

# [***How Nicole Shanahan, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. s VP Pick, Got So Rich***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNC-JJN1-JBCM-F010-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Shanahan brings cash to the ticket, which the campaign needs to fund its drive for ballot access in all 50 states.

**Body**

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Kennedy touted the 38-year-old Shanahan as a voice for younger generations on Tuesday.

AP Photo/Eric Risberg

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Independent presidential candidateRobert F. Kennedy Jr. announced Nicole Shanahan, a Silicon Valley lawyer, as his running mate at a rally on Tuesday. Shanahan, who has no prior background in ***politics***, told the Oakland, California crowd that her goals as vice president are to serve peace and to help those in poverty. She brings something else to the ticket, though: cash, which the campaign needs to fund its drive for ballot access in all 50 states.

As you probably know, I became very wealthy later on in life, Shanahan said in her speech. The 38-year-old lawyer, whose family relied on food stamps when she was a child, didn t become rich in her current job, heading up a nonprofit she founded called the Bia-Echo Foundation; or her former startup, ClearAccessIP, which per PitchBook raised $5.5 million in 2018 and 2019 before selling to now-bankrupt IPwe in 2020.Instead, according to**Forbes** estimates, Shanahan s wealth comes from her previous marriage to Sergey Brin, the Google cofounder whosenet worth enough to rank him as thetenth richestperson in the world.

Shanahan wed Brin in 2018, two decades after he launched Google. It was the second marriage for both of them. The couple divorced in May 2023,reportedlybecause Shanahan had an affair with Elon Musk, an allegation both Musk and Shanahan denied. Divorce records are not clear on how much Shanahan walked away with, and neither she nor Brin responded to requests for comment, but Brin s filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission offer revealing information. The documents show a decrease in his Class B shares of Alphabet (Google s parent company) totaling some 2.6 million shares sometime between May and December 2023. During that period, he did not report any share sales or gifts, which would normally be required for Brin, an Alphabet director who owns more than 5% of the company s shares.

In all likelihood, those shares, worth about $390 million at current prices, went to Shanahan: Transfers due to divorce do not need to be disclosed immediately in insider transaction filings, according to four experts contacted by**Forbes**. Instead, these types of transfers are typically disclosed the next time someone sells or gifts shares. At that point, there should be a footnote explaining that the transaction was taking place pursuant to divorce proceedings, Giovanni Caruso, a lawyer at Loeb and Loeb in New York who specializes in securities law, tells**Forbes**, though he declined to comment on the specifics of Brin s case.

Brin hasn t sold Alphabet shares in nearly two years, and he last gifted Alphabet shares in May 2023 before his divorce finalized, so that rules out those options. If it s a disposition, says another securities lawyer, who asked to remain anonymous because of his work with the tech sector, it s either a divorce or the $10,000 exception. The decrease was worth well over $10,000, eliminating a loophole for small transactions and leaving a divorce-related transfer as the only remaining option.

California is a community property state, meaning that assets are by default divided 50/50 in a divorce. However, Brin and Shanahan had a prenuptial agreement, per court filings andreporting by The Wall Street Journal, which would negate the 50/50 rule and classify their assets either as community property (generally, assets they acquired while in the marriage) or separate property (generally, assets the individuals owned or inherited before they were married). Approximately 90% of Brin s estimated net worth is held in Alphabet shares, almost all of which he acquired as a cofounder decades before he married Shanahan, so they were likely separate property. In divorce negotiations, the Journal article notes, Shanahan asked for more than $1 billion, or around 1% of Brin s estimated net worth at the time, claiming that she signed the prenuptial agreement under duress and while pregnant.

Assuming that Brin s SEC filings show a transfer to Shanahan, she didn t get close to $1 billion in Class B shares. However, Brin has historically executed parallel transactions for his Alphabet Class C shares which do not appear in annual ownership filings because they do not have voting rights selling or gifting similar numbers of Class B and Class C shares at similar times. If he followed his usual pattern and also transferred approximately 2.6 million Class C shares to Shanahan, then taken together, those 5.2 million shares would be worth just under $800 million today. Add in any other assets she may have gotten in the split, like homes they lived in together or some cash from Brin s $900 million in Alphabet shares he sold during their marriage, and that could put her closer to the $1 billion she wanted.

But even if Shanahan only got the Class B shares, a fortune of around $400 million would still make her the wealthiest vice presidential pick in decades likely since Nelson Rockefeller, Gerald Ford s VP.

The fat fortune would also give her plenty of liquidity to jump-start a longshot presidential bid. As of the end of February, Kennedy s campaign has raised just $28 million a far cry from Trump s $99 million and Biden s $127 million and only has about $5 million in cash on hand. It has secured enough signatures for ballot access in just four states, according to thecampaign s tracker. As a candidate, Shanahan can contribute unlimited amounts to her own campaign, whereas regular donors can only give a maximum of $3,300 directly to a candidate for the general election. It wouldn t even be the first big check she cuts: Earlier this year, shereportedlygave $4 million to a super PAC supporting Kennedy to pay for a Super Bowl commercial.

While the Kennedy name has become synonymous with American wealth, Shanahan is likely far richer than RFK Jr., who**Forbes** valuedat an estimated $15 million last year, much of it thanks to his wife, actress Cheryl Hines. Kennedy s fortune, which is $5 million larger thanPresident Joe Biden sbut far below formerPresident Trump s billions, makes himthe fifth wealthiest candidate to seek the White House this cycle. Aside from his relatives, Kennedy is known for his legal work and hispromotion of unfounded conspiracy theories, including about the safety of vaccines. Shanahan expressed sympathy with those views on Tuesday, lamenting children getting one shot on top of another shot on top of another shot in her speech.

Shanahan s exact holdings may remain a mystery for some time. She ll be required to file a personal financial disclosure by May 15, but can request up to two 45-day extensions, potentially pushing her disclosure into September. Even when she does file, if she holds more than $50 million of any asset like, say, a huge stash of Alphabet stock she will only have to report that it is worth more than $50 million, without a cap on the range, per disclosure laws.

Kennedy introduced Shanahan as a fellow lawyer, a brilliant scientist, a technologist, a fierce warrior mom, touting her as his partner in fighting the corporate-captured uniparty. It is a vision that I share too, Shanahan told the crowd, as I spend the next seven months of my life getting him on each and every ballot in this country.

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