

# Those ‘Marrying Sams’

## *Here’s another case study of immigration fraud*

by James Walsh

*[In the previous issue of The Social Contract we featured an article by James Walsh, retired from a position as Associate General Counsel at the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Over the years Walsh has collected true stories of flagrant attempts by aliens to attain entry to the United States. Some of these frauds are quite ingenious and many are downright humorous. We offer another story from his collection here and hope to keep this column open for many editions to come.]*

**A**t a Texas university, three Pakistani and two Indian students joined forces to demonstrate their entrepreneurial skills — despite the fact that India and Pakistan are otherwise bitter enemies. Greed makes strange bedfellows too, as the five students became middlemen, or as they call themselves, facilitators, in a fraudulent marriage brokerage business for foreign nationals in need of immigration papers.

Their business plan was simple; they paid money-strapped co-eds — U.S. Citizens (USCs) all — the sum of \$500 to marry Afghan, Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, or Sri Lankan foreign students attending the university on student visas. The facilitators, on the other hand, collected \$13,000 from each foreign national thus matched. The newlyweds would then hurry to the nearest INS office to file for a non-immigrant visa for the spouse of the U.S. citizen. The marriages involved little overhead other than the payments to the co-eds, local marriage license fees, and fees charged by those performing the ceremonies.

Expanding their business to nearby universities,

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they also began locating male USCs willing to marry female aliens who wanted either to come to the United States or to remain here after their temporary visas expired.

Once an alien spouse received the coveted work permit — previously known as a green card but since 1996 a pink card — and become a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR), the couple suddenly discovered irreconcilable differences and filed for divorce. The U.S. citizen usually received an additional \$200 for appearing at the final divorce hearing. Since few couples ever consummated the marriages, most were clear cases of immigration fraud, which U.S. law classifies as a felony. With divorce decree in hand, the LPR was then free to marry a mate of similar ethnic or religious background, who could enter the U.S. as an LPR spouse, with no need for a facilitator fee. The United States thus gained two new alien residents admitted on the basis of the marriage-fraud game.

The Marrying Sams operated for two years out of their Texas university until they graduated and relocated their business to the eastern United States. A disgruntled co-ed, on learning how much the facilitators were collecting from the foreign nationals, demanded a larger cut for her past and future “marriages.” When the facilitators refused she blew the whistle. Once the INS began questioning the facilitators about their multi-million-dollar scheme, they up and left the country. Today, they continue to operate from abroad, using relatives in the United States and recruiting women mainly from rural areas in the eastern United States — having had their fill of capitalist college girls. Their international immigration marriage-fraud operation survives today by staying one step ahead of the INS. As one facilitator remarked, “There are just too many people wanting to get the U.S. dollar.”

**MORAL:** The INS should monitor all entries made by spouses of USCs or LPRs; and divorces within three years of entry should be investigated for immigration fraud — valid marriages will be able to bear the scrutiny. **TSC**