



## ILLUSTRATIVE CASES OF WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN EXPLOITED AND ABUSED THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGE BROKER INDUSTRY\*

### ALABAMA

Thomas Robert Lane was charged with the murder of his estranged Filipina wife, Teresa Lane. Teresa's body was discovered in a bathtub filled with running water. Authorities found evidence that Lane drowned his wife by pinning her under the water with his foot. A forensic physician determined that Teresa was also subjected to blunt force trauma. During the couple's separation, Lane had been trying to arrange to marry yet another woman from the Philippines.

### CALIFORNIA

Marilyn Carroll married Steffan Carroll in the Philippines in 1988. One year later, he traveled to Thailand to marry another young woman, Preeya. Before marrying his second wife, Carroll assured her that it was legal in California to have two wives. The bigamous marriage ended when Marilyn called the police to report that Carroll had sexually assaulted her – restraining her with thumbcuffs and other devices during the attack. Carroll was charged with bigamy and false imprisonment.

### GEORGIA

Shortly after Katerina Sheridan, a young woman from Siberia, married Frank Sheridan, he kept her a virtual prisoner, forbidding her to keep her own set of house keys, and taking away her visa, passport, and birth certificate. Later, he also took away her cell phone and cut all the phone lines in the house. He flew into violent rages, on one occasion beating Katerina and dragging her around the house by her legs. After several such incidents, Katerina told him that she wanted to go back to Russia. In retaliation, Sheridan *stabbed himself* and then accused her of doing it to get her thrown in jail. Later, Katerina managed to make it to a women's shelter, but Sheridan stalked her relentlessly and tried to get her detained and deported. When police went to arrest Frank for aggravated stalking, they discovered he was in Russia looking for a new bride. Months later, when an officer went to arrest Sheridan for another stalking-related crime, he shot the officer. The deputy returned fire and killed Sheridan.

### HAWAII

The mutilated body of a young Filipina woman, Helen Mendoza Krug, was found in a garbage dumpster behind her high-rise apartment building. The murder was committed in front of her 2-year-old son by her husband, Robert Krug, whom she had met through an IMB. Krug was sentenced to life in prison.

### KENTUCKY

"Dina" corresponded with her husband "Paul," an anesthesiologist, for several months before she agreed to marry him when he visited her and her family in Ethiopia. When she came to the United States, however, Paul took Dina's money and passport, brought her to a motel (the first of five), and kept her drugged and imprisoned for weeks while he subjected her to horrific physical, sexual, and mental abuse. Paul also threatened Dina that she, not Paul, would be arrested and jailed if she reported him to the police. Only when Paul left to attend a conference for a few days did she regain enough consciousness and strength to drag herself to the motel office for help. Paul killed himself before he could be prosecuted. Dina received protection under US trafficking laws.

### MINNESOTA

Soon after "Medina," a Ukrainian college professor, married "Thomas," a well-respected doctor, Thomas turned controlling and violent. Among other outbursts, he threatened Medina with a knife; kicked her in the chest; and even attempted to push her out of a moving car. Thomas also slept with an ax in his drawer and threatened to have her deported if she ever called the police. Medina left Thomas after he broke her son's finger. Today, Medina continues to live in constant fear of Thomas, who stalks and harasses her. Despite knowing about Medina's abuse, the IMB facilitated a new match between Thomas and another Ukrainian woman who also later fled because of abuse. Medina was Thomas' third wife; he had also abused at least one of his prior wives.

### NEW JERSEY

A 26 year-old Ukrainian engineer named Alla bled to death on the floor of her car after her husband Lester Barney, 58, slashed her throat in front of the couple's 4-year-old son, Daniel. Barney fled with Daniel from the scene, the parking lot of the boy's daycare center, but after an Amber Alert was triggered he turned Daniel over to a friend and was himself taken into custody by police. Alla had been granted a restraining order against Barney a few months before and had been given temporary custody of Daniel.

