

A woman walks into a branch of financial services company Amscot in Tampa, Florida, with a \$ 1 million check. She asks to cash the check and tells the clerk that with the money she intends to buy a new yacht in Miami that will be used by her and her husband, a 77-year-old businessman. , And the young woman walks away.

Hours later, the young woman returns to the branch, this time with three checks. The amount stated in each of them: \$ 333,333. Officials again refuse to cash the checks in the absence of the account holder even when the woman offers to pay a double commission, this time turning to Florida police after she leaves. When police contact the husband, he declares that he has full confidence in the 26-year-old Israeli who married him four months earlier, in August 2019. Only a few days later, when two of the checks totaled \$ 666,666 in New Jersey, the businessman understands Who fell victim to fraud.

Lynn Helena Halfon entered Amscot on the morning of November 7, 2019. About a month later she was arrested at Tampa Airport and charged with theft, organized fraud and the exploitation of an adult. Halfon admitted to dealing with the prosecution in the last two offenses, ran 13 months in prison, and last week it was decided that she would be deported to Israel. As part of her deportation terms, she will be able to return to the U.S. to testify in the case if the need arises - and may arise, because during her trial both plaintiff and Halfon's attorney, Todd Foster, spoke of a third person involved in the affair. "Medium" when she tried to cash the checks of her husband, the millionaire and Jewish philanthropist Richard Rapaport.

"I had four surgeries because of a bicycle accident," Richard Rapaport said this week, "and yet, the emotional pain that Lynn caused me was worse than any injury."

"I once thought her plan to steal money from me had evolved over time," Rappaport tells us this week from his home in Tampa. "Today the picture looks different to me. In the past year I have been exposed to evidence that suggests that Lynn was looking from the first moment to connect with someone who has money."

Rapaport, who has been interviewed several times by the Israeli and American media since Halfon's arrest, until recently dismissed allegations in the written defense of Medium's involvement. Advocate Foster presented a correspondence between Halfon and an anonymous woman who allegedly warned her of a series of disasters that could happen to her if she did not cooperate with her - "Your mother is going to die", "You will be obliged to leave" and "Satan convinces him (Rapaport) not to give us The money "- including a promise that if Halfon takes her husband's money the" witchcraft on her will disappear ", and if not, she will be deported back to Israel (at the end of the chain of messages Halfon replies:" I am frustrated and desperate. I can no longer stand this pressure "). Live at Night "Rapaport was asked about it and replied:" I have a hard time believing she was hypnotized, it sounds like a script for a TV show. "

It now turns out that Rapaport did not first make the link between the woman Foster talked about in court, and who he knew only as his wife's girlfriend. Now he says, "He meant Joe (full name saved in system). She's a friend of Lynn's, she has a criminal record and she was her accomplice in the crime. She's and another guy I've never met. "As far as I know, the Florida police have issued an arrest warrant against Joe. The problem is they can't find her."

There's something captivating about it

In the American media, she is called "the Israeli gold-digger," but friends from Israel tell of a good girl in Netanya, the middle of the three daughters of Victor and Ety Halfon. "Let's say their financial situation was never in the sky," says Noa (pseudonym), a friend of Halfon. "Lynn has been working in every possible job since the age of 16 - clothing stores, restaurants. She would rip her ass off to make money. Independence is something that has always been important to her. We served together in the military, and all the service she talked about was flying to the United States. "She was looking for jobs there, researching all kinds of areas and looking for the conditions that would best suit her."

Prosecutor Diane Kruff said during the trial: "Halfon had a relationship with a man who claimed to be a psychic who could ward off evil spirits and negative energy, in exchange for cash."

A year after she was discharged from the military, where she served at Wingate Base, she purchased a one-way ticket to America with her childhood friend. She chose a nickname for herself, Lisa, found a job at a carriage company for Israelis in Florida, rented a small apartment with other Israelis and planned to return to Israel with a significant amount of money. "I know Lynn from the moment she landed in America," says Orr (pseudonym), "she came here quite scared, such a quiet, shy girl. I remember her friend would make a mess, know people and make connections, and Lynn would always be behind her. We were. A group of Israelis who went out a lot together, we spent time, we enjoyed ourselves. "

Did she say or ever do anything that hinted at criminal intent?

"As far as I know she came here like the rest of us, with a lot of motivation to make money and have fun."

For three years, Halfon worked as a cart saleswoman. Once face creams, once heating pads, once massage oils. "She was an excellent saleswoman," says Orr. "She was able to convince a lot of people to buy our products. There's something captivating about her - her smile, the way she speaks. Let's just say she knows the job."

During the time you worked together, did she have a relationship?

