



Lynda Bellingham's Widowed Husband And Her Sons' Inheritance – How Can you Protect Your Children When You Die?

We all sympathised with actress Lynda Bellingham's husband and her two sons when this very popular actress sadly passed away from cancer in 2014. The former 'Oxo mum', actress and Loose Women presenter was always a lively and engaging presence wherever she appeared and after a difficult second marriage she seemed to have found much deserved lasting happiness with third husband Michael Pattemore.

Although at first Michael was an inconsolable grieving husband, it has been claimed that in the past two years he has been enjoying a lot of international travel and the company of at least one other woman. 'Pattemore's travels' in the past year alone have seen him travel to Russia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Australia, Canada, Cuba and China among others. In fact within just a few months of Lynda's death he also went to Dubai three times, to Peru, to Canada and on a round-the-world trip for eight weeks.

Lynda's beloved sons, Michael and Robbie, have now claimed that their stepdad is a hypocrite who, despite insisting he has maintained a close relationship with his stepchildren, has actually cast them out of his life - and possibly their inheritance too.

It seems that Pattemore initially refused to share the sight of Lynda's Will with her two sons until their aunt intervened. What they found out was a great shock to them, as it appeared Lynda has bequeathed her entire estate and assets to Pattemore, instructing him to decide when to split her substantial inheritance between Lynda's two sons and Pattemore's own two children. Pattemore claims Lynda's Will is still in probate and he has therefore not been able to give her children a share of her assets.

Kelly Mercel, a Wills Trust and Probate specialist at leading and award winning regional law firm Pictons says "From what I've read about this situation, it seems that Lynda's two sons feel they have been cut out of not only their stepdad's life but also their late mother's Will. Not surprisingly, they are questioning this unfortunate situation because they were so close to their mum and know that she would have wanted the very best for them in the event of her death.

"I think it's important to highlight that anyone who is married with children from a previous marriage should always obtain legal advice to ensure that their children's inheritance is protected. There are trusts which can be placed in your Will to ensure that your assets or a share in assets are safeguarded for your children, whilst still utilising the spousal tax exemption. It's important to prevent the potential issues that can arise from not having an adequate Will in place and imperative that legal advice is sought in order to ensure that your wishes will be upheld after you have gone.

"Certain categories of close relatives have the right to make a claim on your estate if they have not been provided for and this includes children. Therefore Lynda's sons

may be able to bring a claim on the estate under the Inheritance Act 1975 but such cases can often be lengthy and costly with the right outcome not guaranteed.

“Ultimately the only way you can ensure that someone inherits from your estate when you die is to put this in your Will. Any expression of wishes not contained within a Will are not legally binding for your executors and they are under no legal obligation to follow them. This ultimately could lead to disputes between relatives after you have died.

“I think that this issue between Lynda Bellingham’s sons and her widower is very unfortunate and has happened at what is clearly an already difficult time for them. I think it highlights the importance of obtaining legal advice when preparing a Will to help reduce the possibility of such a situation from arising.”

If you would like to make a Will please contact us Kelly or one of her Team on 0800 302 9448 or email kelly.mercel@pictons.co.uk