

RELEASED IN FULL

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ9851

PAGE 01 GUATEM 06359 01 OF 02 052032Z
ACTION VO-03

INFO LOG-00 INLB-01 ARA-01 CA-02 CIAE-00 INL-01 OASY-00
DS-00 FBIE-00 UTED-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INSE-00 ADS-00
MMP-00 NSAE-00 OCS-03 DSCC-00 /012W
-----784FC9 052033Z /38

R 052032Z NOV 96
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7458
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
ARA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 006359

DEPT FOR CA/VO/F/P FOR ROBERT HANNAN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO FOR USINS

E.O. 12958:N/A
TAGS: CVIS, KOCI, CASC, KFRD, GT
SUBJECT: GROWING GUATEMALAN ADOPTION FRAUD - INCREASE IN IMPOSTOR
MOTHERS

REF: 95 GUATEMALA 04930

SUMMARY

- 1. A RECENT UPSURGE IN THE NUMBER OF FRAUDULENT ADOPTION CASES
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 GUATEM 06359 01 OF 02 052032Z
INVOLVING IMPOSTOR MOTHERS MAY BE FORESHADOWING AN UNWELCOME AND

ALARMING NEW TREND. WHILE IMPOSTOR MOTHERS USUALLY HAVE REPRESENTED A RELATIVELY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GUATEMALAN ADOPTION CASES, ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THIS TYPE OF FRAUD MAY BE GROWING, PUSHED BOTH BY THE LURE OF LARGE FINANCIAL GAIN AND THE ABSENCE OF NEGATIVE LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS. STAYING AHEAD OF THIS GROWING FRAUD WILL REQUIRE EVEN GREATER VIGILANCE AND ADDED SCRUTINY BY POST'S ADOPTION UNIT DURING THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

REAL-LIFE RIDDLES IN GUATEMALAN ADOPTIONS: "ARE YOU MY MOTHER?"

2. LIKE THE DR. SEUSS CHILDREN'S STORY "ARE YOU MY MOTHER?" IN WHICH A LITTLE LOST BIRD QUESTIONS VARIOUS ANIMALS IN SEARCH OF HIS TRUE MOTHER, NATURAL MOTHER IDENTITY RIDDLES HAVE LONG PLAGUED THE CONSULATE'S ADOPTIONS UNIT. NOW, HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF UNSOLVED NATURAL MOTHER RIDDLES IS INCREASING WITH THE RECENT SPATE OF BIRTH MOTHER-RELATED ADOPTION FRAUD.

3. WHILE IMPOSTOR MOTHERS REPRESENT A RELATIVELY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE OVERALL NUMBER OF ADOPTION CASES PROCESSED BY THE EMBASSY (ESTIMATED AT APPROXIMATELY FIVE PERCENT), ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THEIR NUMBERS ARE RISING. MORE THAN A HALF-DOZEN RECENT FRAUDULENT CASES INVOLVING IMPOSTOR MOTHERS, ALTERED DOCUMENTS, TALES OF AMNESIA, AND A NEGATIVE DNA ILLUSTRATE THE EXTENT THAT UNSCRUPULOUS GUATEMALAN ATTORNEYS AND ADOPTION FIXERS ARE WILLING TO GO TO OBTAIN A CHILD AND PROCESS AN ADOPTION, LEGITIMATE OR NOT. WITH GUATEMALAN ADOPTION ATTORNEYS NOW CHARGING UP TO US\$15,000 PER CASE, THE LURE OF A LARGE PROFIT MARGIN,

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 GUATEM 06359 01 OF 02 052032Z
COMBINED WITH A LACK OF ADOPTION OVERSIGHT BY GUATEMALAN
AUTHORITIES, HELP EXPLAIN WHY.

4. THE FRAUD IS GENERALLY FIRST DETECTED DURING THE NATURAL MOTHER INTERVIEW. (NOTE: BECAUSE OF THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF ADOPTION-RELATED FRAUD, POST CONDUCTS AN INTERVIEW WITH EACH ALLEGED BIRTH MOTHER, BOTH TO VERIFY THE BIOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HER AND THE CHILD AND TO DETERMINE THAT THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE CHILD QUALIFIES AS A U.S. "ORPHAN." END NOTE.) IN SOME CASES THE FRAUD IS OBVIOUS, IN OTHERS, MORE SUBTLE. SUSPICION MAY BE AROUSED BY THE TALE TOLD BY

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
THE ALLEGED BIRTH MOTHER, FRAUD MAY BE DETECTED IF THE IDENTITY DOCUMENTS PRESENTED, OR, AT TIMES, THE DECEPTION IS DETECTED THROUGH A COMBINATION OF BOTH.