## **NEW YORK**

Andrew Gole, a former policeman from Long Island, was convicted of murdering Martha Isabel Moncada on a trip back to her home country, Honduras, after she told him she did not want to return with him to the United States. Martha had tried to leave the abusive Gole before, but had feared losing custody of their newborn son to him. Gole strangled and dismembered Martha in their hotel room in front of their baby and Martha's disabled son from her first marriage, then dumped her remains along the roadside. Police arrested Gole as he tried to flee the country after abandoning the older boy at a gas station.

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

Though she was trained as an accountant, Norman McDonald compelled his Ukrainian wife to take several waitress jobs and rely on him for transportation so he would have long stretches of time alone with her daughter, who was only 3 when the couple married. With his wife securely out of the house, McDonald showed the toddler pornographic videos of what he wanted to do to her and then raped her. Two years after the abuse started, his wife discovered what McDonald was doing and immediately contacted the police. Authorities found more than 10,000 images of child pornography in McDonald's computer and hundreds of video clips that depicted him having sex with his stepdaughter. McDonald's 28-year-old daughter from a previous marriage testified that her father had also abused her as a child.

## **TEXAS**

Jack Reeves, a retired U.S. Army officer, was convicted of killing his fourth wife, Emelita Reeves, a 26-year-old from the Philippines whom he met through an IMB called "Cherry Blossoms." Emelita had confided to family and friends that Reeves physically and sexually abused her, and told friends she planned to leave him a day before she disappeared. Two of Reeves' previous wives also died under suspicious circumstances (drowning and suicide). During the investigation into Emelita's death, the State re-opened the investigation into Reeves' second wife's death, and obtained a further conviction against him. The State did not have enough evidence to re-open the investigation into the third wife's murder because Reeves had cremated her body. Reeves was also suspected in the mysterious disappearance of a Russian woman with whom he had lived in 1991.

## **VIRGINIA/MARYLAND**

A young Ukrainian medical student named "Nina" married "John," a U.S. military officer residing in Virginia whom she met through a Maryland-based IMB with a "satisfaction guaranteed" policy. Throughout their one-year marriage, John repeatedly physically and emotionally abused Nina, shaking her violently and insisting that she repeat the commands he gave her. He choked, raped, and beat her on several occasions, ripped a tooth out of her mouth, and threatened her with a knife. When Nina informed the president of the IMB about the abuse, the president said that Nina's experience was normal and that many girls had the same problem. The president said domestic violence is "just the American culture," and abuse is "very hard to prove."

## **WASHINGTON**

Susanna Blackwell met her husband through an IMB called "Asian Encounters" and left the Philippines to settle with him in Washington state in 1994. Blackwell physically abused Susanna, including one incident in which he choked her the day after their wedding. Susanna reported the abuse to the police and obtained a protection order against him. While awaiting divorce/annulment proceedings in a Seattle courtroom many months later, the pregnant Susanna and two of her friends were shot to death. Blackwell was convicted of murdering all three women.

Anastasia King, a young woman from Kyrgyzstan, was found strangled to death and buried in a shallow grave in Washington state in December 2000. At the age of 18, Anastasia was selected by her husband, Indle King, out of an IMB's catalogue of prospective brides. Two years later, wanting another bride and allegedly unwilling to pay for a divorce, King ordered a tenant in their Washington home to kill Anastasia. Weighing nearly 300 pounds, King pinned Anastasia down while the tenant strangled her with a necktie. Both were convicted of murder. King's previous wife, whom he had also met through an IMB, had a domestic violence protection order issued against him and left him because he was abusive.

---

\* Compiled by Tahirih Justice Center ([www.tahirih.org](http://www.tahirih.org)), a legal services and public policy advocacy organization for refugee and immigrant women. For more information, please contact [justice@tahirih.org](mailto:justice@tahirih.org) or call (571) 282-6191.