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BAIT & SNITCH

SEXY 'DECOYS' HIRED TO TEMPT MARRIED MEN

By PATTY LAMBERTI

September 19, 2006 -- THIS week, a New York City man will fly to California for business. On the plane, the beautiful woman seated next to him will strike up a conversation. She will be witty, funny and, like him, love the Yankees. When they land, she'll invite him to dinner. For the sake of his marriage, he'd better say "no." Because that isn't his dream girl - she's a private investigator hired by his wife to test his loyalty.

Called "decoys," these women - like Sandra Hope of Arizona-based Mate Check P.I. - are paid to tempt wayward boyfriends and husbands. Hope says she's lured hundreds of New York men since starting her business 12 years ago.

It works like this: A woman, usually one who is engaged but is suspicious of her fiancé's character, pays Hope about \$850 to throw herself at him. Before the sting, Hope quizzes the client about the man's tastes, so that she can become the living embodiment of his fantasy. She'll ask about everything from his favorite hair color (she has a closet of wigs) to what type of music he prefers. Then she'll fly into town, attach a miniature video camera to her dress, and wait for him to appear at his favorite hangouts.

In her most recent New York case, she stopped her target as he entered his health club. "His girlfriend had told me he loves steak and beer," she says. "So I said, 'Excuse me, I just moved here and I'm dying for a big juicy steak and a beer. Do you know a place?'"

Sure. He knew a restaurant. And after chatting with her, he offered to take her there that evening. Before dinner, Hope called the client and asked if she wanted her to continue the charade. The client said that was enough, so Hope blew him off.

Other women have asked Hope to take it as far as a hotel's front desk. At that point, she claims to have forgotten something in her car and disappears. Hope draws the line at any physical contact. If a man leans in to kiss her, she'll say she has to go to the bathroom, and never comes back. She also won't proposition them for sex, only dinner.

When the job is done, Hope mails the client the video of the meetings. In most cases, the woman immediately confronts her lover with the evidence. But in 90 percent of the cases, she'll stick by his side.

"Women get territorial," Hope says. "They think, 'That's my man.' They realize I wasn't a real woman. It wasn't a natural situation."

Which begs the question: Why hire Hope in the first place?

"I hate to use this analogy, but it's kind of like when someone is missing for a long time. You just want to know if they're dead or alive so you don't have to wonder about it anymore," Hope says. "The woman just wants to know if her man would pick someone up given the opportunity. Also, this gives the woman a reason to say, 'You can't go to that bar anymore, because I know what you'll do if a woman comes on to you there.'"

In other words, they know he's a dog - they just want know how much of one. Or perhaps they're hoping against Hope he says no.

Alas, it's not to be. Hope considers the seduction successful if the man accepts (or offers) an invitation to dinner or drinks - and so far, no one has rejected her. It turns out the wives who hire her were right to be suspicious.

Sarah Jamison of Themis International, a Los Angeles-based firm that employs a New York City decoy who charges \$80 per hour, also has never seen a decoy fail, even when she was sure the man wouldn't take the bait.

In one of her strangest cases, a gay man in Manhattan hired a female decoy to flirt with his lover, because he suspected his partner wasn't just unfaithful, but bisexual as well. The decoy visited the target at his office, a financial institution, and said she wanted to open an account. When it came time to fill out the paperwork, she pretended she'd forgotten her driver's license at home. The man suggested they meet for dinner to complete the forms and, "Get to know each other better." Wink-wink.

Some critics complain that these staged scenarios reek of entrapment. But both



Sandra Hope, seen here at the Barcelona restaurant in Scottsdale, Ariz., is hired by wives and girlfriends to test their mates' fidelity.

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her husband maintained a secret apartment when he offered to take a decoy there, Felder advises against hiring them. "It just creates psychodrama," he says.

Hope, of course, disagrees. "You have the right to know if your man can say "Thanks, but no thanks."

ADULTERY BAIT 101:

Want to lure a married man - or, better yet, an available one? Here are some seduction secrets from professional "decoy" Sandra Hope, seen here in blond seductress mode.

Be aggressive and bold, but in a non-psycho sort of way. And don't overthink what you say.

Before starting any conversation, swallow a breath mint.

The line that always works on strangers? A simple "Hello."

If you have a crush on someone at work, say something nonthreatening, like, "I really like your personality."

If you know the person, research his interests, and then casually work them into the conversation. Find out your target's favorite band and then mention their new CD.

Don't let rejection stop you from flirting with someone else. If your target is rude, just shrug it off. He or she wasn't worth your time.

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