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LETTERS PRODUCED IN LIBEL CASE

Aleister Crowley Charged With "Receiving"

WOMAN QUESTIONED

Edward Alexander Crowley (58), pleaded not guilty at the Old Bailey, yesterday, to the 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," and artist's model.

Mr. Melford Stevenson (prosecuting) said that in 1932 Crowley was a plaintiff in a libel action in respect of a passage in a book which, Crowley alleged, reflected upon him in the name of Aleister Crowley. Mrs. Sedgwick had given to the solicitors for the defence in that action certain information about Crowley, and in June, 1933, she was expecting at some future time to be called as a witness to give evidence against him in the libel action.

At the time, Mrs. Sedgwick was living in Seymour Street, and also living there was a man named Cruze. Four letters which had passed between her and the solicitors, disclosed the fact that she had been receiving from the solicitors certain sums of money in respect of expenses, and there was another letter which related to her arrangement with publishers of a book that she was preparing.

The letters were placed by Mrs. Sedgwick in an attaché case at Seymour Street, and later she missed them. The letters were never seen by her from the end of June, 1933, until April, 1934, when they were produced in court by Crowley's counsel and she was cross-examined upon them.

"Tiger Woman"

Cross-examined by Mr. C. Gallup, Mrs. Sedgwick said the book "Tiger Woman. My story. By Betty May," was issued to the public as her autobiography. She had not written the story.

Counsel: Do you regard that as fraudulent?—I didn't think about it.

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

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

Counsel: And upon whom does responsibility for this fabrication rest?

There was no reply to this question.

Mr. Gallop: Do you recollect saying in this book that you intended to make yourself heard by the public in the future?—Yes, I did.

Who is Captain Eddie Cruze?—He was a friend of mine. I think he stole those papers. I know he did.

Judge Whiteley: Where is he now?—We cannot find him.

Mr. Gallop: Would you be surprised to hear that somebody calling himself Captain Cruze had been telephoning Crowley's solicitors in the last two of three days?—I do not know.

I suggest to you that you came forward in the libel action for the sole purpose of making money for yourself?—I did not.

Replying to the Judge, Mrs. Sedgwick said she was the chief witness for the defence in the libel action. She had between £15 and £20 from the solicitors in expenses. She went about finding out things.

Value of Letters

Mrs. Sedgwick said that the last time she was in company with Cruze was in a public-house off Tottenham Court Road last March. She then accused him of stealing the letters, as she had heard that he had been showing them around, saying that he could get £100 for them.

Mr. Gallop: Did you let Cruze have these letters as some security that you would pay him some money?—Certainly not. I had paid him so much money. He had very little money himself.

The Judge: What possible value can these letters have?

Mr. Gallop: I cannot see the slightest. I am suggesting the most unfathomable folly on the part of Mr. Cruze and this woman.

Detective Sergeant Davidson said that there was a summons against Cruze charging the alleged larceny of two envelopes, one addressed to Betty May and the other to Mrs. Ricksworth (another name which Mrs. Sedgwick had used), but it had not yet been served.

The first witness for the defence was George Mather, a merchant, of Cambridge Terrace, London, who said that he told Crowley that Captain Cruze had told him that he (Cruze) had quarreled with Miss May and that he was anxious that Crowley should have the use of the letters.

Mather said that Cruze told him that he had been acting as Miss May's agent.

The Judge: A captain acting as the agent of a person who is a witness in a case? What did you tell Crowley as to how Cruze came into possession of the letters?—No question was asked at all.

Mather said that Cruze told him that at the time he was advancing money to Miss May and that the letters were part of the security which came into his possession.

The trial was adjourned until to-day, Crowley being allowed bail.