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MARRIAGE FRAUD INVESTIGATION

False marriages and marriage fraud investigation in international marriages

This writing tells about false marriages and explains how to prepare if your own marriage is being investigated and suspected to be a marriage fraud. At the end of this writing is being revealed some of the most common questions made by the immigration authorities while investigating an international marriage suspected to be a marriage fraud.

A marriage does not always guarantee a residence permit or a visa for a foreigner. It's a fact that a residence permit or a visa is of course most likely granted when the marriage is contracted but in some cases the immigration authorities may suspect that the international marriage is a false marriage and contracted only in order to get a residence permit. A false marriage contracted in order to get a residence permit or a visa is called a marriage fraud.

It's unfortunate that sometimes even genuine marriages based on real love are being suspected to be false marriages. Every year amounts of international married couples are being investigated and questioned in order to prevent marriage frauds. In some very unfortunate cases a genuine love based marriage is being considered as a marriage fraud and the residence permit or visa is not granted.

Definition of the marriage fraud

Marriage fraud is hard to define. Marriage fraud can be called as a sham marriage or a fake marriage or as a marriage of convenience. Marriage fraud could be defined as a marriage which is contracted for the purpose of gaining a benefit or an advantage arising from the marriage. Even though a marriage is a fake or a sham of its motivation, the union itself is still legally valid if it meets the formal legal requirements for marriage in that country. Arranging or entering into such a marriage to deceive public officials is itself a separate violation of the law of some countries. The marriage for purposes of immigration fraud is a felony. But because the marriage fraud itself is hard to define the immigration authorities and public officials are processing every suspected marriage individually.

The marriage fraud can be conducted by both of the marriage contracting parties with a mutual decision or with a help of a third party who is arranging marriage frauds.

These marriage fraud arranging third parties or marriage of convenience searching individuals may offer money or other rewards to marry a person just so the person can immigrate abroad. You should keep in mind that the immigration fraud is a felony and may lead to criminal charges.

In some cases the other marriage contracting party doesn't know that the other party is fraudulent and using the marriage in immigration purposes and to receive social or financial benefits. The fraudulent marriage contracting party is exploiting the other party's feelings of love to receive advantages. Every year thousands of people world wide become victims of marriage fraud. Victims of marriage frauds suffer from frustration and may experience an emotional break down due to disappointment with the fraudulent party.

Don't become a victim of marriage fraud

If you have met someone from another country and you are tempted to get married to have a possibility to be together, avoid becoming a victim of marriage fraud. It's important to get to know the other party before contracting any legal contracts.

You should never pay to anyone, excluding formal public official's fees, to get married. Either you should never accept any payments to contract a marriage. Marriage is a legal contract but it's also a contract of love. Marriages should be based on love and not on immigration or financial purposes.

Marriage fraud investigation

The immigration authorities and public officials are trying to prevent marriage frauds and the abuse of the immigration system. The public officials are also trying to protect the citizens from becoming victims of marriage frauds. Unfortunately even genuine love-based international marriages may be suspected as marriage fraud.

In particular international marriages which are contracted after a short period of dating or a period of courtship are drawing the attention. Marriages contracted between two people who really haven't met physically each other are easily being suspected and investigated. To avoid these kind of suspicions the marriage contracting couple should meet each other regularly before contracting a marriage.

It's important to be capable of to prove for immigration authorities and public officials that the married couple has been meeting each other regularly during the courtship or dating time before contracting the marriage. The regular meetings can be proven for example with stamps in passports or with other travelling documents which demonstrates that the married couple has stayed in a same country at the same time.

There aren't really any established practice, rule or standard about the immigration authorities' and the public officials' attitudes towards relationships and courtships taken place through the Internet. Most likely authorities and officials will be quite suspicious towards courtship happening only through the Internet. That's why it's highly recommended to physically meet the way that the meeting can be proven to be happened before contracting the marriage.

