

## If at first you don't succeed...

The October 1994 issue of *De Rebus*, a South African magazine, provided the details of a case which looks to have been dreamed up by a sadistic criminal law examiner.

The tale concerns a fellow called Ron Opus, who died from a wound to the head caused by a shotgun. It appears that Ron, who had been a little depressed, jumped off a 10-storey building in an attempt to commit suicide, but was not aware of the safety net erected at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers. Fortunately for Ron, however, someone shot him through the ninth floor window of the building on his way down, killing him.

The ninth floor was occupied by an elderly man (who had a shotgun) and his wife. This man had been threatening his wife with the shotgun because of a spat. It seems that, in his rage, he pulled the trigger, the pellets went out the window and the descending Ron got shot.

At first glance things looked bad for the old man. However, both he and his wife were adamant that they did not know the shotgun was loaded. It seems to have been a habit of the old man's to threaten his wife with the unloaded gun. He had not intended to murder her or anyone else.

Enquiries disclosed that the couple's son had been seen loading the shotgun in secret some weeks prior to the incident. Apparently the old lady had cut off the son's financial support. The son, knowing his father's habit of waving the shotgun around, seems to have loaded the gun in the hope that his father would accidentally shoot his mother.

Further investigations revealed that the son had become increasingly despondent over his situation and had jumped off the building occupied by his parents, only to be killed by a shotgun fired through the ninth storey window.

The medical examiner deemed it suicide and the case was closed.

Neat really.

*(Drover's Dog, Brief, The Law Society of WA, Vol 22, No 2, March 1995.)*

## THE SPIDER'S WEB



### Read your brief

It is told of Mr Justice Hawkins that a heavily marked brief in a compensation case was once delivered to his chambers and, that after six weeks had elapsed and the hearing of the case was approaching, his clerk wrote to the solicitor suggesting that a cheque for the fee was not only feasible, but was in accordance with the usual practice of the profession. To this the solicitor replied: "If Mr Hawkins had taken the trouble to open the brief he would have found the cheque inside."

*(Victorian Bar News, No 91, Summer 1994.)*

### Who needs enemies?

The ABA Journal reports that after a man in Cortez, Colorado, was arrested and charged with drink driving, his girlfriend went to admirable lengths to clear his name. According to a local paper, she told police "she would swear in court that another male occupant of the vehicle had been driving ... even if it meant committing perjury".

*(The Gist, The Law Institute Journal, The Law Institute of Victoria, Vol 69, No 4, April 1995.)*

### Counsel's dream

The ideal client is the very wealthy man in very great trouble.

*(Victorian Bar News, No 91, Summer 1994.)*

## Suspicious minds

An articled clerk proved himself a fellow of high morals.

One morning, a partner walked into his office to discover an obvious and messy spillage on the floor and his office otherwise in a state of severe disarray. The usual suspects were rounded up for questioning, with our articled clerk second in line. Before the questioning partner had a chance to open his cross-examination, the articled clerk

chimed in with: "It was me." "What was you?" the partner replied. "I don't know, but whatever it was, I did it." As it turns out our hero had a fight with his girlfriend the night before and, being in an emotional state, raided the boardroom liquor cabinet to seek solace in a bottle of gin. Entering the first office he saw he had vented his anger on the room and eventually fell asleep on the floor. He awoke with little memory of his nocturnal activities but, when the call-up for question-time sounded, he knew one thing: whatever it was, he'd done it. It's nice to know that honesty still prevails in the young.

*(Fledglings' Foibles, Brief, The Law Society of WA, Vol 22, No 2, March 1995.)*

### Keeping up appearances

**Counsel:** Now, witness, is your appearance here this morning pursuant to the subpoena forwarded through your solicitors?

**Witness:** No. This is how I always dress when I go to work.

*(Fledglings' Foibles, Brief, The Law Society of WA, Vol 22, No 2, March 1995.)*



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