

**Book Review**  
**Money Magazine**  
**THE WILLS LAWYERS**

*Their stories of money, inheritance, greed, families and betrayal*

Written by Ian R. Whiting, Senior Editor

**"If you love or hate your family... Read this book!"**

Barry Fish and Les Kotzer have done all Canadians a great service with this book – and there is a touch of humour amongst the angst and situations revealed. The vignettes are easy to read and understand – they speak the truth about families in time of loss.

All of the situations are actual cases with names changed to protect the “guilty” - and that makes them all the more memorable. #10 - “Goin' out in style” - brought to mind some of my own experiences with people who “put on the Ritz” at someone else's expense and the truth is never known outside a tight family circle. Keeping up an image gets more expensive all the time!

“I fought back” brings the truth about the effects of financial abuse of the elderly – usually parents. Physical and emotional abuse are usually noticed by others but financial abuse can hide for decades. Readers need to be aware of the horrendous cost (other than financial) to the victims of financial abuse. And several stories here make the point very well.

The “Un-will-ing” narrative caused me to laugh out loud at the thought of Clement using his will to make some excellent points with his in-laws and so-called friends – it was perfect! “Wills as a weapon” has a similar tone and story – wills can become messages from the hereafter to the living and sometimes the lessons are bitter.

Living Wills or Substitute Decision Agreements or Representation Agreements – a rose by any other name – a critical part of the estate planning process don't escape this review. “I heard my mother's words” is a poignant story that regrettably is repeated daily in thousands of hospitals across Canada – if this doesn't cause you to think and then quickly act, it is hard to imagine what will.

“The first wife” brought the laughter back – maybe a lot of truth in this one! “The Hospital visit” evoked another round of chuckles – and you can see it happening which makes it even better! And “The last wish” has the perfect timing you can sense was coming!

“The code” was a tough one to read – the impact on children is beyond words and I have had the same reaction working with clients in this type of situation.

In short – every lawyer and notary that handles Wills and Estates needs to read this book – objectively. The same applies to financial advisors – everyone needs to be aware of the issues that can and do arise and take appropriate steps to help their clients avoid such situations. Bankers are also advised to set aside some built-in prejudices and learn more about helping their clients too!