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Letter To The Editor

ARTICLE ON MATRIMONIAL LAW STRUCK A CHORD

Stanley S. Arkin's June 8 article exploring the "Line Between 'Negotiation and Extortion' " struck a chord familiar to many of us who practice matrimonial law. In virtually every divorce something peculiar, embarrassing or downright humiliating about one of the parties can potentially become the focal point of an advocate's attack.

Fortunately, most practitioners opt for the more civil and germane approach to resolving the parties' marital difficulties and issues. Others, and you know who you are, begin and end every sentence with a reminder about events that are apt to torment your client, expose him to IRS inquiry or subject him to public ridicule.

While utilizing a non-economic basis to exact an economic benefit seems to fit the definition of 'extortion,' those who tend to exploit the weak at heart are very unlikely to ever be officially challenged for their manipulation. Indeed, the only way courts can police the bar's more insidious members is to penalize them when it comes time to award counsel fees. However, if the past is any indicator, the squeaky extortionate wheels out there will, in all likelihood, continue to get the grease.

Peter J. Galasso
Garden City, N.Y.

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