"I did not hear from her about a serious relationship. She would go out here and there for dates with Israelis her age who worked in carts. Everyone loved her very much."

"Lynn fell in love with the United States," says Noa. "She was happy. She could finally afford herself and feel she could afford things. It's something she's never had."

The media covering the "Israeli Gold Degree" affair did not reveal what her friends told us this week: After two years of illegal work in the United States, she married a fictitious marriage to Alex (pseudonym), an American Jew 15 years her senior, who is known to be Enter into an arrangement with her for a fee. Even Attorney Foster knew nothing about his client's first marriage ("I did not hear about it, I did not know if she was married before him or not," he said this week

in response to our question), but friends in America knew, and were not surprised. "Lynn was neither the first nor the last to marry an American for the green card, all the Israelis here are looking for it," says Or. "It doesn't matter to them who he is or how old he is, because it is a fictitious marriage."

It's not clear why, but something in the arrangement with Alex went wrong and Halfon did not get the long-awaited green card. "There was a huge sah between them, something to do with money," says Noa. "She was broken by it," says Donna (pseudonym), who was working with Halfon at the time. "The dream exploded inside her. She cried a lot at the time. She did not like to share what she was going through, but we knew it was related."

Coverage of the "Israeli Gold Degree" affair did not reveal that after two years in the United States, Halfon married a fictitious marriage to Alex (pseudonym), an American Jew about 15 years her senior.

Just then - in early 2018, when she had to make a decision whether to return to Israel or risk continuing her stay and illegal work in the US - Halfon met Richard Rapaport. It happened at a face mask booth in a large mall in Florida. "I usually ignore these stalls. They sell products, but somehow Lynn immediately attracted me," says Rappaport. "She told me she was from Israel and we talked a bit, I bought some products from her. Later we met for lunch and became friends. Her appearance, her character and her story bought me. "

She asked me for money to pay for her divorce

Richard Rapaport, whose fortune is estimated at tens of millions of dollars, is an ardent supporter of Israel. For five decades he has been contributing to "Friends of the JNF from the United States"; In recent years, he has contributed to the rehabilitation of the burning south, established a playground in Sderot and financially supported a rehabilitation village in the Negev and the Alexander Moss American High School in Hod Hasharon. In the photos he uploaded to his Instagram account, he appears hugged by former minister Ayelet Shaked and IDF cemeteries. "Pious Zionist," was written about him in 2016, when he received a medal of honor at a JNF conference in Tampa Bay.

Halfon's origins helped break the ice when she met the Jewish businessman, but contrary to reports that talked about a young woman and an elderly man they barely knew when they were married, Rapaport describes an intense relationship that lasted a year and a half before the two decided to get married. "When I met Lynn she had nothing - no house of her own, no tidy job, no money. I rented an apartment for her, bought her a car and gave her a job in my office. Her dream was to start a fashion business and I wanted to make it come true for her. I hired a market research company. To work for her business and at the same time I hired an immigration attorney to be considered legal in the United States. She told me that her dream is to live here with me in Tampa. She convinced me to marry her. "

"Only after she was interrogated did I realize that she was lying to me about so many things," says Rapaport, "for example that her mother did not have cancer and that her father was not persecuted by the Israeli mafia as she described it."

Didn't you think the age gap between you was unusual?

"I told her there was a huge difference between us, and she said not to worry and that she loved me. I agreed to marry her because I understood that only if we got married would she stay with me in the United States."

Did you know she was married before?

"Sure, she asked me to transfer money to her to pay for her divorce so they would close their eyes between them. By the way, I found out in retrospect that our wedding was in the exact same court where she married her divorcee. It's funny."

Faced with the intense and dedicated relationship that Rappaport describes, Noa - who spoke with Halfon regularly during her stay in the United States - heard nothing from her about the relationship. Yossi (pseudonym), an associate of the Halfon family who was asked about it in "Live at Night," also claimed that no one knew about her connection to Rapaport or their marriage. "Neither I nor any of Lynn's friends knew about this relationship," Noa says. "We all thought she lived in a shared apartment of an Israeli woman, worked and went to bed. We thought she was single. She always said that everything was normal in her life. We are still in shock, it's just not Lynn Halfon."

Richard, did your kids know about your and Lynn's relationship?

"No. When they found out about the theft they were shocked to hear about our marriage and the magnitude of my financial loss."

In retrospect, were there signs that she was interested not only in your love?

"Before our wedding she asked me to buy her a Rolex watch instead of an engagement ring. I went with her to a very expensive jewelry store, bought her the watch she chose, and never saw it again. She did not even wear it to the wedding. She also used my credit card and bought herself a necklace. "Cartier worth \$ 3,600, and I've never seen that necklace either. I don't know what she did with these things."

