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**JUDGE DENOUNCES "BEAST 666"
IN BLACK MAGIC SUIT**

CROWLEY CASE—FULL DETAILS

**Woman's Amazing Story of Scenes
in a Sicilian "temple"**

THE CAT AND THE ALTAR



Miss Nina Hamnett



Mr. Aleister Crowley



Mrs. Sedgwick

After having listened for three days to stories about magic, blood sacrifices, and weird rites in a Sicilian villa, a King's Bench jury stopped the case in which Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, claimed damages for alleged libel against Miss Nona Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," Messrs. Constable and Co., Ltd., the publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

Mr. Crowley complained that the book imputed that he practised "Black Magic." The defence was a plea of justification.

Verdicts for the defendants were returned and judgment for them was entered with costs.

"Abominable Stuff"

The closing day's proceedings were remarkable for the comments of Mr. Justice Swift.

"I have," he said, "been over 40 years engaged in the administration of the law, and thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness.

"I thought that everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at some 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."

Whispering Jurymen

For Miss Hamnett, Mr. Martin O'Connor said it was appalling that "in this enlightened age a court should be investigating magic which is arch-humbug practiced by arch-roguers to rob weak-minded people.

"I hope this action," he added, "will end for ever the activities of this hypocritical rascal."

During his speech two jurymen whispered together, and then all the jury conferred.

One asked the judge if that were "the correct time to intervene."

The judge said that counsel for the plaintiff (Mr. Eddy) was entitled to address them before they expressed any opinion.

Mr. Eddy then made his final submission to the jury, which was that no reasonable jury could do otherwise than find a verdict in favour of Mr. Crowley, "notwithstanding the view that had been indicated."

CROWLEY'S WEALTH

Denial of the Practice of "Black" Magic

When the proceedings were opened, Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley) said that plaintiff had for many years been interested in magic; he had always fought against black magic.

The magic in which he believed was that which stressed the will and in 1920 he started a little community at a villa in Cefalu, Sicily, to study it.

A passage in the book stated that M. Crowley "had a temple called the Temple of Thelema at Cefalu, where he was supposed to practice black magic."

Giving evidence, Mr. Crowley said that when he was young he rebelled against the "general atmosphere of the Plymouth Brethren."

Inherited £30,000

He was educated at Cambridge and inherited between £30,000 and £40,000. He had been interested in magic since 1897. He never practiced black magic.

Mr. Crowley denied that he told Miss Hamnett the things of which he complained in the book. No baby mysteriously disappeared. A goat was kept for milking, but the inhabitants were not frightened by it. He denied that a ceremony known as Pentagram was obscene, or that animals were sacrificed and that people were invited to drink blood.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. (for the publishers and printers): You have been publicly denounced as the worst man in the world?—Only by the lowest kind of newspaper.

Did nay paper call you the Monster of Wickedness?—I don't remember which papers.

Have you from the time of your adolescence, openly defied all moral conventions?—No.

Mr. Crowley admitted that he assumed the designations of "Beast 666" and "the Master Therion" (the Great Wild Beast).

"666 is the number of the Sun and you can call me 'Little Sunshine,' " he explained.

Buddha Marks

Is it true that practically all your works are erotic in tendency and grossly indecent in expression?—It would be entirely untrue to say anything of the kind. I published 52 hymns which were highly praised in the Catholic Press.

Mr. Hilbery then referred to passages in Mr. Crowley's books, "The Confessions of Aleister Crowley."

You assert that you had the distinguishing marks of a Buddha at birth?—Yes. I have got some of them now.

And you continue in your claim to be a master magician.—Yes, that is the technical term. I took a degree which conferred that title.

Your magic is like your poems—a mixture of eroticism and sexual indulgence?—It doesn't involve anything of the kind.

Later in the proceedings Mr. Crowley said he had a flat in his early days in Chancery-lane.

Mr. Hilbery: Did you have two temples in the flat?—Yes, but one was not really a temple. It was just a lobby.

Mr. Crowley agreed that, in an article, he referred to an occasion when he invoked the "forces," with the result that some people there were attacked by unseen assailants.

Black and White

Was that your black magic or your white magic?—It is white magic in which you protect yourself from such things.

Mr. Hilbery: As a part of your magic do you believe in a practice of bloody sacrifice?—I believe in its efficacy.

If you believe in its efficacy, you would believe in its being practiced?—I do not approve it at all.

Referring to the villa at Cefalu, Mr. Hilbery asked whether there was an altar there for the purpose of ceremonies.

"If you like, yes," replied Mr. Crowley.

Did it have on it a book which purports to contain the laws?—I expect so.

Were there candles upon it which were used for ceremonial purposes?—Yes.

Was incense used at the ceremonies?—Yes.

Weapons and Drugs

Was this altar seven-sided? I believe it was.

For the purpose did you require a knife?—No, there were no knives, magically speaking, but there was a dagger and a sword.

Did you wear an appropriate robe at the ceremony?—Yes.

In some of the ceremonies were you endeavouring to get concentrated spiritual ecstasy?—Yes.

Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalu?—There was no hasheesh.

Opium?—Yes.

Strychnine?—Yes.

Did you advise that drugs should be employed for the purpose of increasing or helping the spiritual ecstasy?—No; nothing would be more inappropriate at a ceremony.

I suggest that hasheesh was used for the inmates of your villa?—It was not.

