

THE LIVERPOOL ECHO
LIVERPOOL, LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND
24 JULY 1934
(page 12)

MR. CROWLEY IN COURT

Artists' Model's Letters

SEQUEL TO ACTION

Money Supplied By Solicitors

Edward Alexander Crowley, aged 58, described as an explorer, pleaded not guilty at the Old Bailey, to-day, to the charge of receiving four original letters and one copy of a letter.

The letters were said to have been stolen from Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, known as "Betty May," a model.

Crowley appeared in the dock wearing a double-breasted black jacket, with pinstriped trousers and a black cravat, and he carried a silk hat.

Mr. Melford Stevenson, prosecuting, said it was alleged that Crowley received the letters between June 21, 1933, and April 10, 1934.

The facts of the case were very short and quite simple. In 1932 Crowley became a plaintiff in a civil action for damages for libel.

It was brought against some publishers called Constable, and it was in respect of a passage in a book published by them in which certain reflections, according to Crowley, were made upon him in the name of Aleister Crowley.

AS A WITNESS

Mr. Stevenson said Mrs. Sedgwick, who was known as Betty May, who has earned her living as an artist's model, was expecting to be called as a witness to give evidence against Crowley in the libel action.

There were four letters which had passed between her and the solicitors who were arranging for her to be called, and they disclosed the fact that she had been receiving from the solicitors certain sums of money in respect of expenses.

There was another letter which related to her arrangements with publishers of a book she was preparing.

Towards the end of June she went to a cottage in the country. There she opened her attaché case, and she found that all the documents had disappeared. The letters were never seen by that lady from the end of June, 1933, until the month of April, 1934.

"In that month she was giving evidence for the defence, and on that occasion the letters were produced in court by counsel appearing for Crowley, and cross-examination was directed to Mrs. Sedgwick upon those letters.

"HANDED TO A CLERK"

"You will hear they were handed by the prisoner to a clerk to his solicitors during the course of the preparation of during the course of the preparation of his case in the libel action."

Mr. Stevenson said it was not known who stole the letters. The only person who was likely to have any interest in their possession was Aleister Crowley, and the circumstances were such that it was for him to give an explanation of his possession of them.

Replying to Mr. C. Gallop (defending), Mrs. Sedgwick said that as a professional model she had been receiving sums of money for sittings, and was sitting during the High Court action.

Holding up a book, Mr. Gallop asked, "Do you recognise this book—'Tiger Woman: My Story,' by Betty May?"

Mrs. Sedgwick.—Yes.

"UTTER FABRICATION"

Mr. Gallop.—A great deal of the book is utter fabrication?—A lot of it is.

Do you recollect saying in this book that you intended to make yourself heard by the public in future?—Yes, I did.

Who is Captain Eddie Cruze?—He was a friend of mine. I think he stole those papers. I know he did.

Mrs. Sedgwick said she stayed with Cruze at Seymour-street. He had a little money at the beginning.

Mr. Gallop.—Was he taking drugs?—He was taking something as a sleeping draught.

Was it called cocaine or heroin?—It was called alonal.

"MILLIONS AND MILLIONS"

Was he drunk?—Moderately. He talked so much about millions and millions of pounds that he tired me out.

I suggest to you that you came forward in the libel action for the sole purpose of making money for yourself?—I did not.

Replying to Judge Whitely, Mrs. Sedgwick said she was the chief witness for the defence in the libel action. She had between £15 and £20 from the solicitors in expenses. She went about finding out things.

Mr. Gallop.—Did you announce your intention of leaving the country after the libel action?—Yes, I was leaving.

"£100 FOR THEM"

Mrs. Sedgwick, in further cross-examination by Mr. Gallop, said she accused Cruze of stealing the letters, as she had heard he had been showing them around, saying that he could get £100 for them.

The Judge.—What possible value can these letters have?

Mr. Gallop.—I cannot see the slightest. I am suggesting the most unfathomable folly on the part of Mr. Cruze and this lady.

Mr. Gallop then explained that his defence was that Cruze had the letters as security for money owed him, and as they were his letters he could hand them over to Mr. Crowley.

"APPALLING DEPRAVITY"

Referring to a passage in the book, Mr. Gallop said:—

"This book is supposed to be of your life and it is of the most appalling depravity, whether it is true or false?"

Mrs. Sedgwick.—Well, that is all puff.

And you wrote that story of disgusting and revolting life with the intention of getting money from the public?—Not at all.

The Judge.—You wanted it to sell?—I did not.

Walter William Hunt, a solicitor's clerk, said Mr. Crowley handed him the letters a month or six weeks before the action in the High Court.