I PLEAD "THE FIFTH"

5. A RECENT CASE INVOLVING AN IMPOSTOR MOTHER SUFFERING FROM A TERRIBLE CASE OF MEMORY LOSS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF OBVIOUS FRAUD. NOT ONLY DID THE ALLEGED MOTHER PRESENT A POORLY ALTERED, OBVIOUSLY PHOTO-SUBBED NATIONAL IDENTITY DOCUMENT, BUT SHE WAS ALSO INCAPABLE OF RESPONDING TO THE MOST BASIC QUESTIONS. HER MOTHER'S NAME: "FORGOT." HER FATHER'S NAME: "FORGOT." HER DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: "DON'T KNOW." NAME OF CHILD: INCOMPLETE RESPONSE. CLAIMING TO SUFFER FROM SOME MYSTERIOUS FORM OF AMNESIA, THIS IMPOSTOR FINALLY REFUSED EVEN TO ATTEMPT TO ANSWER ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, CLOSING THE INTERVIEW WITH THE STATEMENT THAT HER FRIEND TOLD HER "IT WAS GOING TO BE SO EASY."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 GUATEM 06359 01 OF 02 052032Z
I'M NOT MARIA, I JUST PLAY HER ON TV

6. SUBTLER, MORE SOPHISTICATED CASES OF FRAUD ARE OBVIOUSLY MORE DIFFICULT TO DETECT AND OFTEN REQUIRE A GREATER EXPENDITURE OF CONSULAR RESOURCES, BOTH IN TERMS OF PERSONNEL AND TIME. IN ANOTHER CASE, THE ALLEGED MOTHER, "MARIA," PRESENTED A SEEMINGLY LEGITIMATE, ALBEIT NEWLY ISSUED, IDENTITY DOCUMENT AT THE NATURAL MOTHER INTERVIEW. ALTHOUGH ON THE SURFACE BOTH HER DOCUMENTS AND HER STORY APPEARED CREDIBLE, A MINOR OMISSION IN HER ID RAISED OUR INITIAL SUSPICIONS. WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE, WE CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINED THAT MARIA DID NOT EXIST. THERE WERE NO OFFICIAL RECORDS OF HER, OF HER BIRTH, OR OF THE ISSUANCE OF HER NATIONAL ID. CLEARLY HER ENTIRE PERSONA, INCLUDING HER SEEMINGLY OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, WERE FABRICATED SOLELY TO DECEIVE US IN THE NATURAL MOTHER INTERVIEW.

DNA: TRUE AND FALSE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

NNNNPTQ9852

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ9852

PAGE 01 GUATEM 06359 02 OF 02 052033Z
ACTION VO-03

INFO LOG-00 INLB-01 ARA-01 CA-02 CIAE-00 INL-01 OASY-00
DS-00 FBIE-00 UTED-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INSE-00 ADS-00
MMP-00 NSAE-00 OCS-03 DSCC-00 /012W
-----784FD8 052033Z /38

R 052032Z NOV 96
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7459
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
ARA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 GUATEMALA 006359

DEPT FOR CA/VO/F/P FOR ROBERT HANNAN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO FOR USINS

E.O. 12958:N/A
TAGS: CVIS, KOCI, CASC, KFRD, GT

UNCLASSIFIED

7. INCLUDED IN THIS FLOOD OF IMPOSTOR MOTHERS WAS A CASE OF NEGATIVE DNA. WHILE POST HAS RECEIVED A FEW NEGATIVE DNA RESULTS SINCE SELECTIVE TESTING WAS FIRST BEGUN, WE HAVE NOT HAD A FALSE DNA SINCE 1994, WHEN GUATEMALAN LAWYERS FINALLY BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT THE TEST CANNOT BE "BEAT." TODAY INSTEAD, IMPOSTOR MOTHERS WHO ARE ASKED FOR DNA SIMPLY "DISAPPEAR," NEVER RETURNING FOR THE TEST. IN FACT, WE HAVE NUMEROUS DNA KITS AWAITING THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 GUATEM 06359 02 OF 02 052033Z

ALLEGED MOTHERS. THEREFORE, IT'S UNCLEAR AS TO WHY IN THIS RECENT CASE THE IMPOSTOR WAS PERMITTED TO TAKE THE DNA EXAM. WHAT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE RESULTS OF A FALSE DNA ARE TRUE, THAT IS, THAT THE ALLEGED MOTHER WAS AN IMPOSTOR ATTEMPTING TO RELINQUISH A CHILD THAT WAS NOT HER OWN.