As a kind of a rule could be told that dating or courtship lasting for two years with 4 to 5 physical meetings and everyday conversations or messaging through the Internet can meet the requirements when it comes to evaluating if the relationship is genuine and the dating or courtship has been regular.

It's important to remember that the officials process every case individually and the special features of every relationship are influencing in the process.

Another thing that easily draws the attention is the age difference. A huge difference in couples ages is always an alert for the immigration authorities and for the public officials. Anyways, the age difference doesn't automatically mean that the marriage is considered to be a marriage fraud. But it's a fact that spouses with huge age differences are more likely to be suspected and investigated as marriage fraud.

How to prepare in marriage fraud investigation; the most common questions made by the immigration authorities and by the public officials

Usually the first thing what the authorities and officials want to know when suspecting and investigating marriage fraud is what language the suspected couple are using to communicate with each other. It's very important that the married couple has a language what both parties can understand and use in communicating with each other. If the couple doesn't have a language what they can use in communicating with each other it may easily lead in marriage fraud conclusions and in refusal of residence permit or visa.

It's common practice that the authorities and officials want to interview the married couple. During these interview the couple may be asked to demonstrate how they communicate with each other.

Usually during the interview the couple may be seated in different rooms and are being run through several questions considering the spouses' personal and mutual life, their past and their prospects for the future. That's why it's important that the both parties get to know each other before contracting marriage and applying residence permit or visa.

There aren't any rule or standard what the authorities and officials will ask during the interview. As said earlier every case is being processed individually and therefore the special features of every relationship or a case are influencing also in the interview process.

You should at least prepare to answer in these questions and to be able to explain or describe the following things:

- When and where did you meet for the first time?
- Describe the first meeting
- Did you exchange phone numbers or e-mail addresses?
- How many times have you met before contracting the marriage?
- Where were you living at the time?
- Where was your spouse living?
- What the two of you have in common?
- Who introduced you to each other?
- Who proposed to whom?
- What is the name and date of birth of your spouse?
- What activities or hobbies you do together?
- Do you or your spouse have any scars or tattoos, where?
- What your spouse does for work?
- Do you or your spouse attend regular religious services, if attend, where?
- Have you purchased any household equipment together?
- Where was your wedding held and when?
- Did your parents attend the wedding?
- How many people attended your wedding?
- What did you liked the most in your wedding ceremony?
- Did anything embarrassing happen during the wedding ceremony or reception?
- Did you go on a honeymoon, if so, where and when?
- Have you met each other's parents?
- When did you see them for the last time and where?
- How often you meet with each other's parents?
- Do you get along with each other's parents?

- How many children do you have?
- Does your spouse have any children from the previous relationships or marriages?
- Who takes care of the household?
- Who prepares the dinner?
- What are your, your spouses and your children's favorite foods?
- Who gets up first in the morning and what time usually?
- What do you eat for breakfast?
- Do you sleep in a same bed?
- Which side of the bed do you sleep?
- How many cars do you have?
- Do you have a TV, if so do you have a cable, satellite or antenna?
- Do you watch movies or TV shows together?
- Do you like to take pictures?
- Does your spouse like to take pictures?
- Did you or your spouse go to work yesterday?
- Did you eat dinner together last night, if so what did you eat and if not why?
- What time did you go to bed yesterday?
- Who went to bed first?
- Did you or your spouse take a shower this morning?
- Did you come to the interview together?
- What kind of transportation did you use to come to the interview?

In the interview may sometimes be applied tactics such as falsely telling that the other spouse has already confessed that the marriage is fraudulent. This is to push the person being interviewed into confessing. If your marriage is genuine you can easily respond to that by answering and stating that this must be an interview tactics.

Generally speaking it's very important that the spouses know each other well, have mutual memories, goals and plans for the future. This is not only to pass the interview but it's to make the relationship and the marriage to be long lasting and prosperous.



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