—Mr. Justice Swift.

For Mr. Crowley—Mr. J. P. Eddy.

For the Publishers and Printers—Mr. M. Hilberry, K.C.

For Miss Hamnett—Mr. M. O'Connor.

Searching questions were put to Mrs. Betty Sedgwick when her cross-examination in the Aleister Crowley libel action was resumed in the King's Bench Division to-day.

Mrs. Sedgwick was questioned about her life before her marriage to Raoul Loveday.

Mr. Eddy (Mr. Crowley's counsel) asked:

“Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday would your life be fairly described as drink, drugs, and immorality?”

Mrs. Sedgwick gave a denial.

“Living a very fast life in London?” counsel continued. “No,” was the answer.

According to evidence given yesterday by Mrs. Sedgwick, whose former husband, Raoul Loveday, died at Mr. Crowley's villa in Sicily, a cat on one occasion was sacrificed in the course of a magical ceremony at the villa. Her husband, she said, then drank a cup of cat's blood.

£1 a Day as Model

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.

Mrs. Sedgwick replying to Mr. Eddy in cross-examination today, said that she had not drugged herself for years. She took cocaine when she was 18, but not after she was 25.

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 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 earned £1 a day. I sat every day until we went to Italy.

Mrs. Sedgwick said that one morning a communication from Mr. Crowley to her husband summoning him to Cefalù. 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 Cefalù."

Mr. Eddy:—Did your husband 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.

Nothing of that sort?—No.

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

You know that after your arrival in Sicily articles about Mr. Crowley appeared?—Yes.

Did you supply the information?—No.

Have you not supplied information to the *Sunday Express*?—Yes.

Have you been paid for it?—Yes.

When did you supply that information?—On the day I arrived in England from Sicily.

What were you paid for it?—I cannot remember. It was a long time ago.

While you were in Cefalù there was no other visitor at the house other than you and your husband?—Not living there, except the people of the Abbey.

No journalist came to Cefalù to see what the facts really were?—I did not see anybody.

Mrs. Sedgwick said that a clergyman's wife and daughter visited the Abbey.

Mr. Eddy. At the Abbey on your arrival, there was a woman named Leah?—Yes.

Was there another woman named Jane?—Yes.

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that yesterday she had said that, when she and her husband (Mr. Loveday) arrived. Leah opened the door. Crowley, she thought, must have been walking along the passage.

Mr. Eddy read from Mrs. Sedgwick's book a passage which ran:

Raoul rapped on the door; we waited a few minutes; the door was then opened; there stood the mystic in all the glory of his ceremonial robes. He had evidently prepared for our arrival.

Mr. Eddy said that in the *Sunday Express* of March 4, 1923, 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.

"Did you write it?" counsel asked. and the reply was "No."

Did you write this book (*Tiger Woman*, described as her autobiography)?—No.

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

Mrs. Sedgwick said the story in the *Sunday Express* was written for her by a journalist.

"The Scarlet Woman"

Did it surprise you to see what had been happening (according to you) at Cefalù when you read this story, purporting to be your story?—No, it did not.

Counsel read from the article in the news-paper: "We knocked at the door and it was opened by a woman whom we were to know later as Jane." "Which of these stories is right?" he asked.

Mrs. Sedgwick:—Well, the journalist did it. I told him it was Leah.

Which of them is right?—The woman Leah, "the Scarlet Woman," opened the door.

Mr. Eddy put to Mrs. Sedgwick a statement in *Tiger Woman* that "when she, and her husband arrived at Cefalù they slept, 'on a mattress on the floor.' "

"Yesterday," observed counsel, "you said you were told to sleep by yourself."

Mrs. Sedgwick:—Yes. My husband and I did not sleep together.

Mr. Eddy:—The *Sunday Express* article states: "Crowley said we had better retire early after our journey. No beds were ready for us, so Jane gave up her room to us and spent the night in the temple." Is that correct?—The journalist must have written that.

Mrs. Sedgwick persisted that she slept by herself.

Mr. Eddy:—Look at your book again (reading).—"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 an invention?" Mr. Eddy inquired.

Mrs. Sedgwick said there were two mattresses in the room, and her husband slept on one.

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

Story of Cat Sacrifice

Mrs. Sedgwick, in reply to further questions, said: "We all pretty well lived in Crowley's room after the Pentagram."

She persisted that drugs were kept in his desk, which was unlocked and were available to the people there.

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.—Everything about the cat is true.

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

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

Mr. Justice Swift (to counsel).—If the suggestion is being put forward, let us have it more precisely. When, where and by whom was the cat shot?

Mr. Eddy.—I am suggesting to this witness that wild cats are a pest in Sicily and if there is any foundation for her story it can only relate to the destruction of one of those destructive animals, and had no reference to any sacrifice at all.

Mr. Justice Swift.—Was there a cat shot or was there not?

Mr. Eddy.—Did Mr. Crowley shoot a cat himself?

Mrs. Sedgwick.—No, she shot a dog outside in the courtyard.

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

Then I am suggesting that this statement of your about the sacrifice of a cat end of your husband, who you agree was a man of refinement, drinking the blood of the cat, is pure fiction?—Every word is true.

Cat Under Altar

Mrs. Sedgwick said she did not understand about the ceremonies at the Abbey. There was a table as an altar in the temple and it was under that that the cat had ran.

"It ran over the circle and tried to make for a bedroom," she added, "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.

Was that because of your husband/s illness, to get proper accommodation for you?—No.

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

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

Were they ill-treated?—No, I do not think they were well brought up and well looked after: "They were delightful children, healthy and well-fed, and with no appearance of being oppressed by the unconventional surroundings."

"Is that true?" he asked.

I don't say they were underfed. I did not approve their upbringing," Mrs. Sedgwick replied.

Her Husband's Illness

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 fever.

"That is true," Mrs. Sedgwick explained. "After he had

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."

Did you tell Scotland Yard what you did to the undergraduate in Paris?—I told you before that that is not true. It is absurd.

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 his illness?" he asked.

"I should think not," was the reply.

Are you utterly reckless as to what stories are communicated to the public as representing the facts?—No.

"A Little More Exciting"

Did all these little touches in this book come from the journalist?—This was copied from the articles I wrote in the *World's Pictorial News*.

They contain inaccurate statements?—I gave them the facts. They "worked round them" and got their data a little wrong.