

Q&A By John T. Syrtash, Associate, Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Answers to pressing questions on Family Law.

A marriage nightmare.

Question: I am a Canadian citizen. One year after my marriage to an Iranian woman, who lives in Iran, I sponsored her in April 2004 to come to Canada. The she started saying that she does not want to live with me and asked for a divorce while still in Iran. Canada Immigration refused to revoke her visa. I was starting an Iranian divorce when she suddenly turned up in Canada. She was here to stay to get whatever was “rightfully hers.” At the beginning she asked for \$37,000 and threatened that if I did not pay her she could have put me on the black list in Iranian court proceedings. (A blacklist means I could not leave Iran unless I paid her pending these proceedings, which means I would have lost my job in Canada.) The threatened black mail the increased to \$210,000. At first I agreed. Then I spoke to a lawyer. I have now started annulment proceedings based on our not having consummated the marriage and for fraud. Now she is asking for a divorce, half of my assets and \$2,000 a month of spousal support since she’s unemployed. I cannot get married and sponsor anybody else for the next three years. .

Answer: The scam is becoming increasingly common, especially form Iran. What is worse, when you agreed to sponsor your “wife: with Canada Immigration, you become obligated to support her for up to three years if she goes on welfare or the Ontario government can sue you and garnishee your wages for such public assistance they pay to her. I have has a number of male clients from foreign countries who have been duped by women into such phony marriages. They do it just to get a free ticket to Canada without waiting in the normal lineup to get into this country, and sometimes make specious support claims. I advise them to see the RCMP.

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