ATTORNEY COMPLICITY: "THE LADY DOTHT PROTEST TOO MUCH"

8. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE GUATEMALAN ATTORNEYS INVOLVED IN THE DECEPTION? THEY ARE PROBABLY DEEPLY INVOLVED, OBTAINING FALSE DOCUMENTS FOR IMPOSTOR MOTHERS, PREPPING THEM WITH THE BIRTH TALE, AND SECURING THE CHILD. DESPITE THEIR PROTESTATIONS OF INNOCENCE, THE COMPLICITY OF CERTAIN ATTORNEYS SEEMS CLEAR. IT'S HIGHLY UNLIKELY THE IMPOSTOR MOTHERS POSSESS THE LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION REQUIRED TO ORCHESTRATE THE FRAUD; THEY ARE BEING COACHED, WITH THEIR GUATEMALAN ATTORNEYS THE MOST LIKELY SUSPECTS.

9. WE RECENTLY MET WITH A GUATEMALAN ATTORNEY FOLLOWING DISCOVERY THAT AN ALLEGED MOTHER POSSESSED TWO DIFFERENT SETS OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, EACH WITH DISTINCT BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION, INCLUDING ONE THAT SAID SHE WAS MARRIED. THE ATTORNEY CLAIMED SHE TOO HAD BEEN DUPED AND PRESENTED OTHER DOCUMENTS - ALL OF DUBIOUS ORIGIN AND AUTHENTICITY - AS PROOF OF HER VIRTUE. HOWEVER, WHEN ASKED TO TURN THE CHILD OVER TO GUATEMALAN AUTHORITIES PENDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION, SHE ADMITTED SHE HAD GIVEN THE CHILD BACK TO THE "MOTHER" IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL NATURAL MOTHER INTERVIEW. THE ATTORNEY ALSO CLAIMED SHE HAD NO ADDRESS OR CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE "MOTHER." HER ACTIONS OFFER PROOF OF HER

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 GUATEM 06359 02 OF 02 052033Z
OF THE CASE PRIOR TO OUR MEETING, THE ATTORNEY CAME ARMED WITH
ALLEGED DOCUMENTARY PROOF OF HER INNOCENCE, SUGGESTING SHE KNEW OF
THE FRAUD IN ADVANCE. IN FACT, IT'S PROBABLE THAT SHE OBTAINED THE
VARIOUS FALSE DOCUMENTS AND HIRED THE IMPOSTOR.

HAPPILY-EVER-AFTER? IN SOME CASES, FOREVER A FAIRY-TALE

10. SO, UNLIKE DR. SEUSS' TALE WHERE THE BABY BIRD RETURNS TO THE
NEST FOR A JOYFUL REUNION WITH ITS MOTHER, ALL GUATEMALAN ADOPTIONS
DO NOT END "HAPPILY-EVER-AFTER." IN THE CASES NOTED ABOVE, THE
NATURAL MOTHER IDENTITY RIDDLE REMAINS; WE KNOW ONLY THAT IMPOSTORS
ATTEMPTED TO RELINQUISH CHILDREN THAT WERE NOT THEIR OWN. WHILE
POST WILL CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE EACH PROSPECTIVE ADOPTION CASE, WE
HAVE NEITHER THE AUTHORITY NOR THE RESOURCES TO ATTEMPT TO LOCATE
THE TRUE BIRTH MOTHERS, NOR TO PENALIZE UNSCRUPULOUS ADOPTION
ATTORNEYS FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE FRAUD. WITHOUT ACTIVE INTERVENTION
BY GUATEMALAN AUTHORITIES, THERE WILL BE NO FAIRY-TALE ENDING FOR
THE CHILDREN, PROBABLY TAKEN FROM THEIR REAL FAMILIES AND CLAIMED BY
THESE IMPOSTORS. FOR THEM, THE REAL-LIFE RIDDLE OF "WHO ARE THEIR
MOTHERS," WILL LIKELY FOREVER REMAIN UNSOLVED. PLANTY

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

