

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 was always embarrassed when attending a formal dinner party, hosted by a European. The problem always came down to which knife and which fork to use for which courses. If there was more than 5 courses, he would be lost and, then, he would be forced to depend on his wife to steer him through the meal. Judy knew of his problem and had spent a great many hours, explaining the logic of a European dinner setting. But all to no avail. Invariably, Solicitor Wong would use the wrong fork with the wrong knife, and/or use a spoon when he should have used a fork, or vice-versa. As for wine glasses, well, he was completely at a loss to know the difference between a Champagne saucer and a Champagne flute. One day, he announced to Judy that he would refuse to accept any more invitations to a formal, European dinner because it was useless to crowd his brain with such unnecessary trivia. *'I have used chopsticks since I was born. I never had any trouble with chopsticks,'* he pouted, sullenly. *'Well, then, I shall just go by myself,'* came the retort from Judy as she strode away from her husband in a bit of a huff. But that would never do because a socialite solicitor of Hongkong should always be seen at a formal dinner party with his wife. For a wife to go to a formal dinner, alone ... well, that would never do ... and rumours could spread, damaging the good reputation of an otherwise, unblemished solicitor. And so Solicitor Wong determined to try again to learn which fork accompanied which knife and which wine glass should be used for white wine and which one for red wine. Judy was very patient with him and spent a number of hours in trying to make him understand the reason and logic for this and that.

It was at a fund-raising Christmas dinner party, held in a fashionable hotel in Tsimshatsui, that

Solicitor Wong was able to employ his new table knowledge in the company of judges, barristers and Senior Council of Hongkong. Dressed in a tuxedo, which he hated to wear because he could never get his collar and tie straight, he sat quietly, next to Judy, watching her every move lest he err in picking up the wrong piece of cutlery or drinking from the incorrect glass. Up until the fish dish, everything had gone very smoothly, but by then, Solicitor Wong had drunk 2 glasses of wine, one white and one red, not including one glass of Champagne, prior to taking his assigned seat next to a High Court Judge. With his head a little foggy, he forgot to look in the direction of Judy after the waiter had placed something in front of him and so, without thinking, he determined to cut into a deboned plaice with a steak knife. It seemed odd that the knife could cut the fish meat so easily, but, after all, Europeans are a funny ethnic group, anyway. Suddenly, there was an elbow, digging into his side. It was Judy, throwing dagger-eyes at him. He had failed again! But where? Judy showed him the fish knife that she was using. She did as delicately as a lady could perform such a task. Solicitor Wong, carefully, scoured the other guests at the table in order to ascertain whether or not they had seen his obvious faux pas. Nobody was looking at him, it appeared, so he tried to drop the offending knife on the floor in order that it would appear that it had never existed. He reasoned that he, then, could request another knife when the meat dish arrived. But fate was not on the side of Solicitor Wong because, in his half inebriated state, the steak knife got caught on the lace tablecloth, then fell onto his white tuxedo shirt, and, then, slide onto his trouser leg, just missing the most-delicate part of his anatomy. 'Wah!' he exclaimed as he realised how close he had come to being made a eunuch. Then, the show was up! Everybody at the table realised what had transpired. The shame of it!

That evening as he lay in his bed, his head, still reeling from the over-indulgence of wine, he thought to himself that he had learned an important lesson:

*'One should not try to plead innocence or
to try to hide the evidence when it is,
clearly apparent and, clearly, overpowering;
it is far better to go for a plea bargain.'*

.....*yaW gnoW ehT*

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