

NYC couples dropping divorces while quarantined together

By Dean Balsamini

COVID-19 is playing cupid to some New York City couples who are calling off their divorces while the life-and-death crisis

“I know a lot of people think divorces will increase,” [Dror] Bikel said. “But when there is a recession, it costs more to get divorced. People have less money, the portfolio is down, incomes are down.”

plays out, matrimonial lawyers tell The Post.

“There’s been a re-engineering of priorities,” said Dror Bikel, who has had seven clients within the last month request to withdraw their divorce filings.

Veteran divorce lawyer Maggie Kaminer said before COVID-19, in two decades she had two couples withdraw their divorce. Now in recent weeks, “I’ve heard from several clients that they want the lawyers to step back and they want to try and resolve the open issues and not litigate.”

Some, like a couple in their 20s, began to mend their fractured two-year marriage after the March 20 shelter-in order.

“They were moving toward divorce, no kids. But they have been spending more time together. She said, ‘I want to reconcile,’” Bikel said.

He [Bikel] continued, “I also think that when there are health issues, people turn inward. ... This could all blow up down the road, but if you’re in a foxhole with someone, it’s hard to break. Bonds are being created because of the quarantine and the virus that did not previously exist.”

In another case, an Upper East Side couple in finance — he in private equity and she a bank money manager — “were working really hard and not seeing each other a lot and their relationship broke down. They just weren’t spending time together,” said Bikel, who represented the husband.

But the wife came down with the coronavirus in the beginning of March and the once-distant husband “had to devote himself to taking care of her” and the couple’s two kids, an 11-year-old boy and 9-year-old girl.

“He was her only lifeline,” Bikel said. The now-doting spouse, who started cooking for his wife and making sure she was hydrated while also monitoring her breathing, called the lawyer three weeks ago, declaring, “I don’t want to get divorced.” They plan to “get into therapy as soon as she recovers and figure it out.”

But Dropping the divorce isn’t always about rekindled caring or romance. Pragmatic concerns also arise.

A Riverdale couple filed for an uncontested divorce but now want to withdraw so they can maintain full health benefits for their family, which includes a high school-age son, Bikel said.

A young cop in Queens and his wife, a yoga instructor, don’t want to deal with separating into two households and the

problems that would bring with visitation for their baby.

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Coronavirus helped bring a Manhattan cardiologist and his wife closer together in a time of crisis.

They filed for divorce in August after five years of marriage. The physician got the coronavirus in mid-March, his wife told The Post, and he is now “fighting for his life.”

Her advice to other couples poised to part? “Re-evaluate. Take a deep breath. Sometimes you need to take a step back, which is what happened in our case.” ■