

The Wong Way

Mr Wong is a practising solicitor in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Because he is a solicitor, he is very proud of his position in society. He wears only the latest fashionable clothes, which he purchases at a very fashionable departmental store, the same fashionable departmental store from where he purchased all of the furniture for his home. Solicitor Wong lives on The Peak, a very fashionable part of Hongkong. He lives in a house. He is married to a former teacher of the English language. He has a teenaged son who attends an international school. He is the proud owner of a white Rolls-Royce, which he purchased, second-hand, about 8 years ago.

The following are just some of the things that Solicitor Wong does; and, the reasoning (or lack of it) for his actions.

Solicitor Wong's dream of being the skipper of a luxury yacht had never really died in spite of his telling, Judy, his wife, the reason that he decided to shelve the plan that would have cost him upwards of \$HK14 million for a 60-foot cruiser and to purchase a berth at The Aberdeen Marina Club. Night after night after night, he dreamt the same dream: Sailing into the sunset, the wind in his face, and he, the Captain of all that he surveyed, shouting out commands to his obedient crew. Sometimes, he would wake up, sweating as though he were at sea and a storm was approaching, and here he was, single-handedly, saving the cruiser and his crew from almost certain disaster.

But all was not lost even though Solicitor Wong never consummated his dream – because he joined as a non-sailing member of The Aberdeen Boat Club, the entrance fee for a non-sailing member, being much less than the cost of an individual membership at The Aberdeen Marina Club: \$HK38,000. That is much less than the \$HK2.10 million, demanded by The Aberdeen Marina Club, the luxury premises of which abuts The Aberdeen Boat Club. Without telling Judy, he would sneak down to Shum Wan Road after work and enter the bar of The Club (as he learned to call it) in order to sit beside some of the old '*salts*' so as to get a small taste of his dream. Solicitor Wong reasoned that, in the event that Judy discovered his trips to The Club, he could always claim that it was in order to talk to his client. He made friends with one elderly English architect who had married the daughter of a very rich, Hongkong-Malaysian family. There, on Sunday afternoons when Judy was out with her friends, Solicitor Wong could listen to the tales of Paul of how he fared in this sailing race and that sailing race in his yacht, 'Redeye.' Paul could drink from noon to 7 p.m. without

stopping, and, the more that he drank, the more he talked. The more he talked, the more he boasted. And, the more he drank, the more that Solicitor Wong would look up at a sign at the entrance of the bar that read: *'Don't Drink and Drive. Give us your Key and take a Taxi.'* But it was becoming very costly for Solicitor Wong to keep up with this rotund, balding English gentleman who was the idol of many of the members of The Club due to his moxie and the vast wealth of his father-in-law. Also, it was well known that his Hongkong office had been responsible for helping to decorate The Aberdeen Marina Club as well as jobs at Shangri-La hotels. Ah! Such wealth! Such contacts!

One Sunday afternoon, having imbibed copious quantities of alcohol for a period of 7 consecutive hours, Paul stumbled out The Club and went to The Aberdeen Marina Club where he had parked his 1990, white Bentley. Paul was having trouble negotiating the stairs of The Club and a number of the members were giggling at his inebrious condition. But the giggling stopped when, about 20 minutes after the departure of Paul from The Club, the fire engines came screaming down Shum Wan Road and stopped immediately outside The Aberdeen Marina Club. The Club members rushed out to see what had happened, but the crush of people, the police, taking precautions with crowd-control procedures, made it impossible to get very close to the scene of what was suggested to have been a disaster at this posh club. Solicitor Wong seized the opportunity and pushed through the mob in order to talk to an official of The Aberdeen Marina Club. To his surprise, he discovered that Paul had had an accident with his white Bentley – in the carpark of The Aberdeen Marina Club. What had happened was that he had been unable to negotiate the down ramp with his Bentley and, instead, hit a low retaining wall, the shock of which caused Paul to be thrown against the steering wheel, knocking the wind out of him for a second or so. He, quickly, put the motor car into reverse gear and, with his foot, hard on the accelerator pedal, he backed at high speed into a parked Mercedes-Benz, totalling the almost new motor car. Smoke engulfed the second-floor carpark of The Aberdeen Marina Club and, as a precaution, the members of the entire club had to be evacuated until the problem could be sorted out. The fire, which was of minor consequence, was quickly extinguished and, when the smoke had cleared, the damage was surveyed: It was horrendous.

But where was Paul? He was conspicuously absent. The police could not find him for a good 30 minutes. The Fire Services Department could not find him. Suddenly and with aplomb, Paul appeared. He was still shaken, considerably, and he was more than a little red in the face, but otherwise, it was the same old Paul. Solicitor Wong to the rescue! Paul was more than a little grateful. *'You know me,'* Paul said to Solicitor Wong as though he were an old friend. *'I was drinking very slowly the entire afternoon. You know that. I don't know what happened. Maybe, the wall had been moved a few feet without informing me?'* Solicitor Wong, quickly putting on his legal cap, offered his services, warning Paul to say nothing to the police lest he say the wrong thing. *'Admit nothing,'* Solicitor Wong warned quietly. Paul was not steady on his feet, but he seemed to understand and nodded in assent. At this point, Solicitor Wong had another dream: Earning \$HK5,000 per hour for helping Paul. However, Paul was not quite himself, at this point of the damage control mode, but, within minutes, he was asking the fee that Solicitor Wong would be charging him. On learning of the figure of \$HK5,000 per hour, he said: *'And you call yourself a Club member! I shall never sail with you, again. Do you think that I am drunk?'* With that, he turned his back on Solicitor Wong who, gingerly, made his way back home to The Peak, his dream of sailing dashed ... as had his dream of earning \$HK5,000 per hour.

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