My heart wants to forgive her, but the mind can not

Lynn Helena Halfon's dream of big money and a good life in America shattered on the night of December 25, 2019, when she was arrested at a Florida airport. With him, the reality of Richard Rapaport's life also shattered. "Only after she was interrogated did I realize that she had lied to me about so many things, such as her mother not having cancer and her father not being persecuted by the Israeli mafia as she described. By the way, when we were together she asked me to transfer money for her friend. A company was its partner in the financial fraud, there is no orphanage. "

A month after Halfon's arrest and six months after he married her, Rapaport filed for divorce. Meanwhile in court, Advocate Foster claimed that his client was innocent and that presenting her

as a gold digger was doing her an injustice. "She had a legal right to that money," Foster told Fox News, promising: . This is a standard money transfer with the consent of a husband and wife, how can you steal from your husband? "

Foster apparently meant it would be a rhetorical question, but Rapaport provided her with at least a partial answer when he told us this week that "I signed Lynn to a prenuptial agreement." However, even though the only indictment in the case was filed exclusively against Halfon, Rapaport now says: "She did not plan the big scam on her own, they were three active partners who worked together to get money out of me. Lynn, Joe and another guy. After she failed to withdraw the money in Tampa, she went out with me to look at apartments we were thinking of buying and some of the time she walked around alone. "In retrospect, I found out that she actually went to New Jersey with Joe and the third partner. They went to the local bank together and managed to cash out two of the three checks."

As mentioned, it is not only her ex-husband and her lawyer who claim that Halfon worked with partners. The plaintiff in the case, Diane Croff, said during the trial: "Ms. Halfon had a relationship with a man who claimed to be a psychic who could ward off evil spirits and negative energy, in exchange for cash." According to prosecutor Kruff, the same medium pressured Halfon to initiate the relationship with Rapaport "so that the victim could fund it financially." Kruf added that Halfon appeared to be "under his mental control" and lied to Rapaport about her mother's medical condition and her father's entanglement in order to extract cash from him in "growing" amounts - which, according to the plaintiff, Halfon transferred to the medium for several months. Kruf was careful to refer to the medium as a "person", a person, without revealing his gender or name.

"For me," Rapaport says, "the best outcome would be if they arrested Lynn's two partners, and especially the girl."

"She's an excellent saleswoman," says Orr (pseudonym) who worked with Lynn in carts. "She managed to convince a lot of people to buy products. Her smile, the way she speaks - let's say she knows the job"

How do you see the decision to deport Lynn to Israel?

"The fact that she spent a year in prison is not really enough in my eyes given the size of her theft, but since she is Jewish and Israeli and I love Israel, I asked the plaintiff not to ask for a longer sentence for her but to deport her from the United States instead."

Lynn tried to contact you? Ask you for forgiveness?

"She did not try to contact me and did not regret what she did. Even if she wanted to, I'm sure her lawyer would not allow it."

How do you feel about her?

"My heart wants to forgive her, but the brain can not. I really loved her and did everything for her. In recent years I have had four surgeries due to bicycle accidents, and yet, the emotional pain she caused me was worse than any injury."

Do you regret what happened to you with her?

"I'll tell you just one thing I learned from this story: if something looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Assisted in the preparation of the article: Guy Wright, Maya Friedlin

Comments: "I'm sure Lynn regrets it, but she didn 't have a chance to apologize"

In the past week, there have been repeated attempts to get the response of Lynn Halfon's nuclear family members, but all have gone unanswered. "Alex", her first husband, also refused to respond to our inquiries. Their responses will be published if and when they are received.

Halfon's lawyer, Todd Foster, responded: "Lynn Halfon is currently under the auspices of the US immigration authorities. They are responsible for moving her to Israel, and she is relieved to return home. I'm sure she regrets what happened, but she did not have the opportunity to apologize to Rich Get down because she's been in jail all this time. "

On the medium that allegedly acted with or activated Halfon, Foster said: "I can not name this person, people mentioned different names and I do not know which one is correct. Why was the name not mentioned in the trial? It depends on the plaintiff and not on me. I can not Confirm that the third person mentioned by Richard Rapaport was involved, but Lynn would do what the medium says. He would instruct her what to do, and she thought bad things would happen to her and her family if she did not do what he asked. She stated in court that everything he gave her, she gave to her medium. "

On Rapaport's lost money, Foster said: "There were three checks, and as far as I know the three were redeemed. I do not know who cashed them, but the report that it was at a bank in New Jersey is accurate."