

兵不厭詐

bing1 bu2 yan4 zha4

Traffic officer PC Steve Hutton barked when chasing after a car-theft suspect. He did not “bark” out an order for the man to stop running but actually barked like a dog.

His imitation act was so convincing that the running man was confused and turned around. That slowed him down and he was caught.

The young suspect must have thought he could outrun the middle-aged officer. But believing that a well-trained canine was about to be set loose on him, he apparently decided that he would rather be arrested than lose an arm or a leg.

PC Hutton had used this special skill before at another precinct and stopped a fleeing suspect in a school. Colleague teased that he “should work for the dog unit but wouldn’t need a dog.”

It is no doubt trickery, but as the idiom goes: “兵不厭詐” (*bing1 bu2 yan4 zha4*). When it comes to apprehending criminals, you need to use any method that works.

Idiom by Lon Yan

“兵” (*bing1*) is “a member of the armed forces,” “a soldier,” “a military man,” “不” (*bu2*) “no,” “not,” “厭” (*yan4*) “to detest” and “詐” (*zha4*) is “to deceive,” “to cheat,” “deceit,” “deception.” Literally, “兵不厭詐” (*bing1 bu2 yan4 zha4*) is “a military man does not detest deception.”

The idiom means “there can never be too much deception in war,” “in war nothing is too deceitful.”

The English expression “all is fair in love and war” means “people in love and soldiers in war-time are not bound by the rules of fair play.” “兵不厭詐” (*bing1 bu2 yan4 zha4*) can be said to be the practical embodiment of that expression.

Terms containing the character “厭” (*yan4*) include:

厭倦 (*yan4 juan4*) - tired of

厭惡 (*yan4 wu4*) - to detest; to abhor

厭世 (*yan4 shi4*) - to be tired of life

討厭 (*tao3 yan4*) - to dislike; to loathe