

The statement said both parties loved muscle cars and dreamed of purchasing a vehicle each, a piece of large country property near their home in Chatham, Ont., and a shop in which they could indulge their shared hobby. The statement of claim said both parties had an understanding that they would split any winnings that came from their lotto purchases.

On Sept. 20, 2017, the OLG announced that a \$12 million prize was to be split between two tickets — one purchased in Quebec, the other in Chatham.

The statement of claim said the woman texted her common-law partner urging him to check whether their ticket was among the winners. He agreed to do so, but later told her and some of their mutual friends that they had not won anything, the statement alleges.

Three days later, the man told her he was driving to London, Ont., for a granite installation job. When she got home from work, however, the statement of claim alleged she found he had packed up his belongings and left their home.

"When [the woman] looks back, she recalls that he did approximately 15 loads of laundry of all his clothes the night prior, and didn't put them into the drawers and closets, as if [he] was preparing to pack up and leave," the document said.

Later that week, she alleges she got word from a mutual friend that the man had sent a text to his boss announcing the end of his relationship, giving in his notice and displaying a picture of the winning ticket.

She sought an injunction preventing the OLG from paying out the full amount. In January, the corporation paid the man half of the \$6 million prize, since that sum was not in question.

OLG said it intended to pay the remaining money "into court," but said it could not offer further comment.

O'Connor says people who buy lottery tickets with other people can protect themselves against litigation in the event of a win.

"If you're in a group pool, take a photo of the ticket," she says. "If you're in an office group buying tickets, designate one person as a group leader who oversees the purchases and sends out a weekly email with the jackpot amount, draw date, cost per play and the cut-off time for payment so there are clear rules around when you can go in.

"You can get whoever is buying the ticket to sign it in-trust so that it signifies it's being purchased by a group. It's also important to photocopy or take a photo of each ticket. You need someone in the group to do proper record-keeping."

O'Connor says people going in on a workplace group lottery ticket could also draft an informal contract where each person signs their name as part of the purchase.

She notes that if there is a dispute, parties have to write to the OLG and then go to court to bring an injunction to stop the organization from paying out the win.

"Then the award gets paid into the court until the matter is resolved," she says.

Nobody wants to be involved in one of these disputes so it's important to keep records of your involvement, O'Connor says.

— *With files from AdvocateDaily.com*