



FAMILY LAW

Tax Lawyer's True Tales Include High Cost of Bigamy When It's Time to 'Divorce'

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More brain than brawn, tax lawyers have a more interesting practice than many give them credit for, writes tax lawyer Robert Wood in a [Forbes](#) column.

Among his own most interesting cases was a divorcing couple who expected to take advantage of a rule that property is divided among the soon-to-be ex-spouses tax-free. Unfortunately, when it came time to apportion this couple's highly appreciated \$100 million in stock from the sale of a business he started, the lawyers discovered that the wife had been married to someone else when they wed years earlier, making their own marriage invalid and their division of property taxable, Wood recounts.

As high-powered practitioners cogitated about a potential solution to the tax bill nightmare, the splitting couple quietly married and then sought the divorce. Before tying the knot, however, family law practitioners insisted that they agree to what had been intended as a property settlement for the divorce as a prenuptial contract for the marriage.