

## 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, throughout his entire professional life, had always had trouble in understanding the way in which Hongkong bankers thought. He maintained that they are not normal people and, because of this fact, one can never, really, understand the way in which they think. He once told his son, Nicholas: *'Bankers are very strange animals. You can never trust a banker because, like any wild animal, they can turn on you in a second in an effort to devour you.'* Nicholas, being a teenager and never having had any dealings with banks, did not understand what he father was saying and did not know the meaning of *'devour'*, but the young boy had always had trouble in understanding the way in which his father thought – as with many other people. Monthly, solicitor Wong's legal firm would receive a notice from at least one of his banks, complaining about this and that. Every year, Solicitor Wong would consider changing banks and, in fact, he did change bankers quite regularly, but, over time, he had started to run out of available banks with which to work because, as this gentleman, an officer of the High Court of Hongkong, had discovered, most bankers no longer held solicitors in the high esteem that Solicitor Wong claimed they were entitled to receive. *'I just don't understand it,'* Solicitor Wong lamented as he lay next to his wife one evening. *'I, consistently, have trouble with my bankers over some tiny little things, such as my clerk, filling in a numerical figure on a cheque while the amount of money, written in words, was a little different from the numerical number. If there is a valid problem with a cheque, issued by my firm, all the banker has to do is to telephone me between the hours of 11am and noon and, in the afternoon, between the hours of 3 pm and 4 pm, and I can put things right.'* All that Judy wanted to say was another *'Yes, dear'*, but, on this occasion, she was sorely tempted to take her husband to task. She said: *'But you always like to*

*speak in English while the bank's clerks mostly speak in Chinese, either in Putongua or Cantonese.' 'Then, they should learn to speak English, shouldn't they?' countered this officer of the Hongkong High Court. And, then, he added: 'The language of the Court is English and I am a master of that language.' Actually, it was Judy who had been a teacher of English and she, constantly, had to proofread her husband's lengthy briefs to barristers because of his numerous mistakes which, he, always, claimed were his clerk's errors. So, she just said: 'Yes, dear' and put a pillow over her head, hoping that Solicitor Wong would get the message. But he did not. 'There was a time that banks took pride in having an officer of the High Court of Hongkong as their customer. Not today, however. Strange! Very Strange! Don't you agree?' And, with that question, he poked his wife in the small of her back with his index finger. Judy turned to face her balding husband: 'Maybe that is because many members of your profession have proved to be utterly dishonest. How many times have certain members of the Swaine family of Hongkong been sued for one thing or another? I can tell you that I have read that the number of legal cases against certain members of this family of lawyers and barristers number at least 40. If you had such a client, you would ask for money first before even having your first meeting with a Swaine. Solicitors of Hongkong, today, are as criminally inclined as anybody else. And don't forget about Willie Kwok Yee, who was thrown in prison for theft. And what about that English solicitor, formerly a British policeman, who, today, is fighting not to have his Practising Licence revoked after a High Court Justice stated, definitively, that he had perjured himself?'*

Judy's judgement about the wayward members of the Hongkong legal profession could not be denied, but Solicitor Wong had, always, distanced himself from members of his profession, who were known to be of questionable character. But, of late, he was mystified as to the way in which certain solicitors and barristers of Hongkong had proved to have been wanting. *'My name is Wong, not Swaine, not Kwok or any other name, associated with criminal acts!'* Solicitor hit back to his wife who, by this time, was wide awake. *'I resent your innuendo that, just because I am solicitor, I am not to be trusted. I am your husband. I have never been found guilty of any act that was not completely legal.'* Judy rejoined: *'I agree – you have never been found guilty of any act that was not completely legal. But are you, morally, guilty of some little acts that are contrary to the law? What about that time ...'* At this point, Solicitor Wong determined to cut off his wife's verbal attack because, in point of fact, that incident in Shanghai with Chen Mei Wei was a little questionable although, thus far, the young lady had not pressed him for more money. *'Anyway, we are talking about Hongkong bankers not the Swaines', the Kwoks, the ... I don't know who else,'* Solicitor Wong tried to defuse the argument that he was about to lose. *'I have never even overdrawn my account so I should be treated with respect. And I am not receiving it.'* Judy, at this point, looked in the half-light of the room and said: *'But you never keep more than \$HK5,000 in your firm's bank account so how could you exceed that limit? You have more money in your pocket than you have in the bank; and, the bank knows this. Whenever your account drops to about \$HK1,000, you are charged a fee by the bank and, every month, you complain to me about that fee. What can you expect?'* Solicitor Wong mumbled something incoherent and turned over, showing his back to his wife.

And so, once again, Solicitor Wong had learned that before starting an argument with his wife, he should come equipped with the goods that he wants to sell, goods that are of the correct quality and are beyond reproach.

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