

CROOKED HALIFAX BOSS TOOK OUR DREAM HOME

Crowe's
new nest

GLADIATOR star Russell Crowe has paid £4million for a bachelor pad in Sydney — a stone's throw from Nicole Kidman.

The Oscar-winning bank, who holidayed with Nicole in July, snapped up the 1890s beach-front villa.

Russell, 37, will have four bedrooms, stained glass windows, marble fireplaces and harbour views.

Aussie Nicole, 34 — divorced from film idol Tom Cruise — is said to be planning to move back to her home city from LA.

...so WE'VE
repossessed
it from him



Victory... thrilled Corbetts yesterday



100 hour

A COUPLE won back their farmhouse yesterday from a crooked bank boss who bent the rules to buy it for a knock-down price.

Halifax assistant manager Alan Deakin snapped up Ian and Elaine Corbett's home after his bank repossessed it.

He was not allowed to buy it under company rules - but got his uncle Alan Marples to purchase it instead.

Deakin then exchanged contracts with his uncle on the same day, buying the house for the same out-price.

He paid just £140,000 for Yew Tree Farm when the true value was about £180,000. Another couple made an offer of £147,000 but it was ignored by estate agents.

The Corbetts had fallen behind with their £180,000 mortgage which they were using to redevelop a barn next to the dream farmhouse.

Lied

They carried on living in the barn while Deakin, 43, and his wife Jillian moved into the home they had been forced to sell.

The stress of the deal and unravelling the crooked sale caused the Corbetts years of misery and Ian, 50, suffered a heart attack.

When Halifax bosses uncovered the underhand sale they demoted Deakin to a smaller branch and slashed his salary from £31,000 to £23,000 - but did not sack him.

Yesterday the Corbetts' six-year legal battle ended in victory when a High Court judge handed them back their property in Sand, Somerset - which is now worth £320,000.

Judge John Weeks branded Deakin "a liar" and said he had dishonestly "circumvented" his company's rules.

He said: "He lied and lied again to his employer. It was a significant



Liar... assistant manager Deakin

breach of society procedures and clearly there was enough evidence to dismiss him. He knew that the vendor would not have sold to him if he had disclosed the true facts."

Judge Weeks, sitting in Bristol, said the Halifax had failed its duty to get the best possible price for the house and ruled the sale should be set aside.

He said estate agents Michael Giffell and Stephanie Balson had been "naïve" in believing Deakin's claims that his boss had cleared the deal.

Outside court, taxi driver Ian said: "The Deakins made their mark on our family life and my health. It's been a very difficult eight years."

"I have had a heart attack and I have been in the care of North Somerset mental health unit."

"This is such a relief. It will take some time to sink in, but we are very happy. I'm just and it is taken so long." Damages will be decided later.

tree

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