

Immigration Relief: Scenarios

Hanna is 17 years old. She fled her home country and came to the US to escape her abusive father. Her mother passed away and afterwards her father began to sexually abuse her. Hanna believes that the police in her home country can't help her so she fled. Her aunt helped her and found a coyote to bring her to the US. On the way to the US, Hanna was raped by the coyote. He threatened to kill her and harm her family back in her home country if she told anyone about the assault. When they arrived in the US, Hanna was stopped by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and detained. She didn't tell the ICE agent about the sexual assault. ICE was interested in questioning her about the coyote that brought her to the US. She answered some questions, but was worried about talking to the agent because of the threats from the coyote, so she didn't tell the agent about the sexual assault.

Hanna is later released from detention and goes to stay with a cousin. She is required to continue to check in with ICE after her release. The coyote that brought her to the US is able to find her and tells her that she owes him \$5000 for the trip to the US. If she can't pay, he tells her that she has to work at a bar to pay him back. She begins to work at the bar as a waitress. While working, she sees that some of the other women there are prostitutes. She begins to talk to some of them and discovers that they also owe money to and have been forced to work to pay off their debt. Hanna is never paid for her work at the bar. A few months later, the bar is raided by law enforcement and Hanna is arrested along with the other women at the bar.

Hanna is questioned by law enforcement about her work at the bar. She tells the officers about what she has seen at the bar. She also tells them about the coyote who forced her to work at the bar. She continues to talk to the officers, but later tells them she will not testify against anyone because she is afraid of retaliation.

Hanna eventually meets Michael. They begin to date. He is a US citizen and tells her that he wants to help her with her immigration status because he is in love with her. They get married and Michael starts the immigration process for her. After a few months, Michael begins to change. He becomes extremely jealous and possessive. He accuses her of cheating on him and forces her to have sex with him on numerous occasions. Hanna decides she does not want to stay with Michael anymore and separates from him. Michael begins to stalk Hanna. He stays outside her house and follows her whenever she leaves. She is afraid that he will do something to harm her.

As you are working with Hanna you notice that she has a hard time discussing any of her past. She is uncomfortable when questions about her father or her trip the US arise and will avoid answering any direct questions from you. She tells you she has been having a hard time sleeping, she often forgets things, and during your meetings, you notice that she begins to panic and will quickly change the subject when certain parts of her life are discussed.