

The Riis case: Lawyer demands 27,9 million NOK On a desperate hunt for creditors

Crime: Lawyer Herman Berge has started a desperate hunt for creditors to keep Amelia Riis from receiving her deceased husband's assets.

by KJETIL SAETER

Amelia Riis (78) has two valid judgments in her hands. Still, lawyer Herman Berge (44) refuses to let go of the estate after Amelia's husband, Einar Riis. The 44 year old, who has given himself the title of executor of the estate in Monaco, has in the past few months hunted intensively for possible creditors to the estate. By doing this Berge wants to stop her from having access to the assets that her husband left in Monte Carlo, assets that come from Amelia's record 55 million NOK settlement with the State in 2003.

Creditor hunt in Italy

Finansavisen reported Wednesday that Berge demands the majority of Amelia's settlement money. But since Berge's claims have now been denied by Norwegian courts, and in addition Amelia has a large indemnity claim against him, the lawyer tries even rougher methods. Finansavisen knows that Berge has been in Italy to convince several earlier colleagues and friends of Einar Riis to declare claims against the estate. For many years the Riis family resided in Italy where Einar Riis worked as an aviation agent. Berge supposedly did not succeed in his attempts in Italy. He has actually tried the same approach in Norway, where he got nowhere. Right before Christmas Asker and Baerum court received a claim against the estate for over 2 million NOK. Supposedly the claim is from Reidar Berglund from Ullensaker.

Berge the mastermind

There is little doubt about who the mastermind behind the claim is. "I refer to your letter in which you inquire about possible claims against Einar Riis, his estate" writes Berglund to Berge, who then sent the letter to the court from his own fax number in Luxembourg. Berge announced his move to the small country shortly after Amelia Riis sued him in 2007. Berglund claims in the letter that he worked for Einar Riis from 1974 until 2005. The background is according to the letter "innumerable requests" from Einar Riis "to find the hidden fortune of Olsen & Ugelstand and Kristoffer Olsen". Several sources Finansavisen has talked to, including Amelia Riis, deny that Berglund has in fact accomplished any substantial work on behalf of the Riis family. Berglund supposedly contacted Einar Riis a long time ago and said that he had information about hidden shipowner fortunes, information he wanted several hundred thousand NOK for. Einar Riis supposedly turned this offer down. Finansavisen has multiple times tried to contact Berglund. According to his wife, he does not wish to comment on the claim.

Wanted to have her declared incompetent

Berge tries to use Berglund's claim as a way to force Asker and Baerum court to withdraw the declaration of undivided estate that was made official after Einar Riis died in May 2006. This declaration gives Amelia Riis the right to handle the couple's assets. For Berge the declaration is obviously an obstacle in his hunt to the million NOK Einar Riis left behind in Monaco. The Asker and Baerum court has denied his request to withdraw the declaration. Therefore Berge also tried to get Amelia Riis declared incompetent. This request also suffered the same fate, since it was denied by the Baerum authorities. Finansavisen has not succeeded to contact Herman Berge by phone, fax or email in Luxembourg.

Page 16 Photo Captions

[1] - Gone berserk with estate. Finansavisen wrote on Wednesday 12/31/08 about Herman Berge's

attempts to get his hands on the lion's share of Amelia Riis' record settlement with the State.

[2] – Contested investment: Finansavisen reported yesterday that Amelia Riis has a 2,4 million NOK claim against Herman Berge, following a substantial investment into a research boat.

Page 17 Photo Caption

[1] – Tried to have Amelia Riis declared incompetent. New claim for 2 million NOK. Will try anything: Lawyer Herman Berge will do anything to stop Amelia Riis from having access to the million NOK her husband left behind in Monaco.

The Amelia Riis case

- Amelia Riis' brother, Kristoffer Olsen jr., became director and new partner of the shipping company Olsen & Ugelstad after the death of their father in 1948. The disagreements between brother and sister became apparent since 1950.
- After the father's death, the mother was in charge of the unpartitioned inheritance, while Kristoffer Olsen jr. ran the companies. After the mother's death in 1970, the mother's estate remained undistributed.
- Amelia Riis has always thought that the court unfairly permitted Kristoffer Olsen jr. to handle the distribution of the property, and that this decision was not in the better interest of the heirs. Large values were lost.
- in 1978 Amelia Riis and her husband Einar Riis sued the State. In February 2001 – 23 years later – the court in Oslo rendered the judgment that gave her partial victory and obligated the State to pay her an indemnity of 43 million NOK. The State appealed the judgment, but later accepted the settlement.
- Amelia Riis has also started other trials, amongst them against the bankruptcy court for Hilmar Reksten.

Background

- Amelia Riis's husband Einar Riis died on May 30, 2006. The majority of the assets from the 55 million NOK settlement with the State were at that time in Monaco, where Einar Riis was resident.
- That same fall lawyer Herman Berge (44) advances a claim of 27.9 million NOK against the estate. Berge had already received more than 10 million NOK from Amelia and Einar Riis.
- Berge also claims that he is the executor of the estate. The 44 year old has thus blocked the assets in Monaco.
- Berge claims he was the architect behind the settlement of 55 million NOK with the State. Earlier Chief of the Justice Department Odd Einar Doerum, who made the decision to settle the case on behalf of the State, denies this statement.
- Amelia Riis now has two valid judgments from Norway where the so-called wills and agreements that Berge bases his claims on, are declared illegitimate.
- Berge does not give up. Last fall he sued amongst others Nicolas Sarkozy and Prince Albert II of Monaco for 1,8 billion NOK on behalf of the estate.

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