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Fraud

by Sue Haffenden

The Facts, as far as they could be ascertained, were as follows.

Fourteen couples had paid over the odds for two weeks all-inclusive at a luxury resort in the Caribbean. The flights and reservations had been confirmed. An evening get together had been arranged the week prior to the start of their holiday to enable them to get to know one another. The detective listened carefully as one by one the couples confirmed the details and made their complaints.

At the get together Craig and Natalie had attended and given a short presentation on what to expect at the resort. No details of the services provided were given but a few knowing looks had been exchanged between the couples. Craig had emphasised the need to keep the exact location secret as theirs was a special kind of holiday. There would be fourteen suites at the hotel and they would be moving between them on a daily basis. By the end of the evening everyone was very friendly and most could not wait for the holiday to begin.

The weather at Gatwick was cloudy and overcast. The fourteen couples greeted each other shyly and shuffled towards the boarding gates. As they chatted, all expressed surprise that both Craig and Natalie though well into their sixties were still arranging these types of holidays.

They were met at the airport and escorted them to the accommodation which turned out to be a group of small bungalows. The weather was sunny and warm and some were a little disappointed that they would be spending so little time outside.

Each couple settled into their own bungalow and had time to relax and swim before dinner. This was lively affair held on the terrace of the main building. The young and good looking staff was courteous and discreet. Excitement started to build as the drinks flowed and the dancing started. Most couples started swapping partners shortly after the music began but by the time they retired all were back with their originals.

The next morning all were keenly anticipating their first day. At breakfast each of them was given an envelope with a bungalow number inside.

The couples separated, some looking apprehensive. They all knew what they were getting themselves into when they booked but the start of two weeks of swapping partners was a little daunting.

The first shout was heard a little after 10am. The occupants of bungalow seven crashed out on the veranda, the man shouting obscenities.

“Knitting, bloody knitting!” screamed half of couple number three.

Further shouts could be heard from the other bungalows.

“Macramé!” “Beadwork!” “Pottery!”

It was agreed over supper that night that they had been well and truly conned. While not actually spelling out two weeks of wife swapping, the advertisements had intimated that fourteen days of swapping partners would ensure that they learnt new skills to bring home to their marriages.

It was reluctantly agreed that Craig and Natalie, mysteriously absent by this time, had pulled off one of the best scams they had ever heard of.

No one flew home early but several of them came back with knitted dishcloths and macramé pot holders.

The detective agreed they had been misled but could find no case to answer. Reluctantly the couples agreed and in future would ask a lot more questions before handing over any money.

For years afterwards the detective dined out on the story of the couples who instead of being at it like rabbits had learned to knit them.