With your approval an inmate had a razor or knife with which to cut himself if he stumbled into using a forbidden word, whatever it was?—They were not gashed, but minute cuts. You can see marks of them on my own arm.

"This is a general practice, by which any man may learn to control his actions and thoughts," added Mr. Crowley.

Drawings on Walls

He agreed that there were drawings on the walls of the villa at Cefalu.

Were some of them, at any rate, frescoes which may technically have been obscene?—Not in my opinion.

Questioned about the ritual of his magic circle, Mr. Crowley said he spoke words which might have been intoning words.

Answering the judge, in reference to newspaper attacks, he said he took no steps to clear his character.

Cross-examining on behalf of Miss Hamnett, Mr. Martin O'Connor suggested to Mr. Crowley that he was a "man who sees visions." Mr. Crowley agreed.

You are a "master magician"?—Yes, go on.

And a person with supernatural powers?—No.

Mr. O'Connor invited Mr. Crowley to try his magic in court. "Try your magic on my learned friend" (pointing to Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C.), he said, "I am sure he will not object."

"I would not attack anyone," replied Mr. Crowley. "I have never done willful harm to any human being."

Mr. Carl [*sic*] Germer, a German, now living in England, said he knew many people in Germany and America who admired Mr. Crowley very greatly.

THE "TIGER WOMAN" Her Account of Grotesque Happenings

Evidence was given by Mrs. Betty May Sedgwick, who said she was formerly the wife of Frederick C. Loveday, referred to in the case as Raoul Loveday. They were married in 1922, and went to Sicily at the end of that year.

Describing one part of the villa at Cefalu, Mrs. Sedgwick said there were five triangular boxes, painted in various colours, on the floor. There was also a red circle, the centre of which was a pentagram. In the centre of the pentagram was an altar.

There were many figures on the walls. "They were extremely improper paintings," continued Mrs. Sedgwick.

"About half-past five in the morning," she said, "the household were aroused and had to go out and face the sun. It was called adoration.

"The evening ceremony was the great thing of the day. Crowley slept the whole day and lived at night. During the Pentagram ceremony the women sat on boxes in the circle.

"Everything was grotesque and rather mad. Mr. Crowley wore a robe of bright colours."

Describing the ritual she said: "There was a sort of hysterical business. They called on gods. There was an invocation. It was all done with due solemnity.

"Drank Cat's Blood"

Mr. C. W. Lilley (for the publishers and printers): Did you see any sacrifice at all?—I saw a very big sacrifice—a terrible sacrifice—the sacrifice of a cat.

Where was it sacrificed?—In the Temple inside the circle and on the altar.

Mr. Crowley had a knife with a long handle," said Mrs. Sedgwick. "It was not very sharp. The cat was taken out of a bag and my husband had to kill it.

"My husband had to drink a cup of the cat's blood."

In reply to Mr. Eddy, witness denied that it would be true to describe her life immediately before her marriage to Raoul Loveday as "drink, drugs and immorality." She added that she had not drugged herself for years. She took cocaine when she was 18, but not after she was 25.

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.

Laudanum Suggestion

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

Have you supplied information to a Sunday newspaper?—Yes.

Have you been paid for it?—Yes.

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

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

She maintained that everything she said about the cat sacrifice was true.

Mr. Eddy pointed out that, in her book, Mrs. Sedgwick said her husband was suffering from enteric.

"That is true," Mrs. Sedgwick said, "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."

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

Four Marriages

Mr. Eddy read a passage in Mrs. Sedgwick's book, in which she said:

"He (Mr. Crowley) ordered me to go and there was a terrific scene . . . He picked me up in his arms and flung me bodily from the front door."

In reply to another question, Mrs. Sedgwick said Raoul Loveday was her third husband.

How soon after March, 1923, did you marry the fourth?—Many years.

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

Your book is called "Tiger Woman"?—Yes.

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

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

She said she received two sums of £25 and £75 for newspaper articles.

Mr. Eddy: I am suggesting, without making any imputation against the solicitors, that you were obviously unwilling to come unless you were paid to come?—No

Her Expenses

Mrs. Sedgwick admitted that she wrote to Messrs. Waterhouse and Company (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 for expenses of coming up from the country 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 good deal."

"Are you known as 'Bumble Toff'?" asked Mr. Eddy, handing a letter to the witness.

Mrs. Sedgwick replied that lots of people called her that.

Do you know anyone by the name of Poddle Diff?—Yes; he is an old friend of mine.

Have you had letters from Poddle Diff?—Years and years ago.

“Extracted” Letters

Mr. Hilbery: Did you ever authorize anyone to extract those letters from your case and give them to Mr. Crowley?—No.

Mr. Justice Swift: Do you know how Mr. Crowley got possession of your letters?—I can't imagine how he got them.

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

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 defendants' solicitors to Mrs. Sedgwick.

Judge's Warning

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.

Mr. Hilbery: The witness says she has been permanently deprived of the possession of the letters against her will.

Mr. Justice Swift: I don't see why we should not use the good old English word "stolen" if the facts warrant it. We shall never know in this case how, because we shall have no opportunity of finding out, but it would be very interesting to know how Mr. Crowley came to be in possession of these letters.

Mr. Justice Swift agreed with Mr. Hilbery, and added that the letters should remain in the custody of the Court.

At the end of Mrs. Sedgwick's evidence Mr. Hilbery said he would like to call Mr. Harper, of Messrs. Waterhouse, to refute any suggestion that he had been a party to purchasing any evidence.