

## COSTA

Kenny Roberts had a dream to be a millionaire before his thirtieth birthday. To this end he tried various plans until, at last, he hit upon the perfect idea.

He bought dilapidated properties near universities, at a minimal cost and let them out at exorbitant rents to students.

And by filling the old houses with second hand furniture and dividing the dwellings into as many bedrooms as possible, his dream was steadily becoming a reality.

Of course, this practice isn't illegal but, the parents of some of those young students have to make enormous sacrifices to pay for such awful accommodation

Mr. Roberts has several properties in his own name and some in his mother's name. This lucrative business financed an excellent life style here in England and, a second home, a beautiful villa, in Denia, Southern Spain.

Denia is a harbour town with an old and new quarter, at the foot of a mountain range that houses those luxury villas. Kenny Roberts is always in residence there during the Summer season, exploiting to the full his good looks and facility for deception.

Stuart Wilson was a school caretaker until he suffered a serious injury to his back when he fell from a ladder, that proved to be faulty, whilst clearing a gutter at his place of work.

After long and painful treatment he regained mobility but was retired by the authorities in respect of his health, and awarded partial compensation and a full pension.

Stuart was a widower, with no children, and decided when retired, he would buy a small apartment in a nice part of Spain where he could enjoy the sunshine and indulge his passion for fishing. Perhaps, he thought, he might even afford a tiny boat with outboard motor and tootle out to sea to just sit and fish all day.

It was the middle of May, the season had begun and Kenny Roberts was ensconced in his villa, having arrived several hours earlier from Alicante airport.

The villa, the pool, and his car were all cleaned by Rudi, his useful German friend who had married a Spanish woman he met there whilst on holiday .....

Rudi would undertake most any task for Kenny as cash transactions worked perfectly for both parties.

That first night there, Roberts sat on his terrace looking down at Denia harbour with some considerable pride, smiling complacently at his success.

Mentally he outlined his plans for the morning. A jaunt around the bay in his small outboard motor boat, moored at the harbour, and then pick up a copy of 'Costa', the ex-patriots newspaper to peruse its contents for anything interesting, while enjoying lunch al fresco. Experience told him that being in Spain did not necessarily exclude him from making money, in fact 'Costa' had been an excellent source of financially rewarding schemes, And for Kenny Roberts there was no greater thrill than that of making money .....by whatever means.

As the sun shrugged off its chaperone of mist to blaze down from a cloudless sky, Roberts stepped into his little boat, wearing shorts, deck-shoes, and designer sun glasses and tugged at the outboard motor rope. There was an unhealthy rattling sound, the rope came away in his hand and a small piece of tired looking metal lay in the bottom of his boat .....

Back at the villa, Rudi advised Kenny that the pulley retainer mechanism had broken and that it would require replacement.

Unfortunately it would be very expensive and difficult to replace in view of the engine's age. Roberts suggested makeshift repairs, perhaps welding, before selling it to some unsuspecting 'punter'.

Rudi said he could fix it but such a weld would be liable to break again at any time, even operating it with extreme care .....

Roberts remained deep in thought for a moment then spoke as if from inspiration.

"I can sell the boat and get rid of this at the same time". And he gestured toward a small Citroen parked next to his Mercedes. Then, in response to Rudi's incredulous expression he remarked, "Oh I know the car's got that overheating problem but we won't tell them that, will we?" And he patted the bonnet with mock affection.

So, against his professional judgment but in respect of the money he would receive, Rudi carried out the outboard motor repair and Kenny Roberts placed an advert in 'Costa' to effect the sale of 'One small boat with excellent outboard engine' and, 'A white Citroen 'A.X' .....Perfect runner'.

Stuart Wilson was rather pleased with himself. Despite a shy, sensitive disposition, which he readily acknowledged, he had sought a nice apartment in the quaint old quarter of Denia and fitted it out more or less as he imagined.

Also, whilst in positive mood, an attitude he struggled to maintain but enjoyed while it lasted, he replaced most of his old fishing tackle with new equipment.

But what thrilled him above all else, was the small boat with outboard motor he had purchased in response to an advert in 'Costa'. Incidentally the vendor had sold him a little Citroen, offering a good discount if he purchased both the boat and the car . Stuart had to admit that the car had proved troublesome and unreliable but he had every confidence in the boat.

After all, he reasoned, the owner spoke of it with such affection.

He recalled exactly Mr. Roberts words. "Treat her with care and she'll never let you down. Always remember, just very gently pull and you're away".

Well, today, Stuart Wilson retired caretaker, resident in Spain six months of the year, would be taking his boat for their first trip together.

A dream come true, Stuart thought, as he loaded his fishing gear and cool box on board. He glimpsed wisps of steam rising from the Citroen's bonnet but would not let this spoil his day as he nervously held the outboard motor starter pull, with Roberts' words echoing in his mind. "Very gently pull and you're away".

He did just that, and soon they were leaving the harbour .....

He felt self conscious and was convinced that everyone on the harbour wall was staring at him critically, but of course they weren't.

He was just another man, off on a fishing trip, who very few people even noticed. And as he left the harbour, such was his joy it banished his nervousness and he found himself waving at the bustling shoreline.

About half mile out to sea he cut the boat's engine and rigged his fishing line. Attaching a small bell to his line which would alert him should a fish bite while he prepared lunch.

Then, some little while later, reclining in the boat, sipping orange and eating a ham salad, he decided to try his new binoculars. They were a retirement present from his school and something he had always wanted but felt was an unnecessary extravagance whilst living in England.

There were one or two vessels far off out to sea, and quite a few people on the beach east of the harbour.

But between the swimmers, who mostly strayed within striking distance of the beach, and himself half a mile or so out, he had that expanse of sea as his own.

He was about to put the binoculars back in their case when he spotted something that was as far out to sea as his boat, but probably some five hundred meters to the east. At first the object puzzled him but he then felt sure it was a man

Being unfamiliar with the glasses he struggled briefly to adjust them, until eventually the man came clearly into view.

Stuart was shocked, not only to discover it was he who had sold him the car and boat but, more importantly, the man was drowning.

It looked hopeless but he knew he must try to reach him before he slipped beneath the surface to be lost forever.

In wild panic Stuart's actions were spontaneous rather than calculated as he snatched violently at the outboard motor rope .....