

## Preparation, preparation

a timed exercise

Jorj Kowszun

My motto is “Be Prepared”. I am told that this is also the motto of the Boy Scouts, but, if so, this only proves that they were acting according to my motto earlier than I, or should that be “me”? I like to be precise about these things, but I also like to sound educated. That was his downfall, you see. He assumed that because I was uneducated I must have lacked intelligence. That I could not pull off a clever scam, not one that he would see through.

So I prepared. First I set up one of those phone numbers that charges the highest amount per minute that the company would allow. It happened to be 499 pounds, much higher than I had imagined, but very convenient for me.

Then I persuaded Sheila to help. We set her up with a car that had a convenient fault that caused the car to stop if a certain combination of buttons was pressed and a mobile phone that had run out of juice. Preparation, see?

She turned up at his house and rang the doorbell.

“I am so sorry to bother you. My car has broken down,” she pointed way down the road at the car. Exhibit A. He took that at face-value.

“My phone has run out of juice,” she held it up for him to see. Exhibit B. That too he took at face value.

“Could I possibly use your phone to call my husband? He will know what to do.”

He let her in and pointed to his phone, “Help yourself,” he said.

“It might be a longish call, they will have to fetch him to the phone,” Exhibit C.

“Take as long as you need,” he said.

Well, she managed to keep a one-sided conversation going for a whole twenty minutes. When she finished she apologised profusely. He shrugged and offered her a cup of tea.

“That’s very kind,” she said. “However I will need to be near the car so he knows where I am.”

That bit was on the weak side, but he accepted it and she walked off to the car, got in, pressed the right set of buttons. It started and she drove off.

Nearly twenty thousand pounds – yes!