

Greek man in 'poisonous marriage' sought to buy wife's affection with fraudulent \$85k loan

A GREEK MAN who was "drowning in a poisonous marriage" obtained a fraudulent \$85,000 loan in a bid to buy his wife's affections and pay for her breast enlargement tests, a court has been told.

The Brisbane District Court was today told Greek George Kotis, 41, forged his wife's and mother's signatures to obtain a fraudulent loan in his wife's name to help fund their financially unsustainable lifestyle and to save his troubled marriage between May and June of 2008.

The court was told Kotis was constantly humiliated, degraded, dehumanised and forced to walk behind his wife because she was too embarrassed to be seen with her morbidly obese husband, whose weight ballooned from 110kgs to 185kgs after they married in 1996.

Prosecutor Amelia Loode told the court Kotis applied for an \$85,000 fraudulent loan in his wife's name from AMP.

The court was told Kotis obtained the loan, using the family home he owned as collateral, by forging the signatures of his wife and mother.

Ms Loode said Kotis then deposited \$83,793.21 into his account and used the funds to purchase a cleaning business worth \$20,000, shares worth \$30,000, and a family car.

She said Kotis also spent some of the money on his wife's "medical testing" for breast enlargement.

The court was told Kotis' wife uncovered the fraud and forgery about a year later when they discussed separating and ending the marriage.

Barrister Sam Di Carlo, for Kotis, said his client had been the sole breadwinner during the marriage and initially came into the relationship with a house, which he owned outright, and \$95,000 in savings.

He said Kotis' wife placed her husband under such great pressure to provide "the family a 'quality' lifestyle" that he suffered a breakdown before



committing the fraud.

The court was told Kotis went into the marriage financially secure, but was "going backwards quickly" as a result of his and his wife's arguably indulgent lifestyle.

Mr Di Carlo that situation was exacerbated when Kotis' weight "blew out" - by 75kgs - and his wife became so dissatisfied with him she began dehumanising and humiliating him.

He said the wife, whose name was

not revealed in court, forced him to walk behind her in public, to avoid embarrassment, and constantly told him he was "ugly" and a "cow."

The court was told Kotis suffered a breakdown as a result of the abuse and required psychiatric treatment.

Mr Di Carlo said at the time of the fraud and forgery Kotis was "a very troubled man" who resorted to crime to "buy his way out of trouble."

Mr Loode said Kotis had repaid all of the money obtained as a result of the fraud.

Kotis was jailed for 12 months, but released on immediate parole, after pleading guilty to one count of fraud and two of forgery.

Judge Leanne Clare, SC, in sentencing Kotis, said: "You have a very low self-esteem and struggled to make your wife happy within the marriage."

She said it was clear Kotis "was drowning in a poisonous marriage" and believed he "was trying to save it" through his criminal actions.



Crowds turn up for some Greek dancing at the 2010 Panyiri Greek Festival at Musgrave Park, South Brisbane. Photo: Michelle Smith

Yahsu ... it's Panyiri time

Brisbane's Greek Festival, or the Panyiri, is all about the food, the smiles, the dancing school kids and Brisbane's warm winter sunshine.

More than 100,000 honey puffs and 500 kilograms of haloumi were gone by the time the 2010 Panyiri, finally closes on Sunday night.

Lord Mayor Campbell Newman and Premier Anna Bligh, welcomed

one of the biggest events in her own electorate, will played tag-team and launched the 2010 Greekfest.

Believe it or not, the Greek Festival has been running now for 34 years.

It is now one of the biggest community events on the Brisbane calendar.

My Kitchen Rules television winners gave their tips on cooking

Greek style and there was traditional olive-eating competitions and Greek dancing from the Hellenic Dancers.

On Saturday the clear blue skies tempted tens of thousands to Musgrave Park for day two of the three-day event, where long queues were not enough to scare off those hungry enough for a Greek feast of spanakopita, chargrilled octopus,

crisp haloumi cheese and Greek salads.

And self-confessed Greek goddess 'Effie, managed to draw plenty of plenty of laughs while she helped judges Lisa Curry and Mark Wilson judge "Greek Dancing with the Stars" competition, which drew a crowd of tens of thousands.

Article from Brisbane Times

Kon digs around for Chinese investment

NT RESOURCES Minister Kon Vatskalis is crossing cultural barriers to lobby more Chinese mining explorers to dig into Territory soil.

Plenty of business cards and gifts will be exchanged in a Chinese manner after the Greek-born minister arrived in Nanjing yesterday.

The five-day stay in the country, which also includes trips to Shanghai, will be filled with meetings, seminars and networking functions.

It is hoped to attract further Chinese companies to invest in exploring mining opportunities in the Territory.

"Ensuring our relationship with Chinese investors remains strong is a key component of growing the Territory's economy and creating jobs," Mr Vatskalis said.

The NT is the only jurisdiction with a four-year strategy plan - the Bringing Forward Discovery initiative - to lobby for Chinese and Japanese investment into exploration rather than existing mining opportunities.

Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show the Territory was the only jurisdiction to have increased exploration expenditure to almost \$150 million last year.

"The (strategy) has resulted in considerable investment by Chinese companies in Territory projects and under-explored areas," Mr Vatskalis said.

An 11-person delegation of ministerial advisers, departmental directors and businessmen is travelling with the minister.

The East China Mineral and Exploration Bureau (ECE) which has a 25 per cent share in the NT's Arafura Resources, has organised an investment seminar for the group to be held today. Mr Vatskalis said he was pleased ECE had invited the Territory to host the first ever NT investment seminar in Nanjing. "We now have a Chinese bureau arranging the meetings on our behalf," he said.

Article from Northern Territory