

Polite Grafitti

by G.E. Simons

Professor Unwin Loomis was arrested at 11.01pm on Tuesday 15th January 2013.

He was entirely guilty of what he had done and wanted that to be acknowledged and understood by the arresting officer.

He immediately asked that eleven similar offences also be taken into consideration, all having been committed on the first Tuesday of the previous eleven months.

Unwin Loomis is a professor of political science at a central London university.

He has also published books on social engineering, the death of the British high street and more recently, fly-fishing. He is 58 years old.

Many of his former students who consider him a continuing mentor and now hold positions in lobbying and research, still correspond with him by email and occasionally by telephone.

One in particular, Susannah Bach who manages a think tank, actually meets with Unwin Loomis in person on the first Tuesday of each month.

They eat at the same Indian restaurant on the Edgware Road where they discuss topics ranging from literature and cinema to family and spiritual progress.

They never discuss politics but always share a bottle of Concho y Toro Merlot, over a Nimbu Chana Masala. Then they return to their respective homes in the boroughs of Bexley and Ealing.

Susannah lives in Bexley with her husband Ed, who works as a Senior Digital Account Director for a marketing agency and their son Alex, who at eleven years old has already mastered the rudiments of the violin.

As they share a pot of green tea at the end of each of their monthly meals, Unwin asks Narahari, who manages the restaurant, to call Susannah a taxi. And every month Unwin then escorts Susannah out to the various Ford, Vauxhall and Nissan cars that arrive, before safely seeing her into the back of them.

Unwin always tells her that he likes to grab a breath of air before he easily then finds a taxi of his own.

But Professor Unwin Loomis hasn't only been breathing in the teeming London air before he flags down his ride home, before finding a car, he has been applying statements of polite graffiti to cars and homes with aerosol cans of gold paint.

On the first occasion he had sprayed the words 'This is a beautiful car.' onto the bonnet of a black C-Class Mercedes sports saloon.

Tonight on the twelfth occasion, when caught in the act by a passing police patrol, he had been in the process of spraying the words 'I like your topiary.' onto the bright red front door of a wisteria-clad townhouse.

He had done it, he explained to the arresting officer, because he wanted to compliment people who were clearly doing well in life. When asked if he would like legal representation during questioning, he said that he wouldn't.

Though he did ask if it would be possible to telephone his wife who always waited up, to make sure he got home to Ealing safely on the first Tuesday of every month.

