

THE SUN
SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA
7 DECEMBER 1947
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**Black or white, his magic
branded him as wicked**

FACT'S London News Bureau

The invocation went on for two hours. Then a cat was brought in and laid on the seven-sided white altar, with a red star painted on the side, and sacrificed.

Blood from the dead cat dripped into a bowl and a man stepped forward and drank the blood.

An Englishwoman, Mrs. Betty Loveday, described the scene to an English court and said the man who drank the cat's blood was her husband, Frederick Loveday, known as Raoul.

Mrs. Loveday gave evidence in 1934, for the defence in a libel action brought by Edward Alexander (Aleister) Crowley against authoress Nina Hamnett, and the publishers of her book, *Laughing Torso*.

Sicilian temple

A paragraph in the book prompted the action. It read: "Crowley had a temple in Cefalu, Sicily. He was supposed to practise black magic there, and one day a baby was said to have disappeared mysteriously. There was also a goat there. This all pointed to black magic, so people said, and the people of the village were frightened of him."

Crowley never sought to silence his defamers through the courts until "*Laughing Torso*" was published. The jury dismissed the case with costs against him.

Justice Swift in summing up the case said: "I've never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous stuff, as that which has been produced by a man, who described himself as the greatest living poet."

Last Tuesday, with the stigma of "the most wicked man in the world" still on him, 72-year-old Crowley died in a guest-house at Netherwood, Hastings.

Born of strict Plymouth Brethren parents at Leamington, Warwickshire, Crowley was educated at Malvern School, then Cambridge. Alpine climber At Cambridge, he became interested in magic, and, on graduating, roamed the world, climbed the Alps, the Himalayas and Italian volcanoes. He crossed China and the Sahara Desert and lived in an Indian village.

He studied all the religions in the world and practised magic cults.

Crowley claimed that he practised white, not black magic. These were his distinctions.

White magic is on the side of the angels and rests on faith in the order and uniformity of Nature. It invokes good spirits to its aid, although evil spirits may be evoked and controlled to do good.

Black versus white

Black magic is a degrading thing associated with the degradation of religion and the invocation of devils and even calls for the sacrifice of children.

In his early experiments in white magic, when he was inexperienced, he said he had invoked certain forces with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants.

On a later occasion, he succeeded in rendering himself invisible. Once he had placed a dead bird in a skeleton's mouth to see if he could make the skeleton live.

In his book *Magick*, he wrote: "Bloody sacrifice is the most efficacious in practising magic and human sacrifice is the best."

Crowley claimed to be the greatest poet in the world, but most critics named his poems, vile and repulsive. He, himself, had described them as "the excreta of Aleister Crowley."

In 1920, he started a small community or order at the Sicilian village of Cefalu. He took an old farmhouse and converted it into a temple called the Abbey of Thelema. Thelema is a cult of magic.

A band of men and women, some with children, became disciples, who lived at the temple and they called Crowley, at his bidding, Beast 666, or the Master of Therium, meaning Great Wild Beast.

His bedroom at the temple was called the Room of Nightmares. It was decorated with fantastic frescoes, most of them obscene.

Crowley denied that he practised black magic here, but this was Mrs. Loveday's story.

The red circle

She said her husband had met Crowley in 1922 and that year they went to the Abbey of Thelema.

In a large room, a red circle had been drawn on the floor in the centre of which was a pentagram. In the middle of the pentagram was the altar, with a book and candles on it.

The walls were decorated with lewd paintings and incense burned on a brazier. The cultists sat round the circle.

Beast 666, wearing a robe with a cowl, and his spiritual wife, dressed in scarlet, who was known as The Scarlet Woman, entered.

In a ceremony that lasted two hours, Beast 666 rose and made passes with a sword, then went to each person in turn and breathed him in. A ritual was read. On Fridays there was a special invocation to Pan, the Arcadian patron of shepherds.

Cat sacrifice

Mrs. Loveday then told of the sacrifice of the cat and the blood-drinking. She said her husband was ill after he had drunk the blood and Crowley gave him laudanum every day.

Loveday died later, but his death was ascribed to natural causes.

The eerie stories of the Abbey of Thelema spread beyond Cefalu and Beast 666 was told to leave the country. He was also barred from France.

In recent years, Crowley was fat, olive-skinned, with a heavy jowl and grey hair.

When his staring, reptilian eyes closed for the last time, an emerald and diamond ring, shaped into two entwining snakes, which he had claimed was a powerful magic symbol, was still on the third finger of his left hand.

Said the staff at the guesthouse: "He lived a simple life here."