

Federal Court



Cour fédérale

Date: 20260115

Docket: IMM-15198-24

Citation: 2026 FC 62

Ottawa, Ontario, January 15, 2026

PRESENT: Madam Justice Azmudeh

BETWEEN:

RICHARD RICARDO WILLIAMS

Applicant

and

**THE MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP AND
IMMIGRATION**

Respondent

ORDER AND REASONS

I. Overview

[1] This is an application for judicial review of an Immigration Officer's (Officer) decision (Decision) denying the Applicant's permanent residence (PR) spousal sponsorship application because they were not satisfied that the Applicant met the requirements set out in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, SC 2001, c 27, [IRPA] and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, SOR/2002-227 [IRPR].

[2] Mr. Richard Ricardo Williams (Applicant or Mr. Williams) entered Canada as a visitor on July 7, 2022. Shortly after arriving in Canada, he met Ms. Alita Wendy Gramigni (Sponsor, or Ms. Gramigni), a Canadian citizen, at a party. They started a relationship, he moved in with her, and a year later, on June 25, 2023, they got married.

[3] The Applicant then applied for permanent residence in Canada under the Spouse or Common-Law Partner in Canada Class, with Ms. Gramigni sponsoring him. In support of their application, they submitted various documents:

- a) A joint bank account application signed on November 17, 2023 and joint bank account statements;
- b) Ms. Gramigni's personal bank account statements, and e-transfer records between the couple;
- c) A letter from the property manager stating the couple had been tenants since September 2022 and another letter dated October 2023 stating that the Applicant was added to the lease agreement;
- d) Photographs of their relationship and wedding ceremony;
- e) Whatsapp text message exchanges;
- f) Amazon purchases with Ms. Gramigni's billing information;
- g) A gas utility bill in Ms. Gramigni's name

[4] On July 14, 2024, the Officer sent a procedural fairness letter to Mr. Williams expressing concerns about the genuineness of the relationship and asking the couple to send specific documents. The couple responded within the deadline and submitted further evidence, including their residence's property manager's letter stating that they had been tenants since September 2022, bank account information, Amazon purchases, e-transfer evidence and additional

WhatsApp messages and photos.

[5] Upon reviewing the documents, the Officer found that the relationship was not genuine. In their reasons, the Officer found the 17-year age difference (here, the wife is older), the start of the relationship after a month of the Applicant's arrival in Canada, and their small wedding with few details, and few joint documents as reasons that their relationship was not genuine. The Officer also made credibility findings material to the decision, stating the following in the GCMS Notes: "On the IMM 5532 it indicates that the sponsors family did not meet the sponsor until September 2023 which was after their wedding – however photo on file shows a photo of sponsor and her mother at the wedding." The Officer never held an interview to test the Applicant and/or the sponsor's credibility.

[6] The Applicant argues that the decision is unreasonable and was reached in a procedurally unfair manner because the Procedural Fairness Letter (PFL) did not provide sufficient details about the Officer's concerns. The Respondent argues that the Decision was reasonable and was reached fairly.

[7] For the following reasons, I find that the decision was unreasonable and grant the application.

II. Issues and Standard of Review

[8] The determinative issue in this case is whether the Officer's decision was reasonable.

[9] The standard of review applicable to administrative decisions such as this is reasonableness (*Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) v Vavilov*, 2019 SCC 65 at para 23 [*Vavilov*]; *Singh v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2022 FC 1645 at para 13; *Shah v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2022 FC 1741 at para 15).

A reasonable decision is “based on an internally coherent and rational chain of analysis and [...] is justified in relation to the facts and law that constrain the decision maker” (*Vavilov* at para 85). The reviewing court must ensure that the decision is justifiable, intelligible, and transparent (*Vavilov* at para 95). Justifiable and transparent decisions account for central issues and concerns raised in the parties’ submissions to the decision maker (*Vavilov* at para 127).

III. Analysis

[10] In this case, I agree with the Respondent that the Officer provided very detailed reasons. However, I also agree with the Applicant that many of the determinative factors for the Officer, such as their determination that the couple’s age difference was suspect without further scrutiny or analysis, are unfounded credibility findings based on stereotypes or unexplained expectations.

