

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 had employed more than 5 Filipino drivers (he, always, referred to them as '*my chauffeurs*', however), during the past decade, and each one of them had caused damage, to a greater or lesser extent, to the pride and joy of the solicitor's life: His 20, year-old, white Rolls-Royce. This once luxurious and elegant motor car looked more and more shabby as the months passed until, one day, after eating at a fine-dining restaurant at a 5-star hotel in Admiralty, he heard an attendant in the hotel's car park refer to his motor car as, '*The Clunker*'. Solicitor Wong was not amused. '*He (the car park attendant) should not talk like that,*' he lamented to Judy, his wife. '*It is rude and uncalled for.*' With that remark, he went to have his shower, looking very downtrodden, his head slightly bowed as he walked through their Peak home. Judy felt empathy for her husband and was determined, that evening, to lift his spirits. '*Have you ever thought that it is time to purchase a new motor car, my Dear?*' asked Judy as Solicitor Wong settled into bed. '*But I have only had this motor car for the best part of 10 years!*' came the immediate retort. And, then, he continued with: '*A Rolls-Royce should last at least 30 years, you know. I read that somewhere.*' '*Then, it is time to consider your next car, don't you think?*' asked Judy. '*After all, it takes at least one year to have a Rolls-Royce custom built for a person of your stature.*' With these thoughts, Solicitor Wong closed his eyes and visualised himself, sitting in a new Rolls-Royce. It had to be a white one, of course, and the new chauffeur must wear a dark suit. Such luxury!

But, on visiting the Rolls-Royce showroom on the Ground Floor of Bank of America Tower, to his horror, Solicitor Wong was informed that all new Rolls-Royce, motor cars had been completely sold

for at least 2 years. *'The Chinese in Shanghai and Beijing are buying up all of our motor cars,'* the Rolls-Royce salesman explained. *'I can put your name on the waiting list if you like. What is your name, Sir?'* Solicitor Wong was not in the habit of standing in line, especially when it came to purchasing a \$HK5-million-plus motor car. He left the showroom even further dejected than he had been the previous evening. Judy commiserated with her husband's plight, but she could offer no suggestion to ameliorate the situation. Then, like a thunderclap came an idea. She asked: *'What about a new Bentley? They are just as expensive as a new Rolls-Royce and some people claim that they are an even better motor car, now. And, they are even bigger than a Rolls-Royce.'* It had never dawned on Solicitor Wong to switch from a Rolls-Royce to a Bentley and, in fact, he had never even seen one. That evening, after looking at the latest 2011 Bentley models on his Personal Computer, Solicitor Wong went to bed, pondering whether or not he would have as much status, sitting in a chauffeur-driven Bentley, as he perceived himself, seated in the back seat of a new, white Rolls-Royce.

The following Sunday afternoon, Solicitor Wong had his chauffeur take him to the Bentley showroom in Causeway Bay. The luxurious Bentley showroom was devoid of any prospective customers so that the salesman was more than happy to spend all of his time, explaining the wonders of the new Bentley Mulsanne. Solicitor Wong fell in love with this new motor car and, after being told of its many wonders, its speed, its comfort, and its state-of-the-art electronics, this proud man was reaching for his cheque book as he took his seat, opposite the charming Chinese salesman. *'Now, how much is a new, white Mulsanne?'* Solicitor Wong asked. *'We don't know, yet,'* came the immediate answer. *'And we shall not know until you have placed an order and, then, the factory will tell us the price within about 6 months.'* Solicitor Wong asked: *'How can I place an order for a new Mulsanne if I do not know how much to pay for the motor car?'* The salesman explained that, on placing an order for a new Mulsanne, a prospective customer was required to leave a non-refundable deposit of \$HK500,000 as a demonstration of the formal intent for the allocation of a new motor car from the British factory and, about 4 months later, another non-refundable deposit of \$HK500,000 would be required as confirmation of the order of a new motor car. Then, about 7 months to a year later, the car would be shipped to Hongkong and, after being serviced, one may take delivery of the shiny new, Bentley Mulsanne. *'As for the final price of the motor car, fully loaded, it will be about \$HK6 million, all in,'* the salesman suggested.

Once again, Solicitor Wong went home to Judy with the bad news. *'\$HK6 million-plus for a new motor car!'* he cried, almost in tears. *'And, then, I have to wait for a whole year for the motor car. It is more expensive than a new Rolls-Royce!'* Judy was thinking that the price of a new Bentley was more expensive than a small flat in Shatin. To her way of thinking, it was a waste of HER money. She looked lovingly at her dejected husband. *'I fully understand how you feel,'* she said after a short, pregnant pause. *'You are not being treated in the manner in keeping with your position as an officer of the High Court of Hongkong. It is very wrong.'* *'Yes ... yes,'* came the immediate response from Solicitor Wong, his blood pressure, rising as he looked round the room as though he were lost. *'But what am I to do? I cannot continue to be driven in my clunker and be the laughing stock of the High Court, can I?'* Judy had considered an alternative to a Rolls-Royce or a Bentley, but she knew that her husband would become furious at such an idea. At last, she asked how much it would cost for The Clunker to be completely overhauled, inside and outside, including 5 coats of white paint. *'Too much ... much too much,'* came to immediate response. *'At least \$HK1 million-plus. And, then, it would still be a clunker with a new coat of paint.'* On hearing this, Judy came up with another wonderful idea: *'OK, then, why not buy a reconditioned, vintage Rolls-Royce, directly from London, England? One that is about 40 years old? You can buy one very easily and immediately and, then, you can proudly say that you are the owner of an antique (not old) Rolls-Royce –an antique Rolls-Royce that costs a great deal more than a new one. You could be the toast of the High Court!'*

About 3 months later, Solicitor Wong was walking into a Rolls-Royce showroom in Berkeley Square in the City of Westminster, London, England. He looked round the showroom and, there it stood: An

immaculate, white Rolls-Royce, manufactured just before World War II. He rushed over to it as though he wanted to kiss it. It was beautiful beyond words. As the salesman sauntered over, Solicitor Wong heard: *'She's a beuyee, ain't she? Only had one owner, you know. An old lady from Kent. Poor dear! She passed away and, now, this great motor car has to be sold to pay taxes or somefink.'* Solicitor Wong asked: *'How much is it?'* *'Very cheap, really, all tings considered'* came the answer.

'I tink I could let you 'ave it for bout 500,000 quid.' Solicitor Wong only heard 500,000 and mistakenly thought that he was dealing in Hongkong dollars. Out came his cheque book. He was sure that he was about to get a bargain. *'I'll buy it!'* he blurted out. On signing the Provisional Bill of Sale, Solicitor Wong was struck almost dumbfounded when you learned that a *'quid'* was slang for a British pound, and that, 500,000 quids (as Solicitor Wong mispronounced the word), was equal to about \$HK6.50 million. Being very proud, Solicitor Wong determined that he could not lose face in London, England, especially in the historic and famous Berkeley Square, and so he paid a deposit of one million quids and returned to his hotel, The Connaught, in order to tell Judy of his good fortune.

When Judy heard what her husband had done, she nearly fell out of her chair. But it was too late: She had been the ultimate engineer, by accident, perhaps, of the \$HK6.50-million, faux pas, perpetrated by her husband, no doubt, by she, nevertheless, had been the éminence grise, like it or not.

Moral: And so, faithful wives of this world, the moral of this tale is that one should never, never, never allow a husband to do the shopping: They just cannot be trusted; they have never been known to have been ruled by logic, but by pride and being subject to impulse purchases that detract from a wife's ability to purchase her absolute requirements in order to complement her ever-expanding wardrobe.

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