

**THE EVENING TELEGRAPH
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**CROWLEY CONVICTED IN LETTERS CASE
AUTHOR-EXPLORER IN WITNESS-BOX**

"I BELIEVED EVERYTHING I WAS TOLD"

**Bound Over and Ordered to Pay
Towards Cost of Prosecution**

The hearing of the case for the defence was continued at the Old Bailey to-day, when the trial of Edward Alexander Crowley (58), who was described as an explorer, was resumed.

Crowley was charged with receiving four original letters and one copy said to have been stolen from Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, professionally known as "Betty May," an artist's model, of South Hill Park Gardens, Hampstead.

Mr. Melford Stevenson, prosecuting, said that in 1932 Crowley became a plaintiff in a civil action for damages for libel against publishers in respect of a book in which reflections, according to Crowley, were made upon him in the name of Aleister Crowley.

Mr. Stevenson said that the letters disappeared from Mrs. Sedgwick's attaché case and were later produced during the hearing of the libel action.

The letters referred to the payment of certain expenses by a firm of solicitors to Mrs. Sedgwick, who was a witness for the defence in the action, and she was cross-examined upon them.

The Defence.

The first witness for the defence was George Mather, a merchant, of Cambridge Terrace, London, who said Cruze told him that he had been advancing money to Miss May and the letters were part of the security which came into his possession.

Mr. Mather said in answer to Mr. Gallop, that when he told Crowley that Cruze had these letters in his possession, Crowley said he would like to see whether they were relevant and would

like copies. Witness said he obtained copies of the letters and showed them to Crowley, who then asked him to secure the original.

Mr. Gallop—Assuming these letters were stolen, had you the slightest knowledge or suspicion that they had been stolen?—No.

"Innocent of Suspicion."

The Judge—Had you formed any opinion at all as to how this man came to be in possession of these letters?—By reason of their association, Cruze and Betty May's association.

The Judge—That they were given to him?—Yes.

Mr. Gallop—Were they absolutely innocent or any suspicion that these letters had been stolen?—Absolutely.

Witness said that after Crowley had asked him to secure these letters he went and saw Cruze, and asked Cruze to loan him the letters. Cruze told him that he wanted the letters returned after the High Court Action.

The Judge—For what purpose?—He did not give any reason.

Continuing, witness said that Cruze mentioned the subject of money, and said he wanted money to redeem his luggage which was being held for rent.

"I gave him five pounds," said witness, "and he handed me the letters and I then handed them to Crowley."

Saw Nothing Wrong.

The Judge—Where did your £5 come from?—From Mr. Crowley.

Mr. Gallop—Had you the slightest intention of keeping these letters for yourself?—No.

Mr. Gallop—Were they loaned, obtained, or procured for the purpose of being disclosed to the Judge and jury in the libel action?—Quite.

Mr. Gallop—With the intention that they should be disclosed when Mrs. Sedgwick was in the witness-box?—Yes.

Did you see anything at all wrong in what you were doing?—No.

And do you now?—Certainly not.

Witness said that he was not present at the trial of the libel action, but it came to his knowledge after the action that letters had been kept in the custody of the Court, and he endeavoured to find Cruze to tell him so.

Mr. Crowley in Box.

Mr. Crowley went into the witness-box and took the oath in a deliberate tone, saying that he was an author and poet writing under the style of Aleister Crowley.

Mr. Gallop—Is this the first time in your life that any charge has been made against you in any place in the world?—Yes.

You were present when I opened the case on your behalf yesterday, and you heard the observations I made about your early writings. In fairness to yourself, do you wish to volunteer anything about it?—The book I wrote was written in pursuance of my professional duty to professors in medicine.

You disapprove of my comments?—I think you were imperfectly informed.

Crowley added that he wrote that book in 1897 and 1898.

Mr. Gallop—Has there ever been anything levelled against you in any court?—No.

"Otherwise."

Continuing, Crowley said that he was plaintiff and still was the plaintiff in the action against Constable. He had heard that Mrs. Sedgwick would be called as a witness against him, and he knew of her many years before.

Had you formed an opinion as to her integrity?—Yes.

In a phrase did you regard her as a trustworthy person, or otherwise?—Otherwise.

Crowley went on to say that in December, 1933, Mr. Mather told him that Cruze knew all about Mrs. Sedgwick's plans, and would disclose the whole affair to him. Mr. Mather told him the story, which Crowley found to be perfectly clear and convincing.

