

## THE CALL.

Eric considered himself that bit more 'on it' than most people; he was 'street wise'. Whereas others would have the wool pulled over their eyes, Eric's Christian Dior sunglasses ensured that wool was never an optical impediment. Despite this, Eric was a Luddite when it came to technology. He did not have a mobile phone, believing that, one day, people would turn their backs on emails in favour of the good old Royal Mail.

Then, one day, Eric received a phone call on his landline that was to change the rest of his life.

'Brrrr. Brrrr. Brrrr.'

'Who is it this time?' thought Eric, picking up the phone. 'This is to tell you that your Amazon account has been charged to the sum of 500 pounds for a bicycle pump. If you did not order this product, then please...'

Eric slammed the phone down in anger. He didn't even have a bicycle! But who had made that phone call? The accent had sounded vaguely Chinese... then Eric suddenly remembered that the local hardware store had recently employed a woman from Hong Kong.

Eric knew that others would have been taken in by this call, but not him, not with his 'street savvy'. Eric immediately ran out, jumped into his car, and set off for the store. It was five minutes away, but Eric knew that, with his foot on the accelerator, he would get to the store quicker than any email could manage.

The screeching of brakes announced Eric's arrival, as he leapt out of his car, slamming the door. Eric threw open the shop door, panting with a sense of urgency.

'How much do you charge for a pump?' yelled Eric at the woman he believed to be from Hong Kong. Whether it was his panting, or the woman's tenuous grasp of English that was the issue, it was not clear, but on hearing these words Michelle Cheng immediately called for assistance.

The shop-keeper, Darren Brook, entered from the back of the store. He was a big man who exaggerated his muscular appearance by swaying towards Eric, his arms out either side.

'What's the problem?'

'This man has just asked me how much I charge for a pump,' replied Ms. Cheng.

'I certainly did', added Eric, still panting and driven by his sense of moral conviction. Eric knew that others, more gullible than he, would have accepted the charge, but he did not.

Darren knew he could out-muscle Eric, but now was not the time. Instead, he took out his mobile phone and dialled 999. As the phone rang, Darren turned to Eric. 'We know about men like you,' he said. 'Stay where you are. A member of Her Majesty's Police Force will be here shortly'.

Others would have felt fear, appreciating the consequences of the interactions, but Eric felt a huge sense of relief. The shop assistant would pay for her sins.

Unfortunately, Eric was to be charged, but not in the way that he had originally feared.