

The Empty Box

Matthew Perry's Estate — \$120 Million, The Alvy Singer Living Trust, and the Lesson in What He Got Right

The Friend Who Planned Ahead

Matthew Perry died on October 28, 2023, at the age of fifty-four. He was Chandler Bing. He was one of the most recognized human beings on the planet. He was also, as it turned out, one of the better estate planners in Hollywood.

This episode is different from every other case in this series. It is not a war. It is not a disaster. The Matthew Perry episode is the one where we study what happens when someone gets it mostly right — and what the small mistakes that slipped through can teach every woman building an estate plan today.

"He was worth \$120 million. His probate estate was \$1.5 million. The difference is a trust called the Alvy Singer Living Trust — named after Woody Allen's character in Annie Hall. The man loved his references."

The Alvy Singer Living Trust

Matthew Perry established the Alvy Singer Living Trust during his lifetime. He had a pour-over will directing any assets not already in the trust to flow into it upon his death. He used a blind trust for his real estate purchases, keeping his homeownership completely anonymous and out of the public record. His probate estate contained \$1.5 million in bank accounts. The rest — \$118.5 million — was in the trust. Private. Out of probate. Exactly as designed.

The beneficiaries — his parents, his half-sister, and reportedly a former girlfriend — were never publicly disclosed. The trust itself remained sealed. His will was a public document — but it only referenced the trust. The trust held the story.

What He Got Right — And What Slipped Through

The trust. Most of his wealth was in it. Private. Out of probate. The pour-over will. Any assets not in the trust at death were directed into it. The blind trust for real estate — his properties were not in his name.

What slipped through: \$1.5 million in bank accounts not titled in the trust name. A small oversight on a \$120 million estate — but it forced those accounts into probate, making the amount public, and triggering a process that could have been avoided entirely by simply titling the accounts in the trust.

The Estate Tax Question

On a \$120 million estate with the 2023 federal exemption of approximately \$12.92 million — roughly \$107 million was potentially exposed to a 40% federal estate tax. That is more than \$40 million in potential taxes. Whether his planning addressed this is unknown — because his trust is private. Sophisticated estate planning for large estates requires tax planning that goes beyond a simple revocable living trust.

**CORE
LESSON:**

Matthew Perry got it mostly right. The trust. The pour-over will. The blind trust for real estate. But even a small oversight — a bank account left outside the trust — ends up in probate. It ends up in the public record. Fund every account. Title every asset. Leave nothing outside the trust that you are not willing to make public.

What The Oracle and The Architect Say

In forty-five years of California real estate Alexis has seen both versions. The client who funded the trust completely — whose estate transferred privately in weeks. And the client who created the trust but left the real estate outside it — whose family spent years in court over a property that should have transferred cleanly.

Matthew Perry is the instructive case because he was close. He did the hard work. He created the structure. And a \$1.5 million bank account that was never titled in the trust became a public court record on a \$120 million estate. Close is not enough. Every account. Every property. Every asset. Fully funded.

"The 20-Year Question: Is your trust funded? Not created — funded. Is every asset you own titled in the name of your trust? If you closed your eyes right now and your family had to answer that question — could they?"

**THIS
WEEK:**

Make a list of every asset you own — real estate, bank accounts, investments, business interests. Check each one. Is it titled in the name of your trust? If not — call your attorney this week and fix it.

Celebrity Estate Interrupted Volume I — new episodes every Wednesday at 5AM through August 5, 2026.

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