

Joan Blass  
April 20 1924 – March 26 2016



# A Story of Predatory Marriage

Daphne Franks

[www.predatorymarriage.uk](http://www.predatorymarriage.uk)

[facebook.com/predatorymarriage](https://facebook.com/predatorymarriage)

Joan died on Easter Saturday, 26 March 2016.

On Easter Monday, 29 March 2016, “Ranlyn” arrived at Joan’s GP surgery with a marriage certificate.

He had married her on 26 October, 2015.

The witnesses were his son and a lady from the pub.

None of Joan’s family or friends was present and none of them knew it was happening.

We set about trying to find out how the marriage could possibly have

Ron and  
Joan, pub  
lunch



Joan in her eighties



Joan, age 88





## WILLS:

In 2004, both Joan and Ronnie made their Wills.

They were common, straightforward Wills leaving everything – house, money, possessions – to their two children.

## Power of Attorney

In 2004 Joan had set up Enduring Power of Attorney so Daphne could look after her affairs if she lost mental capacity to do so.

To many people's surprise, Power of Attorney has no link with marriage. There is no requirement to tell the attorney if the donor plans to marry.

This is by the garden gate, where, in November 2011, she met “Ranlyn”



Joan's 90<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday  
Party  
April 2014





We sought help from:

- Joan's GP
- Social Services
- The Police
- The family solicitor

## Letter from the Registrars

I proceeded to ask Mrs Blass for the same information. The questions that proved problematic were her age and house number. All other details were given easily. She reminded me jokingly that a lady never gives her age but I replied by saying that on this occasion, she had to. However, by recalling how many years separated herself and her brother, she eventually answered to my satisfaction. In respect of her address, she was able to name the street but could not remember the number of her house. Mr [REDACTED] started to intervene and he was reminded that Mrs Blass had to answer by herself. In view of her memory problem mentioned above, I decided that the street name only would be acceptable.

When the couple left the room after this initial interview, the DSR asked me if I thought Mrs Blass was fully aware of why she was there and should we proceed with the ceremony. I replied that, in my opinion based on the interview, how her information had been given and her demeanour, we should go ahead.

What are the “red flags” here? What should the registrars have done?

“Ranlyn” has always insisted that Joan did not have dementia, and that nobody in the family had ever mentioned it to him. His real name is blacked out in this excerpt from Joan’s medical records.

30 Sep 2015 15:08	Surgery: Dr Nigel Bew (General Medical Practitioner)
Seasonal influenza vaccination (XaZ0d)	
Ex-smoker (Ub1na) (New Episode)	
Review of dementia advance care plan (XabE!) - with [REDACTED] - short term memory good, walking less well, gets up and down stairs and in bath. Has a wheelchair.	
130 / 85 mmHg	
Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (Split Virion) BP (Sanofi Pasteur MSD) 1 0.5 ml	
Vaccination Consent: INFLUENZA	

The Mental Capacity Act, 2005 – from [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)

- (1) The following principles apply for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity.

We contacted:

- The Register Office in Leeds – they married in Leeds Town Hall
- The Office of the Public Guardian
- The Local Government Ombudsman
- The Police
- The Forced Marriage Unit
- The General Register Office (national headquarters)
- Finally we went to our MP, Fabian Hamilton

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Consent) Bill

Fabian Hamilton MP

November 21, 2018

Passed unanimously for a second reading but then ran out of  
Parliamentary time

Crown Prosecution Service

Unable to prosecute because of lack of evidence.

There have been no prosecutions for Forced Marriage with dementia.

## Changes we seek:

- That a marriage should no longer revoke a will
- Robust procedures for Registrars with consequences if these are not followed
- Notification of civil marriage to be published on the internet
- Evidence to be kept at marriage

“Ranlyn” - - -

- Insisted that my mother should be buried when she had always wanted to be cremated
- Kept all the money (and possessions) and refused to leave the house
- Used my mother’s blue badge to park and was caught and prosecuted and failed to pay the fine

• Remarried in 2018 to another elderly lady who had a limo company

## OTHER CASES

How many other cases are there?

Nobody knows.

“No data is available on the prevalence of predatory marriage – largely because no one in authority is looking for it.” - solicitor Sarah Young

## WHAT NOW?

The Law Commission has just completed a consultation into marriage and its results are being collated and analysed.

We are now working with barristers, solicitors, safeguarding professionals and mental capacity experts to try to change the Law and procedures around marriage.

After the results of the Law Commission consultation have been analysed, I have been invited to a meeting with Alex Chalk MP,

Joan Blass's  
grave is the  
patch of grass in  
the middle, with  
no headstone





JOHN

was here!

With thanks to:

- Stephen, Olli and Alex Franks
- Rachael Clawson of Nottingham University
- Lisa Curtis of The Ann Craft Trust
- Sarah Young of Ridley and Hall Solicitors
- Shoosmiths Solicitors
- Dr James Warner of Imperial College
- The Police who built a case and tried to help
- The relatives of other cases who have spoken to us
- Beth Chappell of St Gemma's Hospice, Leeds
- Fabian Hamilton MP
- Real Safeguarding Stories and all involved