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Frequently that beautiful charmer is really a witch

By Garland M. Baker
Special to A.M. Costa Rica

It is not news that Costa Rica is a sex destination, famous for legal prostitution and escorts virtually waiting for Gringos at the airport. Many foreigners who want to have a wild vacation choose this country specifically for that reason. There are Web sites that advertise sex tourism just like any other type of tourism.

Many others come to visit only to move here after they find out how easy it is to find nice-looking women. Most Ticas are very cute, friendly, affectionate, everything one could ever dream and never got from women back home. Whether one is paying for escorts or just found a nice girl casually, Ticas seem to always charm male foreigners.

Therefore, even though a tourist may consider Costa Rica a paradise for a playboy-like lifestyle — and while many do live like that — there is a group of male expats who have ruined their lives since getting involved with Ticas. Naturally, one would wonder how on earth can experienced, well-traveled and even wealthy men ruin their lives in the hands of nice, charming Ticas? The answer to this dilemma is not a simple one.

It is a well-known fact that many Ticas live off of the savings of foreigners who surrender to their nice, affectionate sexual charm. Although it is not considered prostitution, these women are self-proclaimed Gringo hunters, who sell their body



and company for what they can get, and most aim to clean men's bank accounts, take their properties and ideally marry, expanding their horizons and enslaving these men.

Gringo-traps are open about their intentions because of a cultural belief that foreigners are walking wallets and an easy way to get a slice of the American dream. Culturally, a Tica who marries a foreigner is considered lucky, and saying that one is fishing for Gringos is not frowned upon, but rather admired and encouraged.

The real question is how an intelligent man experienced with women can be an easy prey for Gringo Hunters? The following stories might give some clues as to the reasons why this phenomenon is so common.

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A 69-year-old Gringo falls desperately in love with a 34-year-old Tica, who visibly looks and acts like an escort. After dating awhile, she convinces the man to finance two credit cards, one for \$4,000 and the other for \$8,000. Then, she goes further trying to convince him to give her \$40,000 for a property that she is planning to steal with the help of a dishonest lawyer, claiming that it belonged to her family and she needed to get it back because someone stole it from them. When the Gringo went to a lawyer for advice on her request, the lawyer gave him a reality check and kept him from coughing up the \$40,000, but every time he takes the woman to lunch — he says — he ends up taking a trip to the bank afterwards and paying her debts.

A 58-year-old Gringo falls for a voluptuous 19-year-old Tica and decides to take care of her education. He teaches her how to drive and lends her his new luxury car after she has had her license for only five months. She destroys the car in a crash but suffers only minor scratches and bruises. If she had died, her family could have taken the Gringo to the cleaners by claiming in court that he was irresponsible in letting the woman drive.

Last but not least, a married Gringo has an affair with a much younger Tica, who openly says she decided to hunt him when she met him. When his wife becomes fatally ill and dies, he marries the Tica almost immediately. He takes her to the States with him, and they settle down there. She obtains her citizenship and convinces him to adopt one of her children. Now she is threatening to leave him if he does not adopt and help get citizenship for the rest of her offspring and grandchildren. Before meeting her, he was retired and had a small fortune, and now he is working again despite his age because he cannot make ends meet for his new family.

The stories above share common factors: The three men were past 50 years old when they met the Ticas and they had a financial status that allowed them to treat their dates nicely. The three women are not only much younger than the men, but they also conduct themselves like escorts, wearing skimpy clothes and acting sexy all the time, and they did not have a financial status that allowed them to take care of themselves when they first met the men.

The problem with these stories is that foreigners that fool around with that type of women are usually older than 50 and the only thing going for them is the cash. Most of them have not done a good job taking care of their appearance and cannot naturally attract younger women. They can only attract them monetarily. Most men know that and play according to the rules. However, they also set themselves up for losing it all . . . just for sex.

So, is it an addiction to sex that ruins those men? Can they not set a limit to how much they will finance the lives of those women and their families? What is it? It would seem unlikely that they would keep spending thousands to solve the woman's problems if she were not their girlfriend.

The definition of a sex addict is a person who uses sex to escape depression or unhappiness about their lives, just like they would use alcohol, food or work. However, defining the Fool Gringo Phenomenon as a sex addiction seems a little extreme and too coincidental.

A local psychiatrist thinks that another reason could be an addiction to neuro-transmitters that produce feelings of pleasure from sex or affection, such as serotonin, dopamine or endorphins. People who are addicted to pleasure may endure unimaginable stress in order to get that rush. It might also be an addiction to toxic relationships, an attraction to drama that makes these men get

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involved in such a negative love life where they are being openly used, he said.

A more feasible possibility has to do with the legendary middle-life crisis. Young men who are dumb enough to let a woman manipulate them get tired of the cycle at some point, leave and find themselves someone better. On the other hand, older men who struggle with low self-esteem due to their age, failed marriages, work problems, among other aspects, may feel lucky to find a nice-looking woman at all, and, in turn, let the woman walk all over them. Middle life crisis has many ramifications, and it can create severe depression in males, leading to unexplainable behavior like getting into toxic relationships, forming a whole new family as if they were 20 in order to feel young again, or spending all their money on women and even going back to work to keep financing their mates or new wives.

Whatever the reason may be, the ugly truth is that the Fool Gringo Phenomenon is happening more and more in this country, and although they can seek the help of lawyers for certain situations, obvious manipulation is not penalized by law. Gringos cannot go to court for foolishly emptying their bank accounts in exchange for affection. Actually, if they get involved with the really spiteful Ticas, they can end up as victims of [domestic violence scams](#) or get sucked into costly [child support cases](#).

Expats or tourists should make sure they have a truly good and financially independent partner who is watchful of their best interest. Sensible rules to avoid becoming a prey to Gringo Hunters include not marrying impulsively, not having children and not financing more than the normal expenses during their dates.

Garland M. Baker is a 38-year resident and naturalized citizen of Costa Rica who provides multidisciplinary professional services to the international community. Reach him at info@crexpertise.com. Baker has undertaken the research leading to these series of articles in conjunction with A.M. Costa Rica. Find the collection at <http://crexpertise.info>, a complimentary reprint is available at the end of each article. Copyright 2010, use without permission prohibited.

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