

## 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 very proud of his many accomplishments: His struggle to become an officer of the High Court of Hongkong, having been born to a family whose pedigree was not, exactly, of the upper crust; his ability to marry a young, comely girl whom he met at The University of Hongkong while struggling to master the English language and, thus, was accepted into the 'aristocracy' of Hongkong, escaping from the clutches of the hoi polloi; the birth of his son, Nickolas; and, of course, the ability to be able to afford to ride in the finest motor car that the world has, ever, created – the Rolls-Royce! It was shocking, therefore, when, on a Saturday evening, while dining with his wife and teenage son, a well-known, Hongkong architect snubbed him at a popular restaurant on The Peak.

Signalling in a friendly gesture to Architect Chan, who was seated some distance from Solicitor Wong, as he was munching on a juicy piece of baked chicken, this well-known architect, whose name was somewhat of a legend in the construction industry of the territory, just turned his back on the solicitor in an unmistakable motion that indicated his utter disdain for this officer of the High Court. It was an insult that smarted Solicitor Wong, but there was little that he could do about the snub because it was not illegal to refuse to be friendly with anybody. 'What!' exclaimed Solicitor Wong to his wife: 'Did you see that?' Judy looked up from her conversation with Nickolas and asked as to the nature of the incident. Solicitor Wong nodded in the direction of Architect Chan and, with a nod of defiance, his right arm, making a circle round his head, he explained the insulting attitude of Architect Chan, who had turned his back on Solicitor Wong. 'But that is the architect to whom you wrote those insulting letters, the letters, laced with threats of legal action if he did not remove his Porche from the lane, abutting the rear of our garden wall! What would you expect?' Judy

questioned. It was true, of course, because Architect Chan's townhouse stood at the rear of Solicitor Wong's Peak townhouse and, without permission, the architect's dark-blue Porche had been, for many months, parked in the lane, next to the wooden fence at the rear of Solicitor Wong's luxury home, partially blocking the view of Victoria Harbour from his bedroom window. In addition, it had come to Solicitor Wong's attention, when investigating the ownership of the offending Porche and Architect Chan's Peak townhouse, that House Number 38 had an illegal extension on the northern face of the 3-storey edifice. In a barrage of official letters, sent to Architect Chan by the office of Solicitor Wong, all of the complaints about the offending Porche had been documented with dates, times, and the exact location of the vehicle along with the complaint about the 'deafening' noise of the sports car when it was being parked by the architect, sometimes near midnight or in the early hours of the morning. The many replies from Architect Chan were full of innuendos about the character of Solicitor Wong and of the nuisance that Nickolas had caused the family of Architect Chan, on numerous occasions, when Solicitor Wong's son played with the family's silky terrier in their handkerchief garden. Threats and counter-threats, accusations, and suggestions of unpleasant actions that could be taken by Architect Chan against Solicitor Wong and his family ensued until, eventually, the brouhaha subsided into what could only be described as a Mexican standoff. The Porche continued to be parked at the rear of the garden of Solicitor Wong although, as a concession, Architect Chan ceased revving up the motor car's engine, late at night or early in the morning when he returned home from one of his many late-night business meetings.

*'I, really, do not understand that man's attitude,' Solicitor Wong said quietly to Judy. 'I have acted very properly to him, during our disagreement. You know that, don't you? 'But you threatened him with a lawsuit at one point,' Judy said. 'But that is what solicitors must do in matters of this nature,' came the immediate response from this learned gentleman. And then he added: 'But it was only a threat and there was not a follow-through. The law is not interested in such petty matters and the rule of "de minimis non curat lex" applies. Architect Chan and I, both, knew this and we, mutually, strove to settle our differences without the necessity of seeking the services of an arbitrator or seeking adjudication.'* Judy did not agree with her husband, but she had learned, over the years, that engaging in lengthy discussions with her husband usually resulted in feathers flying so she just looked at Nickolas as though to suggest that she had no interest in taking the conversation any further. This, however, infuriated Solicitor Wong who wanted his wife's support in his protracted fight with Architect Chan. He wanted to engage Judy in a continuation of the conversation, pertaining to the dispute with Architect Chan and, to this end, he said: *'I want to be friendly with "that" man, but he must, first, hold out his hand in friendship. I am a gentleman so why can't he understand that?'* Judy was stunned: *'But you suggested that you, as a solicitor, an officer of the High Court, as you put it, would take the matter to The Buildings Department of the Hongkong Government in respect of the illegal structure at House 38! Is that a friendly gesture? I would call it very unfriendly. And, now, you expect him to acknowledge you as a friend or at least a friendly acquaintance!'* Solicitor Wong, taken aback by Judy's stance, said: *'But there was nothing personal in my letters to Architect Chan. As a solicitor, I am duty bound to uphold the law and, when I discover a matter that is, patently, wrong at law, I must report it to the correct authority of Government. The fact that I did not report it – as I should have done – is indicative of a friendly act and "that" man should have appreciated that fact. Instead he shuns me as though I were wearing clothes, cut from the same cloth of Muammar Gaddafi of Libya. Such impudence!'*

To which, Judy rudely remarked, sarcastically:

*'Then, the next time that a solicitor threatens me, I should not consider it an unfriendly act and, perhaps, I should send him some flowers with a little thank-you note for sending me his threat.'*

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