

## HOW TO PREVENT THE PROBLEMS FOUND IN MIKE BALDWIN'S WILL

As the nation continues to be gripped by Coronation Street's current storyline relating to who will inherit Mike Baldwin's fortune and business, The Institute of Professional Will Writers (**08456 442042**) is stressing the importance of seeking proper advice when making a will, so as to prevent families suffering similar problems to the Baldwins.

In the soap, viewers are following the feud between two of the Baldwin sons, Danny and Adam, which surrounds the will left by their father. Danny, who held an enduring power of attorney, on behalf of Mike, has been left everything by his Dad, leaving Adam to ponder his options in contesting the will. Unbeknown to both Danny and Adam, their father contradicted himself by leaving everything to Adam within a will he drew up in Spain. This was dated later than his English will and has only been discovered by Danny's girlfriend, Leanne, tucked away in a world atlas.

The IPW says that this raises several very important messages. Its Chairman, Paul Sharpe, says: "Anyone who has made a will should tell anyone and everyone that they have one. They should also tell anyone and everyone where it is kept and how to access it, but, tell no one what is in it."

The fact that there are two wills left by Mike Baldwin presents potential problems. Because the Spanish will was dated later than the English will, the Spanish will must revoke the English version, unless otherwise stated. The IPW advises that anyone drawing up a new version of their will can easily avoid confusions such as this, by making a statement in the will that says whether the foreign will, does or does not, revoke the English will.

For the majority of us, making a will is a way of reducing family stress and hardship. But anyone drafting a will should take great care if it excludes a spouse, an ex-spouse who has not remarried, a child under 18, a dependant child, or a financial dependant. Writing a letter, explaining why that person has not been included in the will, can prevent many of the problems experienced by the Baldwin family.

Whilst it was Mike Baldwin's prerogative to write a will, a lack of foresight in his actions, coupled with poor advice, has left his family feuding and the destination of his estate uncertain. The IPW, a self-regulating body that campaigns for higher standards in will writing, so as to ensure the public receive the essential and most accurate advice, says that people can avoid such problems by actively seeking an IPW member to advise them about their will.

Paul Sharpe, says, "Everyone who writes a will should ensure that they are leaving the legacy they want to leave and some may be tempted to do this themselves. However, this can be dangerous and anyone in a situation such as Mike Baldwin's, who has a business, children from different relationships and foreign property, should always take professional advice.

"The willwriting market is not regulated, resulting in many different individuals claiming to be 'willwriters'! As a result, poor advice is often given and this can raise all sorts of complications at the reading of the will, which can then lead to it being contested. To avoid the conflicts such as those highlighted by the Coronation Street plot, people need to seek a fully trained willwriter, such as an IPW member who will ensure that any will they advise upon is perfectly worded."

The IPW insists that every member passes its entrance exam or has an equivalent qualification from the Law Society, the Institute of Legal Executives or the Chartered Institute of Bankers. It also demands continuing professional development and that every member has Professional Indemnity Insurance of a minimum of £2 million.

Members of The Institute of Professional Willwriters can assist and advise on all aspects of will writing. For more information, ring **(08456 442042)** or visit [www.ipw.org.uk](http://www.ipw.org.uk).

-ends-

Press calls: Jane Hunt/David Aaron, Catapult PR, **01253 851188**.

**Notes to Editors:** Interviews with an IPW member can be arranged on request.