

## **Trouble for Trouble! Judge Knocks \$10 Mil from Helmsley Dog's Take** by Dan Slater June 16, 2008

Last week, for our girlfriend's birthday, the Law Blog adopted a kitten from the North Shore Animal League. We named the three-month old William Wallace, and then went about procuring several appurtenances of kitty wealth, such as toy mice, feather teasers, a fleece bed and a scratching post.



Leona Helmsley's dog, Trouble, photographed in Helmsley's New York apartment in 2003. (Credit: Ass.Press/Jennifer Graylock)

It all seemed pretty rich, until we read about the expense sheet for Trouble (pictured), the Maltese poodle left behind by the late Leona Helmsley, who died last August at 87. In papers that were reportedly unsealed today, Manhattan surrogate court judge Renee Roth, along with New York State's Attorney General's Office, reduced Trouble's trust fund from \$12 million to \$2 million. According to the report in the NY Post, the deal also entailed \$6 million in payments to Helmsley's two disinherited grandchildren, amid their allegations that Helmsley wasn't mentally competent when she signed her will.

As for Trouble's future well-being, she now resides in Florida with Carl Lekic, the general manager of the Helmsley Sandcastle Hotel, reports the NYP. In an affidavit, Lekic said that "Two million dollars . . . would be enough money to pay for Trouble's maintenance and welfare at the highest standards of care for more than 10 years, which is more that twice her reasonably anticipated life expectancy," he said.

Lekic put Trouble's annual expenses at \$190,000, which includes Lekic's \$60,000 guardian fee, \$100,000 for 'round-the-clock security, \$8,000 for grooming, \$3,000 for miscellaneous expenses, \$1,200 for food and anywhere from \$2,500 to \$18,000 for medical care.

Helmsley's will had asked that either her brother or grandson care for the dog, but both took a pass. Last September, the LB noted the NYP's interview with [Rachel Hirschfeld](#), who calls herself a pet-trust lawyer. Hirschfeld felt that Trouble was getting short-shrifted by Helmsley's lawyers and family. "It's outrageous what's happening here," Hirschfeld told the NYP, citing the report that Trouble isn't living with the man Helmsley asked to take care of her.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2008/06/16/trouble-for-trouble-judge-knocks-10-mil-from-helmsley-dogs-take/>