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Upper Class

# The Rich and the Sick: Steel Magnate's Granddaughter Battles Ex-Hubby in Court

By Natalie O'Neill Fri., Oct. 2 2009 at 10:55 AM Write Comment

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Miami's crop of the very, very wealthy is an odd breed, and Riptide can't help studying it the way Marty Stouffer scoped out bobcats on *Wild America*. Observe the insanely rich woman in her natural habitat. Watch her peculiar mating habits. See her messy court case.

Take Alice Takach for example. The Key Biscayne woman is the great-granddaughter of an enormously wealthy steel magnate named **Henry Phipps**. Although she doesn't work, according to court papers, she has a trust worth somewhere in the ballpark of 75 million. Back in the '90s, her autumn Lutheran wedding was even written up in the *New York Times*.

An open court case tells another story. In 1969, Alice married a strapping financial executive named Eduardo Tarafa. The two lived the high life in New York until 1983, when Eduardo was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She filed for divorce shortly afterward, remarried, and agreed to pay alimony to help with his sickness.

Then his condition got much worse. Says his lawyer, Jason Marks: "He understands what's going on but can't do a thing on his own." He has been bound to a wheelchair for years and can't go to the bathroom without the help of an aide.

In 2002, Alice filed a motion to terminate alimony. She claimed he lived with a relative who supported him, but a judge didn't buy it.

Says Attorney Marks: "This woman is mega-rich -- we're talking about old money here... and she has pitted a war against this poor guy."

Alice's lawyer, Raymond Rafool, counters that Eduardo himself is worth more than \$1 million. "In reality, [Alice] has gone over and above... The issue is: Shouldn't he pay for his own medical bills? They've been divorced longer than they were married."

Flash-forward to present day. Health-care costs have increased threefold since the divorce. So, not long ago, Eduardo filed for an increase of about \$13,300 in alimony per month. He outlined what the additional cash would be used for: an electric wheelchair, acupuncture for pain, and a shower chair so he could bathe. Alice refused, and they ended up in court again. Then, last month, Miami Circuit Court Judge Marc Schumacher "modifi[ed] alimony to \$10,592" more per month. Alice has since appealed.

Says Marks: "For him, this is life or death."

Contends Rafool: "We're sorry that he's sick... but he's being greedy."

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