

## Close friends are saved by the bell



It smacks of the absurd when the Constitutional Court changes the definition of "close person" to include not only family members, but also very close friends, and does it in such a lackadaisical way. The case in question relates to the alleged rape of a woman by her estranged husband and whether a very good mutual female friend should be required to testify (she mustn't), but the implications of the ruling are far greater. The term "close person" appears in numerous Czech laws. Will very close friends now have access to someone's medical records in case of a coma or death, asked lawyer Filip Melzer in disbelief yesterday on Czech Radio? And what about tax and conflict-of-interest cases, for which rules apply to "close persons"? If, for example, a well-known Prague lawyer concealed and managed the illegal assets of a top-level politician while he was in office, would they be protected from incriminating each other because they are very close friends? We'll find out.

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