

**THE DAILY MIRROR**  
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**ALEISTER CROWLEY'S 'BLACK MAGIC'  
APPEAL FAILS**

**'INSULTING LANGUAGE ON SACRED MATTERS'**

—The Judge

The appeal of Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, in the "Black Magic" libel case, was dismissed with costs by the Court of Appeal yesterday.

Mr. Crowley appealed against the judgment of Mr. Justice Swift in the action he brought against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of "Laughing Torso," Messrs. Constable and Company, publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

He said the book imputed to him the practice of black magic, which he declared was "foul and criminal." He said he had never practised it.

The case for the respondents was that on Mr. Crowley's admissions in the witness-box and on statements made in his published works, he had practised a form of magic which was "the negation of what every decent and right-minded person had ever held to be either decent or sacred."

They also maintained that his reputation was that of a "black magician."

For the publishers, Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., said their case was that the statements in "Laughing Torso" were not defamatory of Mr. Crowley, nor were they something that could be understood by reasonable people as damaging his reputation. "having regard to what his reputation was and the material on which he had built it, and what he had allowed it publicly to be."

**"VITAL DISTINCTION"**

Mr. Eddy, for Mr. Crowley, said that, though there was much to suggest that his client had practised magic, there was a vital distinction between white and black magic.

Lord Justice Greer, giving judgment, said the Court had come to the conclusion that, though there might be something

to be said in favour of the view that the summing-up was not as full as it should reasonably have been, the only possible result in this case, having regard to the evidence and admissions of Mr. Crowley, was a verdict for the defendants.

Mr. Crowley had made admissions regarding his conduct which Mr. Justice Swift described as admissions of the grossest kind he had heard in forty years' experience at the Bar.

"In fact," added Lord Justice Greer, "the Judge said, 'Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man who describes himself as "the greatest living poet."' "

"So far as I am concerned," added Lord Justice Greer, "I had never heard of the distinction between black magic and white magic until it was explained, by the evidence, as a technical distinction which is known to those who study magic and study the arts of people who either are, or pretend to be, magicians, black or white.

### **"IMPROPER" BOOK**

"It is said the words meant that by means of black magic Mr. Crowley had killed a baby—I think that is an extravagant interpretation of the words.

Mr. Crowley had written a book when he was a young man and it was admitted to be obscene.

"In 1929, when he published his 'confessions,' he does not seem to have apologized very much for what he had done as a young man.

"Is it astonishing that a jury of common sense, after hearing evidence of that kind—and it is multiplied by a lot of other evidence about his efforts as a magician—should think it was impossible that they could give a verdict for the plaintiff?

"They had extracts from his books in which insulting language had been used with reference to matters which average persons regard as sacred."