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VERDICT FOR DEFENDANTS IN
"BLACK MAGIC" LIBEL ACTION.

"TIGER WOMAN'S" DENIALS

JUDGE ON "DREADFUL, HORRIBLE
BLASPHEMOUS STUFF"

AUTHOR'S LIBEL SUIT

K.C. REPUDIATES PURCHASING
OF EVIDENCE SUGGESTION

Judgment for all defendants, with costs, was given to-day in the "black magic" libel suit brought in the King's Bench Division by Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author.

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

In evidence, Mrs. Betty Sedgwick admitted that she was known as "Tiger Woman." She denied that immediately before her marriage her life could be described as "drink, drugs and immorality."

During to-day's hearing, reference was made to "stolen letters." Mr. Hilbery, for the defence, said he wished to refute any suggestion that the solicitors instructing him had been a party to purchasing any evidence.

"LIFE OF DRINK AND DRUGS"

The action, heard by Mr. Justice Swift and a special jury was against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso."

Messrs. Constable and Company, publishers, and Messrs.

Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers, were joined as defendants.

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.

"Cat Sacrifice"

Mr. Crowley denied that he practiced "black magic" at a villa which he occupied at Cefalu, Sicily, and which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He admitted that he called himself "Beast 666" out of the Apocalypse.

Miss Hamnett was once a student of his, but he denied that he supplied to her the information of which her book was based.

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, whose former husband, Raoul Loveday, died at the Cefalu villa in Sicily, stated yesterday, that on one occasion a cat was sacrificed in the course of a magical ceremony.

Her husband then drank a cup of the cat's blood.

Mr. Crowley, in his evidence, had declared that there never had been any sacrifice of any animal in the ceremony or any drinking of blood.

NO DRUGS FOR YEARS

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.

She denied she was living a very fast life in London.

"I was a model and I sat to keep both of us," she added.

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that on the day of her arrival in England from Sicily she supplied information to a Sunday newspaper.

"I am suggesting," remarked Mr. Eddy, "that you are the source of all those stories about 'the worst man in the world.'"

Asked if there was a word of truth in her evidence about the terrible sacrifice of a cat" she replied, "Absolutely true—everything about the cat is true."

Mr. Eddy: Are many of the cats in Sicily wild and destructive animals?—I only knew two and they were very charming cats.

Mr. Eddy suggested that the shooting of a wild cat by Mr. Crowley was the basis for her story?

Mrs. Sedgwick: No, no.

Laudanum Poisoning

She was turned out of the "Abbey" a few days before her husband's death.

Mr. Eddy: What was he suffering from?

Mrs. Sedgwick: I have no idea. I thought it was laudanum poisoning.

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

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

Raoul was her third husband.

Mr. Eddy: When did you marry your fourth?—I have forgotten. About seven or eight years ago.

The fourth husband had a very serious illness didn't he?—The fourth, I don't think so.

Mr. Eddy quoted from "Tiger Woman," Mrs. Sedgwick's book, the 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 am 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.

"My Nostrils Dilated"

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 paying dearly for that insult. False teeth indeed.

"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."

Mrs. Sedgwick agreed that she was known as "Bumbletoff" and had received letters signed "Poodlediff" from an old friend of hers.

After questions about other letters, Mr. Eddy asked, "Did you ever authorize anyone to extract those letters from your case and give them to Mr. Crowley?"

Mrs. Sedgwick: No.

Judge's Questions

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

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

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

Mr. Justice Swift: Where were they stolen from?—From my cottage or from the hotel when I was in London.

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

Mr. Hilberry: 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: 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. They have no right to have it. Merely asking somebody whom you suspect of being in possession of stolen property to produce it doesn't give you the right to give secondary evidence of the document, if that person doesn't produce it.

Copies Produced

When some of the copies of the missing letters were produced and referred to Mr. Justice Swift agreed with Mr. Hilberry

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. Hilberry 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: My suggestion was, is, and will be, that money explains the presence of Miss Betty May (Mrs. Sedgwick) in the witness-box. I do not make any sort of imputation upon the solicitors.

Mr. Eddy: 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.

Mr. Martin O'Connor, for Miss Hamnett, referring to Mr. Crowley's refusal to accept his challenge to try his magic in court, said it was appalling that "in this enlightened age, a court should be investigating magic which is arch-humbug, practiced by arch-rogues to rob weak-minded people.

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

Later, seeing two jurymen talking together Mr. Justice Swift stopped Mr. O'Connor in his address.

One of them said, "The jury wish to know whether this is a correct time for us to intervene."

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

Judge's Comments

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

"I have been over 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.

"I have learnt in this case that we can always learn something more if we live long enough."

Judgment was entered for all the defendants with costs.

Mr. Justice Swift said that there was no reflection upon the solicitor for the publishers and printers.

When Mr. Eddy asked for a stay of execution and referred to the summing up, Mr. Justice Swift remarked: "I thought I had followed the instructions of Lord Justice Scrutton. I still think that I did, but you can go and point out to him that I did not. Some day another jury will re-investigate this matter."

The Judge refused a stay of execution.

As to the documents in his custody he told the defence: "We will keep the letters in court, and we shall certainly have them in proper custody if you take them to another court."