

Larry King's estranged wife Shawn 'likely' to inherit estate despite secret will, lawyer says

By Taryn Ryder | February 19, 2021



*Larry and Shawn King attend an event together 2017.
The actress is now challenging her estranged husband's secret will.
(Photo: Getty Images for Celebrity Fight Night)*

The battle for [Larry King](#)'s estate is on. The famed broadcaster's estranged wife, Shawn King, is contesting a secret will that leaves his estimated \$2

million [estate](#) to his children — and a legal expert says she has a good shot at winning.

Shawn went to court to oppose stepson Larry King Jr.'s emergency petition to become a special administrator of the estate. Earlier this month, Larry Jr. submitted a handwritten will, known as a holographic will, from his father dated Oct. 17, 2019 that left his estate to his five children. The former CNN host died in January after contracting sepsis.

According to the objection filed on Tuesday, per the *Los Angeles Times*, Shawn's lawyers say the holographic will may have been written under questionable circumstances. [Celebrity divorce lawyer Peter M. Walzer](#), founding partner of [Walzer Melcher](#) family law, which was ranked [best family law firm](#) by Chambers & Partners, tells Yahoo Entertainment they likely have a strong case for that argument.

"It will be argued that Larry did not have the capacity to draft a will. The fact that he hand wrote the will, combined with his possibly diminished capacity could lead one to believe he did not know what he was doing," [top family law attorney](#) Peter M. Walzer says. "A man of Larry's wealth and experience would ordinarily retain counsel to prepare an estate plan that would include a trust."

Larry battled multiple health issues over the years. In March 2019, he suffered a stroke and was in a coma for weeks. One month later, he underwent heart surgery. Larry was hospitalized with COVID-19 prior to his death.

The Times obtained the handwritten note, which read, "This is my [Last Will & Testament](#). It should replace all previous writings. In the event of my death, any day after the above date I want 100% of my funds to be divided equally among my children Andy, Chaia, Larry Jr Chance & Cannon." (Chance and Cannon are the two sons Larry shares with Shawn. Larry's daughter, Chaia, and son, Andy, later died within weeks of each other last year.)

"The holographic will is suspect. It is likely the will will be thrown out," Walzer tells Yahoo. "Most people do not write out a will in their own handwriting."

Larry filed for divorce from Shawn, his seventh wife whom he wed in 1997, for the second time in August 2019. (They both dropped divorce petitions in 2010.) Their divorce was not final when Larry died.

"Larry was not pushing the divorce and was generally non-responsive and refused to participate in the divorce proceeding," reads Shawn's objection, obtained by *The Times*. "He gave no indication that he actually wanted to pursue divorce (other than the initial filing of the Petition for Dissolution). Although entitled to seek trial preference because of his age, he did not avail himself of this option, and allowed the dissolution proceeding, which was filed in August 2019, to languish."

Larry Jr. argues in his filing that the estranged couple "were actively involved in ongoing dissolution proceedings" and "were residing separately from each other since 2019, and were living separate and apart at the time of Mr. King's death."

Walzer believes that while the divorce was pending, "it is not enough to indicate that he intended to disinherit his wife."

Another curveball in estate battle are two postnuptial agreements Shawn claims were put in place, reportedly limiting his ability to make testamentary gifts to his children. The holographic will would violate the terms of those agreements. According to Walzer, that's a big deal.

"A valid postnuptial agreement would have priority over a will. Because of fiduciary duties between husband and wife, a postmarital agreement would require consideration, full disclosure and attorneys for the parties," he explains.

In Walzer's expert opinion, it's "unlikely that the holographic will will be upheld."

"It is likely that Shawn will inherit Larry's estate," he says.

A court date has been set for March 25.