

THE TIMES
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CHARGE OF RECEIVING LETTERS

MR. ALEISTER CROWLEY ON TRIAL

Before Judge Whiteley, at the Central Criminal Court yesterday, the trial began of Edward Alexander Crowley, 58, on bail, described as an explorer (and known as an author under the name of Aleister Crowley), who pleaded "Not Guilty" to a charge of receiving four original letters and one copy of a letter said to have been stolen from Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, known as Betty May, an artist's model.

Mr. Melford Stevenson and Mr. A. E. Reade prosecuted, and Mr. C. Gallop defended. Mr. Stevenson explained that Crowley became a plaintiff in a civil action for damages for libel. It was brought against a firm of publishers, and it was in respect of passage in a book published by them in which, according to Crowley, certain reflections were made upon him in the name of Aleister Crowley. Mrs. Sedgwick had given to the solicitors for the defence in that action a certain amount of information about Crowley, and in June last year she was expecting to be called as a witness in the libel action. She gave evidence in April this year. As often happened, she had received certain sums of money in respect of her evidence.

In June, 1933, Mrs. Sedgwick was living at an address in Seymour Street, W., and there was also living there a man names Cruze. Mrs. Sedgwick had in her possession a number of letters, four of which had passed between her and the solicitors who were arranging for her to be called as a witness. These letters disclosed the fact that she had been receiving money for expenses. There was another letter relating to her arrangements with the publishers of a book she was preparing. These letters, with a number of other documents of a personal nature, were kept in an attaché-case.

Towards the end of June last year, Mrs. Sedgwick went to a cottage, in the country, and on opening the attaché-case there she found that the letters and the documents had disappeared. She did not see the letters again until April last, when she was giving evidence for the defence in the libel action. The letters were then produced in Court by counsel appearing for Crowley.

It was not known who stole the letters.

EVIDENCE OF "BETTY MAY"

Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, giving evidence, stated that she now resided at South Hal Park Gardens, Hampstead. She said she was an artist's model, and she was usually known as "Betty May."

Mr. Gallop, holding up a book, asked the witness: Do you recognize this?—*Tiger Woman: My Story* by Betty May.

Mrs. Sedgwick. Yes.

Was it issued to the public as your autobiography?—Yes.

With the intention that the public should believe it was the story of your life?—Yes.

Whereas I gather you now say you had not written the story?—No.

Do you regard that as fraudulent?—I did not think about it.

Mrs. Sedgwick said that part of the book was written from articles she had supplied to the Press.

The Judge.—Some of it is true, then?—Yes.

Mr. Gallop.—But a great deal of the book is utter fabrication?—A lot of it is.

Mrs. Sedgwick explained that she was divorced.

Questioned about a Captain Eddie Cruze, the witness said he was a friend of hers. "I think he stole those papers—I know he did," she added.

In reply to the Judge, Mrs. Sedgwick said she had between £15 and £20 from the solicitors in expenses in regard to the libel action, in which she was the chief witness.

Mr. Gallop, explaining the defense, said that Cruze said the letters were handed to him as a security for money Mrs. Sedgwick owed him. As they were Cruze's letters he could hand them to Crowley.

Walter William Hunt, Solicitor's clerk, said that Crowley handed the letters to him a month or six weeks before the libel action came on in the High Court.

Detective-sergeant Davidson said a summons had been issued against Cruze charging him with the larceny of two envelopes addressed to Mrs. Sedgwick in the names of Miss Betty May and Mrs. Rickworth.

Mr. Gallop submitted that there was no case against Crowley, but the Judge ruled that it must go to trial.

George Mather stated that he told Crowley that Cruze was anxious that he (Crowley) should have the use of the letter.

Cruze, the witness alleged, has quarreled with Mrs. Sedgwick, for whom he had acted as agent.

The trial was adjourned until to-day, the defendant again being allowed bail.