What was it?—That Betty May was preparing to commit perjury. That I knew already from several sources. Mather said that Cruze's story could be substantiated, because Cruze had some letters in his possession.

Mr. Gallop—Was nothing said by Mather as to the way these letters came into possession of Cruze?

Crowley—He told me the same story as he told the court.

Had you any reason to doubt the truth of it?—None whatever. I believed everything I was told.

Crowley was answering another question at length when the judge interposed. "I don't want long speeches."

Showed Copies to Solicitor.

The Judge—At the time that you had this conversation with Mather, had you instructed the solicitors in this libel action?—Yes.

Crowley said that he showed the copies of these letters to the partner in the firm of solicitors and he recounted to him exactly what Mather had told him. The solicitor discussed the usefulness of these letters, and a lengthy discussion ensued as to whether they should or should not use these letters if they could get them. The solicitor advised him that they might be useful.

Mr. Gallop—Whether he was right or wrong, did your senior counsel at the libel action take the same view?

The Judge—Sis your senior counsel know the circumstances in which you obtained possession of them?—I cannot say, my Lord.

"All This Secrecy."

Crowley said that he asked Mather to obtain the originals. Mather was paid £5 in his (Crowley's) presence by a friend of his whom he had authorized to pay. Crowley said he did not desire to disclose the name of that acquaintance in Court, but said he would write it down if the Judge desired.

The Judge—I don't know why there is all this secrecy.

The name was not mentioned in Court.

Mr. Gallop—Did you at any time suspect that these letters had been stolen?—No.

Did no legal advisor of yours ever suggest to you the possibility that they might have been stolen?—No.

Cross-Examination.

Crowley was then cross-examined by Mr. Stevenson, who asked—Are you representing yourself as a responsible person whose word is to be trusted?—Yes.

Listen to what Mr. Justice Swift said about you in your libel action when he had listened to your history and activities for several days. Did he say, "I thought that everything that was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me. I have learned in this case that one can always learn something more if we live long enough. Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, abominable stuff as that

produced by the man who describes himself as the greatest living poet." Is that the view that Mr. Justice Swift expressed about you?

Crowley—He was referring to this book.

The Judge—Do you mind answering the question?—The question is accurate.

Counsel—Have you been expelled from Italy?—I have, like a most distinguished Englishman.

Have you been expelled from America?—No.

From France?—No.

Have you been refused permission to remain in either of these countries? In France they refused me permission to remain on a technical point.

Have you been expelled from India?—No.

Paid £5.

In reply to further questions, Crowley said that it was quite clear that the letters in question were addressed to Miss Betty May and that he paid £5 for them.

Did you think it likely that the lady would consent to them passing into your possession?—I did.

Asked why he did not approach her for the letters, Crowley said that her consent would no doubt have been dependent upon some compensation. He did not know her address at the time, and he had never seen Cruze in his life.

Crowley added, "Mather was a friend acting in the interests of justice. Every honourable man is always willing to act in such a manner as Mr. Mather had acted."

Mr. Stevenson, cross-examining—Is every honourable man prepared to take part in a transaction of the sale of letters to be used by one party against another in cross-examination in an action?—I don't know.

Did it not cause you to wonder when you were engaged upon this transaction?—No, I wanted to make the truth clear.

"A Straight Story."

Have you ever in your life heard of letters from solicitors arranging for the attendance of a witness in court being offered as a security for a loan?—I have no commercial experience.

The Judge—Did you believe that these letters were offered as a security for a loan?—Yes, my Lord.

"Mather told me a straight story and I believed it," said Crowley. "I repeated it to the solicitor and he believed it."

Mr. Gallop, re-examining—Are the observations of Mr. Justice Swift, in your libel action, subject to an appeal?—Yes.

Crowley then left the witness-box and went back into the dock.

Addressing the jury, Mr. Gallop said that in his submission it was a thoroughly silly prosecution from beginning to end.

Summing Up.

In his summing-up Judge Whiteley said that it had been said that these letters were for security for a loan. He could not imagine any person advancing a farthing for any of them.

After a summing up lasting an hour the jury retired.

The Verdict.

Crowley was found guilty.

He was bound over for two years and ordered to pay a sum not exceeding 50 guineas towards the costs of prosecution.