

## 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.**

When the key indices of the stock markets, around the world, collapsed, Solicitor Wong was caught with his trousers, right down to his ankles. Within that one fateful day, he lost all of the profits that he had chalked up since the beginning of the year. Prior to that horrible day in August, he would boast to

Judy, his wife, how much money he had earned, for himself and his firm by '*playing*' the stock market. But, on this evening, he had to confess that he owed nearly \$HK4 million to the bank and another \$HK800,000 to the Hongkong stockbrokerage house which had encouraged him to purchase stocks and shares on margin. Seated at the dinner table, he told his wife, matter-of-factly: '*I think that I shall have to apply to a new bank for a third mortgage on our home. I need the money, urgently. I cannot understand the reason that my 2 regular banks have denied my requests to raise some more bridge financing, during telephone calls, today. The Branch Managers of both banks not only denied my request for a third mortgage, but went further, stating that even I was not qualified to be given a personal loan. What has happened in Hongkong? It used to be that solicitors were considered top drawer on the social ladder. I cannot understand the reason that I am treated this way.*' If Judy had had daggers in her eyes, she would have fired one at her husband on hearing his confession about the amount of money that he had lost in speculating on the price of stocks and shares on The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd. She said, after a split-second's consideration: '*Never!*' It was the first time that Solicitor Wong had ever heard his wife utter one word in the manner of a Stentor: It was frightening to this officer of the High Court of Hongkong. '*Did I hear you, correctly?*' he asked, politely. Judy repeated the word: '*Never*'. And then added: '*I have warned you on many occasions that if you gamble on the stock market, do not come crying to me when you lose money. I have*

*listened to you for some time when you were tallying up your “paper” profits from your speculations on this company’s scrip or that company’s scrip, and I recall, telling you that greed will one day get the better of you. Well, that day has come. I shall not allow you to put MY matrimonial home in jeopardy by asking a bank for a third mortgage in order to cover your gambling losses.’* Solicitor Wong wanted to correct his wife’s suggestion that he had been ‘gambling’ on the equity markets of Hongkong, but he thought better of it because of the loudness of the high-pitched, shrill voice of his wife – which frightened him and caused him to feel extremely uncomfortable.

That which Judy did not appreciate was that Solicitor Wong had financial commitments in Shanghai, commitments that had been costing him more than \$HK30,000 per month for more than one year. He

had taken out a \$HK4-million mortgage, using the matrimonial home as collateral rather than mortgaging his office in Central Hongkong in order to open an office in Shanghai. That mortgage loan had taken some years to retire. She often pondered as to the real requirement in respect of that loan. What Judy did not know was the existence of Li Hua, Solicitor Wong’s ‘secretary’ in Shanghai.

This young lady of 27 years had become accustomed to a certain lifestyle, complete with a house-helper, a gardener and a driver. For some time, Solicitor Wong had been buying and selling stocks and shares in Hongkong in order to pay for his Shanghai ‘office’, as he described this pied-à-terre in Shanghai to Judy. But the bills were mounting in Shanghai – and Solicitor Wong’s cash drawer had been depleted. *‘I do not think that you understand, completely, the gravity of our situation,’* he started to explain to Judy in what he thought was the correct pronunciation of the television presenters of the British Broadcasting System. *‘I have running expenses, monthly, for my office in Hongkong Central as well as my Bund office in Shanghai. If I cannot pay my bills and I am sued for Money Due and Owing, not only will I be embarrassed, but banks in Hongkong and The Mainland will call in all of my outstanding overdrafts and other debts – and, then, I could be financially ruined. In addition, I shall be black-balled by Hongkong banks, which will delete me from the list of solicitors’ firms which are accredited to do work for them or any of their clients. I am in real trouble, my dear wife. I need help and I do not know what to do other than seek emergency cash to tide us over by raising a third mortgage on our dear home.’*

Solicitor Wong’s entreaty to Judy had been completely lost. Judy was not stupid, having obtained a Master of Arts from The University of Hongkong, and, on hearing her husband’s endearments ‘my dear wife’ and ‘our dear home’, if anything, it sickened her. She did not know about Li Hua, but she had long suspected that something, other than work, had kept her husband in Shanghai for 2 days of every week for more than one year. Further, Solicitor Wong rarely shared much of the financial or business affairs of the solicitor’s firm that bore his name, claiming that it would be ethically incorrect and inappropriate to make mention of the secrets of his clients. At the same time, Judy realised, on

looking at her husband, who appeared to be almost ready to crawl to her for help, that she could obtain kudos by assisting her husband in his hour of need. At last, she said: *‘I am able to help you with regard to the money that you need, urgently, but there are conditions, attached to my loan to you.’* Solicitor Wong thought, at this time, that his wife had been taking courses at The Law Faculty of her alma mater because she did sit on various committees at The University of Hongkong. Judy continued: *‘You will close The Bund office, immediately, and you will, no longer, go back and forth to Shanghai. You will stop speculating on stocks and shares on any equity market and you will turn over your bank book to me and place my name as a cosignatory to all bank accounts, including the bank accounts of your firm.’* For the first time in their 22 years of marriage, Judy was laying down the ‘law’ as it applied to the family. Solicitor Wong, meekly, agreed because time was pressing.

*‘From where will you get the \$HK4.80 million, along with the accumulated interest?’* Solicitor Wong asked, groveling for an answer. *‘That is my secret,’* Judy replied, sternly. *‘You have your secrets and I have mine. Do you agree? Shall I draw up the necessary documentation?’* Now, it became very clear to Solicitor Wong: Judy had been taking courses in law. But she had the upper hand and Solicitor Wong was forced to accede to her demands.

**Which goes to prove the lesson that every man must, at some time in his life, learn or be pooped**

by a female tidal wave: A women, ultimately, controls the man of her life; her man is but putty in her hands when she determines to mold him to her.

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