

Insights



Robin Rathmell Speaks with The New York Times on Ultra High-Net-Worth Individual Matrimonial Disputes in the time of COVID-19

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Kobre & Kim's Robin Rathmell recently spoke with Paul Sullivan, who runs the *New York Times*' "Wealth Matters" column, on how court closures and operational changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have affected divorce proceedings involving ultra high-net-worth individuals (UHNWIs).

The main dispute in a divorce is on the question of how to value and divide a couple's assets, which can become particularly complicated when UHNWIs, who often hold complex structures of assets in multiple jurisdictions, are involved. Court closures already hinder even a relatively straightforward divorce, but things spiral when assets are held in different countries. Rathmell points to commercial courts in the Cayman Islands, which have sought to stem this problem by operating through video to keep matters like high-dollar divorces moving along.

However, Rathmell explains, "In commercial cases, there's a reason to do this to keep the world moving, but in criminal law, it would never work." This has implications for divorce cases, which "range from borderline commercial cases, if there's a lot of assets, to near criminal cases if there's child neglect."

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