

Divorce Is Big Business and Getting Bigger

**By Matthew Crider, JD
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As the old saying goes, "one person's loss is another person's gain." Divorce is no exception to this rule. Divorce attorneys have known this for years and have done well by many divorcing couples.

Marital dissolution is a \$28 billion dollar business, according to maritalstatus.com. It's no surprise that outside investors have been inventing new ways to cash in on a piece of the action in the recent past.

The divorcing population, a once marginalized group, is now being marketed to.

There are oodles of gift websites for divorcing men and women. Souvenirs cover a wide variety of items and appeal to a wide array of people. They include mugs and t-shirts about being "free," celebratory divorce cakes, pre-written alimony checks with nasty messages written in like, "Payable to: Cause of All My Pain," wedding ring coffins, ex-wife toilet paper and even knife holders in the shape of your ex-spouse.

Christmas, London Family Law Attorney, Vanessa Lloyd Platt, a Senior Partner at Lloyd Platt & Company, developed a "divorce voucher." This gift card was something friends and family could give a loved one whom they either knew would be divorcing in the near future or whom they believed should get divorced. The card could be purchased for £125 (approximately \$195), and it bought a 30 minute divorce consultation.

In June, 2010, the media bombarded us with news that divorce parties in Japan were all the rage. Couples could "un-marry" for approximately \$600 in a ceremony of ring smashing witnessed by friends and family complete with a rickshaw to carry the couple to and fro and decorations for extra flare.

Divorce parties and ceremonies were popular in America a few years back, but these new fetes seem to have become a formal enterprise for hire rather than just in-home parties thrown by a friend.

This past summer, we saw the unveiling of Wedlock Divorce insurance by John A. Logan, Founder of Safeguard Guaranty Corp.

Marrying couples tentative about their nuptials can purchase an insurance policy for as little as \$16 per month for \$1,250 "units of protection." This would ensure that, if the marriage indeed didn't last, he or she (the owner of the policy), would have some cash available to apply toward attorneys fees or moving fees.

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The *New York Times* this week uncovered another emerging enterprise – divorce "lawsuit lenders" -- companies that front money to people involved in marital dissolution who couldn't otherwise pursue "justice."

This lending practice has been in place for many other types of contingency lawsuit cases but has only more recently hit the divorce realm. Stacey Napp, founder of Balance Point, came up with the idea after going through her own divorce and, in fact, started the company using money from her settlement.

L.A. resident, Michelle Pont, sought help from Balance Point when she discovered that the settlement she had received in her marital dissolution was a mere fraction of what should have been hers per California community property laws.

Fortuitously for her, Pont discovered that her husband's business (that she helped build from the ground up) was worth millions. As such, she was entitled to more money. Because she was out of financial means and out of work, Pont didn't have the money to go after the additional cash. That is, until she received a loan from Balance Point.

The loan enabled Ms. Pont to reopen the case and get what was rightfully hers.

As a Sacramento divorce lawyer, I'm still trying to decide how I feel about the commercialism of divorce.

On the one hand, I'm glad that people have more information and resources today than they did a decade ago when I embarked in the field.

On the other hand, it's taking on a public feel that makes me a bit uneasy. At the rate things are going, I wouldn't be surprised if the next business venture involved a "drive thru" divorce court. Oh wait, we already do have drive thru divorces!

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About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed [Crider Law PC](#) in 1999 so he could help individuals by providing creative solutions and be their trusted advisor and legal counselor. He serves his clients by listening closely to their goals, dreams and concerns and working with them to develop superior and comprehensive estate and asset protection plans. His family law and divorce focuses on assisting families in a dissolution matters, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child and spousal support, spousal support and alimony, and parental rights.

