

**THE EVENING DESPATCH  
BIRMINGHAM, WARWICKSHIRE, ENGLAND  
13 APRIL 1934  
(page 11)**

**"HORRIBLE STUFF PRODUCED  
BY MR. CROWLEY"**

**JUDGE'S COMMENT IN "MAGIC" CASE**

**DEFENDANTS WIN**

**EVIDENCE BY "TIGER WOMAN"**

The "black magic" case ended to-day with a strong condemnation by Mr. Justice Swift of the evidence produced by Mr. Crowley.

The verdict was for the defendants against whom Mr. Crowley, the author, brought an action for libel. The defendants were Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," Constable and Co., Ltd., publishers and Charles Whittingham & Briggs, printers.

"Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, abominable stuff as that produced by the man describing himself as the greatest living poet." Mr. Justice Swift told the jury.

"I have nothing to say about the facts except this: I have been more than 40 years engaged in the administration of the law in one capacity or another. I thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness; I thought that everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me, but I have learnt in this case that we can always learn something if we live long enough."

The jury said their verdict was unanimous, and judgment was given for all defendants, with costs.

Mr. Crowley complained that the book imputed that he had practiced "black magic" which he said was a libel upon him. The defence was a plea of justification.

Mr. Crowley denied that he practiced "black magic" at a villa which he occupied at Cefalu, Sicily.

**"ARCH HUMBUG"**

## Closing Words of Counsel for Authoress

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, whose former husband, Raoul Loveday, died at the villa in Sicily, stated yesterday that on one occasion a cat was sacrificed in the course of a magical ceremony and that her husband drank a cup of the cat's blood. Mr. Crowley had said that there never had been any sacrifice of any animal in the ceremony or any drinking of blood.

Mr. J. P. Eddy (for Mr. Crowley) resuming his cross-examination of Mrs. Sedgwick to-day asked: "Immediately before your marriage to Raoul Loveday would your life be fairly described as drink, drugs and immorality?"

"No," replied Mrs. Sedgwick, who said she had not drugged herself for years.

Did your husband tell you that Mr. Crowley wanted to give you both a chance in Sicily to live a clean life there?—No.

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

After her arrival in Sicily articles about Mr. Crowley appeared. She had supplied information to a newspaper but could not remember how much she was paid for it.

Mr. Eddy: Did you write this book ("Tiger Woman")? No.

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

Mr. Eddy: Look at your book again. "We gather that it was time to get up. Raoul was something of a dandy and was horrified at the absence of toilet apparatus." Is that all an invention?

### A DISTINCTION

Mrs. Sedgwick said there were two mattresses in the room and her husband slept on one. He was not allowed to be husband, she added.

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

Cross-examined on her evidence regarding the "terrible sacrifice of a cat" she said it was "absolutely true."

She left the abbey a few days before her husband's death. She had no idea of what he was suffering from but thought it was laudanum poisoning.

After he drank that cat's blood he was violently ill and sick. Mr. Crowley gave him laudanum, a lot of it, as medicine. She told Scotland Yard she thought it was laudanum poisoning at the time.

## UNTRUE STATEMENT

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

The statements in the original articles were true, but the statement about the undergraduate at Cambridge was not.

Why did you allow that utterly untrue story to be reproduced in a book which goes out to the public as your story?—It didn't seem to me to matter much and as it had appeared in the article it didn't matter if it appeared in the book. It certainly made the book a little more exciting.

Is it to make you evidence a little more exciting that we are hearing these things now?—No.

Mr. Eddy quoted from "Tiger Woman" her fourth husband's mother as saying "You foul, wicked woman. You are killing my son."

Mr. Eddy: Are you "Tiger Woman"?—Yes. Why?—Because I'm rather feline in looks. I thought perhaps it was rather a good name for me.

Mrs. Sedgwick said she slapped her fourth husband's mother because she annoyed her.

Mr. Eddy quoted from the book a passage describing how she aroused the resentment of a man's female companion by sitting at the same table.

"She became insulting," the passage continued. "My nostrils dilated as they do when I am angry. At last she got up and danced with the man. As they passed by she looked backwards at me and said, 'She is a pretty little thing, but it is a pity she has false teeth.'

"I jumped up and slapped her as hard as I could on the face. Waiters immediately bundled us upstairs into the street fighting all the time. I meant her to pay dearly for that insult. False teeth indeed.

## A WIG

"I plunged my fingers into her hair and pulled hard. The result was not what I had expected. I found myself lying in the gutter and clutched in my right hand—I could hardly believe my eyes—was a chestnut wig.

Mr. Eddy: You have got a very violent nature?—No.

## **MISSING LETTERS**

### **To be Kept in Custody of Court**

Mr. Eddy asked if she had ever authorized anyone to extract letters from her case and give them to Mr. Crowley. "No," she answered.

Mr. Justice Swift: Are these produced by Mr. Crowley?—Yes.

Mrs. Sedgwick declared that all the contents of her case were stolen.

Mr. Hilbery called on Mr. Eddy to produce a letter of 24 February, 1933, from the defendant's solicitors to Mrs. Sedgwick.

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. Justice Swift: 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.

When some of the copies of the missing letters were produced and referred to, Mr. Justice Swift agreed with Mr. Hilbery that they should remain in the custody of the court.

He instructed the associate of the court to keep them until the case was over. "Then remind me to discuss them again please," he added.

Mr. Hilbery said this was all his evidence. He wished, however, to refute any suggestion that the solicitors instructing him had been a party to purchasing any evidence.

Mr. Eddy said his suggestion was, is, and would be, that money explained the presence of Miss Betty May (Mrs. Sedgwick) in the witnessbox. He did not make any sort of imputation upon the solicitors.

"I am not prepared for a single moment to assume that the money paid this woman really represented expenses. My position is that she was in fact demanding money and getting it."

### **"APPALLING"**

Referring to Mr. Crowley's refusal to accept his challenge the previous day to try his magic in court, Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett) 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 all times the activities of this hypocritical rascal."

Mr. O'Connor suggested to the jury that the point had been reached at which they should stop the case.

"The question," he continued, "is whether you can believe that Crowley has suffered any damage. At the end of my speech I suggest you should consult among yourselves and say you have heard enough of Crowley and return a verdict for the defendants."

Later during Mr. O'Connor's speech, seeing two jurymen talking, Mr. Justice Swift stopped counsel and then all the members of the jury conferred together.

Then one of the jurymen said they wished to know whether this was a correct time for them to intervene.

Mr. Justice Swift: You cannot stop the case as against the defendants. You may stop it against the plaintiff when Mr. Eddy has said everything he wants to say.

Mr. Eddy finally addressed the jury for Mr. Crowley, saying that no reasonable jury could do otherwise than find a verdict in favour of Mr. Crowley. The law of libel was available to everybody whether he was of good or of bad character.

### **DOCUMENTS TO BE KEPT**

After the verdict Mr. C. W. Lilley (for the defence) mentioned the documents which the judge had in his custody.

"You indicated some little difficulty as to the proper ownership of them," he said. "If you think it right to allow those documents to remain in custody of the court pending an application for them to be made on behalf of one party or the other, we should be very glad if they may stay in the custody of the court."

Mr. Justice Swift: We will keep the letters in court and we shall certainly have them in proper custody if you take them to another court.