

Idiom by Lon Yan

原形畢露

yuan2 xing2 bi4 lu4

Love is blind. These wise words caution us that we often don't see the faults of the people with whom we have fallen in love. So, it is quite common that people discover, over time after marriage, that their spouse turns out to be not quite the same person they thought they knew before.

For James Jarid Burton of Tennessee, the awakening came really soon. Just hours after the wedding, the 30-year-old man found himself staring into the barrel of a 9mm handgun, which his bride has produced from under her wedding gown.

She allegedly pulled the trigger, knowing that the gun was not loaded, giving the poor husband the biggest shock of his life. Even more shocking must be the drastic transformation of his bride, a process that is

described by the idiom “原形畢露” (*yuan2 xing2 bi4 lu4*).

“原” (*yuan2*) is “original,” “former,” “形” (*xing2*) “appearance,” “form,” “shape.” “原形” (*yuan2 xing2*) is “the original form or shape,” “the true form or shape under the disguise.”

“畢” (*bi4*) is “whole,” “total,” “completely,” “露” (*lu4*) “to reveal,” “to show,” “to emerge.”

“原形畢露” (*yuan2 xing2 bi4 lu4*), literally, is “original shape completely revealed.”

The idiom means “to reveal the true nature or colors completely,” “to unmask and expose the whole truth.”

The bride, aged 25, was reported to have loaded the gun afterward and fired into the air, sending onlookers fleeing. We don't know what the woman was like before, but the “原形” (*yuan2 xing2*) – “true colors” – that she has revealed was, frankly, quite intimidating.

Terms containing the character “露” (*lu4*) include:

露出 (*lu4 chu1*) – show; reveal

露面 (*lou4 mian4*) – to make an appearance; to show one's face

露營 (*lu4 ying2*) – camping

披露 (*pi1 lu4*) – to disclose; to make public