



JOHNETTA PAYE ESQUIRE

ENTERTAINMENT OCTOBER 31, 2016

# Syndication earnings from entertainment biz: How Tommy Ford's family can get his



JPAYE



SHARE



f SHARE

t TWEET

p PIN



IT'S FIGHTING SEASON ON  
UPCOMING SEASONS OF  
'BEING MARY JANE' ... IN  
THE COURTROOM



He was the Tom Ford we all knew and loved. Not the Tom Ford that Jay Z rapped about, the other one, Thomas Mikal Ford — although both of them are fashionable in their own way. His character Tommy was the one who had a questionable job. The one who managed to make Pam temporarily stop being hostile. The one who had zero problems with telling Cole “you stupid.” The one who had that laugh you could hear a block away (or a room away if you were watching “Martin” syndicated episodes).



gettyimages®

WireImage | Amy Graves

And now Ford has passed away as of October 16, 2016, but fans of “Martin” will still get to enjoy him. (He also completed “Wounded,” “The Ballerina” and “Fade Away,” according to [IMDB](#), before his passing.) Although the “Pope of Comedy” actor played a much darker role on “New York Undercover,” that was yet another show that was on syndication (2007 to 2011). However, “Martin” episodes are still on syndication on TV One and BET occasionally, which means Ford’s family may still be entitled to earnings in syndication.

#### **Passing syndication royalties on to loved ones**

**Draft and execute a will:** Every state has specific requirements for the creation and execution of a valid will. It is advisable to check the requirements of your specific state before having a will drafted. If these strict requirements are not met, the will is considered invalid, as if no will had been created and executed.

In Georgia, the state where Tommy Ford died, one of the requirements for a will to be valid is that it cannot be written by hand on a sheet of paper. If so, it will not be recognized under Georgia law. The will has to be signed by the testator, the person who is leaving the will. The testator has to be of sound mind at the time of signing the will. For example (and unrelated to Tommy Ford), if a testator had a schizophrenic episode while he or she was signing a will, it is unlikely that a probate judge would find the person was of sound mind.

Another requirement is that the will needs to be witnessed by two people. The two witnesses need to sign the will in front of the testator. These are just a few of the requirements to draft and execute a valid will in Georgia. It is advisable to consult with an attorney before drafting a will.

**Establish a trust:** Another way Tommy Ford could have ensured his syndication royalties were transferred to his next of kin was by creating a trust. Again, each state has specific requirements for the creation of a trust. In Georgia, one requirement for creating a trust is that there must be a written document creating the trust. The document needs to be signed by the person creating the trust. Another requirement is that the trust document has to name a beneficiary. The trust property has to be specified in the trust document. In Tommy Ford's case, the trust property should have included his syndication royalties. These are just a few requirements of creating a trust in Georgia.

---

In case you are curious how syndication royalties are calculated, [check out this article](#).

---

**The ugly side of syndication rules for other cast members**

### The ugly side of syndication rules for other cast members

Family members are not the only individuals that financially benefit from syndication royalties. In the case of “The Cosby Show,” Bill Cosby’s fellow castmates also received syndication royalties from the show. With cable networks like TV Land removing reruns of “The Cosby Show” from its lineup, the cast is sure to see a decline in their [syndication checks](#).

Syndication royalties are generated from another distributor, like a cable network licensing episodes of a show. Cosby’s castmates can do very little to stop networks from pulling reruns of the show from its lineup. Most entertainment and endorsement contracts have morality clauses. It allows a network, film studio or advertiser to dissociate from a celebrity if the celebrity engages in behavior the general public would find to be in disrepute.

But luckily in the case of “Martin” cast members, all parties kept a reasonably good reputation and continue the entertainment grind.

-----

Have more estate planning and will questions? Contact [J. Paye & Associates](#) today.

-----

Have more estate planning and will questions? Contact [J. Paye & Associates](#) today.

Shamontiel L. Vaughn contributed to this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).

*The information contained here is intended to provide useful information on the topic covered but should not be construed as one-size-fits-all legal advice. Speak to an attorney specifically about your contractual agreement for specific terms and conditions.*

#### RELATED ITEMS

LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Comment