THE LEGACY PLANNERS P.C.

PERSONAL FAMILY LAWYER®

Your trusted family advisor.

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What Priscilla Presley's Lawsuit Reveals About the Prevalence of Elder Abuse

June is Elder Abuse Awareness Month, and there's a case in the headlines right now that drives home just how important this issue is. Priscilla Presley, 79, is currently in court, claiming she was defrauded of over $1 million by people she once trusted. If it can happen to someone with her resources, fame, and team of advisors, it can happen to anyone.

That's what makes her story so powerful—it's a wake-up call. Financial elder abuse doesn't just affect strangers on the news. It's something we all need to understand, prepare for, and actively guard against.

Let's look at what happened in Priscilla Presley's case, how predators operate, and most importantly, how proactive Life & Legacy Planning can provide the protection you and your loved ones deserve.

How Financial Elder Abuse Often Begins

In Presley's case, the allegations are chilling—but unfortunately, common. Reports claim that over the course of two years, her former business partner, Brigitte Kruse, gained her trust, gradually isolated her from longtime advisors, and ultimately persuaded her to sign documents giving others control over her finances and business affairs.

If these claims prove true, they represent a textbook pattern of financial elder abuse. And understanding that pattern is the first step toward prevention.

Here's how it typically unfolds:

1. Building Trust

It often starts with kindness and connection. The person who becomes the abuser may shower the older adult with attention, take on the role of "helper," and position themselves as the one person who truly cares. Presley alleges this was exactly how her former associate positioned herself—as someone who would take care of her and someone she could trust.

2. Isolation

The next phase is more subtle—but dangerous. Abusers work to distance their target from long-time friends, professionals, or family. In Presley's case, she claims she was encouraged to distrust her closest advisors. This isolation eliminates the very people who might recognize red flags or speak up when something seems off.

3. Legal Control

Once trust is secured and isolation is in place, the final step is gaining formal authority. Presley alleges she was convinced to sign powers of attorney and other legal documents that handed over decision-making power. With those in hand, the accused allegedly drained her finances.

This kind of exploitation isn't unique to Presley's case. In fact, it follows a familiar—and frightening—pattern seen in countless elder abuse cases nationwide. By the time someone gains legal control, the victim's support system has often been dismantled, making intervention incredibly difficult. That's why understanding how these steps unfold is so important. Because while the details may vary, the strategy is alarmingly consistent—and it's not limited to the rich or famous.

Why This Matters for Every Family

You don't have to be a celebrity to be at risk. Financial elder abuse is happening every day in families across the country—quietly, painfully, and often without justice.

The impact is far-reaching:

Financial devastation: The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network reports that between June of 2022 and June of 2023, banks flagged nearly $27 billion in suspicious elder exploitation in a single year. For families, that could mean losing a home, retirement savings, or money intended for long-term care.

Emotional trauma: Victims often feel ashamed, embarrassed, or afraid to tell anyone. Loved ones blame themselves for missing the signs or feel helpless when trying to intervene.

Family conflict: Sadly, these situations often fracture families. Suspicion may fall on the wrong person. Siblings may turn against each other. And while the family argues, the true abuser continues taking advantage.

This is exactly why early, intentional planning is so critical. But not just any estate planning will work.

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The Life & Legacy Planning Difference

Most people think of estate planning as something you do once and forget about. But that "set it and forget it" approach doesn't work when it comes to protecting yourself and your family from manipulation or abuse.

That's why I offer planning that's more holistic: Life & Legacy Planning. It's a plan that works when you and your loved ones need it most—not just on paper, but in real life.

Here's what sets Life & Legacy Planning apart:

1. Clear Documentation and Conversations

It's not enough to sign a few documents. You need a plan that clearly states who should be in charge of your finances and decisions, and under what conditions. More importantly, your loved ones need to know what the plan says and understand how it works. When everyone is on the same page, it's much harder for a manipulator to come in and disrupt things.

2. Regular Reviews

Life changes. Relationships evolve. New people come into the picture. That's why we build regular reviews into your plan—so we can catch any red flags early. We also create space for your family to ask questions and get clarity if something feels off. This simple habit can prevent major issues later on.

3. A Trusted Relationship with Your Lawyer

One of the most potent parts of Life & Legacy Planning is the ongoing relationship with me, your Personal Family Lawyer®. Unlike the traditional model, where you see a lawyer once and then maybe never again, I have systems in place for regular reviews and updates to your plan. That means I'm more likely to notice if something seems strange or if someone is trying to manipulate you. If your loved ones ever suspect something, I will be there for them so they have guidance and support when they need it most.

How to Take Action Now—Before You're Vulnerable

This kind of ongoing, trusted relationship isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a vital layer of protection. But even the strongest plan only works if it's created before a problem arises. That's why taking proactive steps now, while you're in control, is so important. That means while you're mentally sharp, healthy, and surrounded by people you trust. Waiting until a crisis occurs—or until your ability to make decisions is in question—makes it much harder to establish effective safeguards.

So what can you do today?

Talk to your family. Have open, honest conversations about your wishes and how you'd want them to step in if something seemed wrong. Transparency is key.

Stay connected with your professional advisors. If your lawyer, CPA, or financial advisor knows you well, they're more likely to notice if something seems off. Together, we can create a network of protection.

Trust your gut. If someone seems unusually interested in your finances or tries to isolate you from your family or advisors, that's a red flag. Early action can prevent long-term damage.

How to Create a Plan That Protects You from Predators

Priscilla Presley's legal fight is still playing out, and the truth of her case will be decided in court. But her story is already teaching us something critical: no one is immune to elder financial abuse. Not even celebrities with wealth, experience, and legal teams.

What makes the difference is a comprehensive plan that works, protecting you from possible predators.

As a Personal Family Lawyer® Firm, I help clients like you create thoughtful, proactive Life & Legacy Plans that don't just protect your assets—they protect your relationships, your dignity, and your peace of mind. We start with a Life & Legacy Planning® Session where you'll get more financially organized than ever before, learn what will happen when you die or if you become incapacitated, and then make decisions that reflect your goals, values and wishes, while protecting your assets and all the people you love.

Let's build a plan that protects what matters most—before anyone else tries to take it from you. Click here to schedule a complimentary 15-minute consultation to get started today:

www.calendly.com/lauren-tlppc

This article is a service of The Legacy Planners P.C., a Personal Family Lawyer Firm. We don't just draft documents; we ensure you make informed and empowered decisions about life and death, for yourself and the people you love. That's why we offer a Life & Legacy Planning Session, during which you will get more financially organized than you've ever been before and make all the best choices for the people you love. You can begin by calling our office today to schedule a Life & Legacy Planning Session.