[11] Without explaining the foundation of their finding, the Officer found the timeline of the relationship to be too speedy for a genuine relationship. Other than their own unexplained assumption or expectation of what a reasonable timeline should be, it is unclear from their reasons how meeting someone at a party a month after arriving in Canada, then deciding to live together and get married a year later are problematic to the genuineness of the relationship. The gap in the chain of reasoning on a material finding renders the decision unreasonable.

[12] The Officer also found that the couple's 17-year age difference was evidence of an ingenuine relationship. This is another unfounded assumption or stereotype. It is unclear what the Officer's expectation for a reasonable age difference was and why the age gap was relevant. The couple cannot be faulted for not proactively explaining what they did not see as an issue. If the Officer saw it as an issue, then they had to raise it in the PFL or during an interview (which was never given) to give them an opportunity to address it. Regardless, basing the decision on an unfounded assumption creates a gap in the chain of reasoning (*Vavilov* at para 96).

[13] In addition, the Officer seems to have made a clear untested credibility finding that would reasonably have needed an interview. This ambiguity in and of itself further contributes to a gap in reasoning. For example, the Officer found the fact that the sponsor's mother learnt of the relationship in September 2023, well after the wedding, to be a sign of an ungenuine relationship. However, the Officer also found that the mother was at the wedding because of a wedding photo and found this to contradict the couple's statement on the date by which the mother had learned about the relationship.

[14] As a result, it remained unclear what fact the Officer accepted or rejected about the mother, and though this was a material issue for them, they never attempted to examine it directly with the couple. The Respondent agreed that one cannot reasonably reconcile the mother's learning of the relationship a few months after the wedding as a sign of a sham relationship with her presence at the wedding.

[15] However, since this was a material contradiction, it was unreasonable for the Officer to make a credibility finding without further analysis. If the Officer has indeed made a credibility finding, then, they would have needed to clearly signal their concern to the Applicant and/or the Sponsor in a clear PFL or during an interview. The Respondent stated that this too is not a sufficiently important fact to render the entire decision unreasonable.

[16] At the hearing, the Respondent agreed that the Officer's analysis on the above points was problematic. However, they argued that these were insufficient factors to render the decision, as a whole, unreasonable. I disagree. The decision concluded that the relationship was a sham and referenced the Officer's rationale for it. This Court cannot speculate as to what factors were less important than the others for the Officer, such that their presence in the reasons can be ignored.

[17] The Respondent agrees that a decision becomes unreasonable when an officer relies on stereotypes in their decision-making, but also notes that relying on demonstrably true and relevant facts is not stereotyping (*Eroglu v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2022 FC 1305 at paras 27-30; but see *Hassanpour v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2022 FC 1738 at para 19). However, I disagree with the Respondent that the Officer did not stereotype without relying on demonstrably true and relevant facts, or that the stereotyping occurred on what the Respondent's counsel speculates were peripheral facts for the Officer.

[18] To conclude that the relationship was not genuine, the Officer also heavily relied on what the evidence did not show. For example, the Officer found that while the Applicant and the sponsor stated that they met at a party, they did not say whose party it was. From the Officer's

notes, it is unclear how the additional detail would have been helpful in their assessment. In effect, they discounted the evidence by focusing on the missing content within the documents, the Officer found that the evidence had little corroborative value and framed it to be insufficient. Focusing on what the evidence does not say, in and of itself, can render a decision unreasonable: evidence must be evaluated for what it says rather than what it does not say (*Anshur v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2018 FC 567 at para 21).

[19] Therefore, though the Officer provided very detailed reasons, breaks in the chain of reasoning render the decision unreasonable.

[20] Contrary to the Respondent's submissions, this is not about the weighing of the evidence by the Officer, to which this Court gives deference. The Officer's reasons were tainted by their reliance on multiple assumptions rather than on evidence supporting their conclusions. That renders the decision unreasonable.

IV. Conclusion

[21] I find that the Officer's decision was unreasonable. I allow the judicial review.

[22] The parties did not propose a certified question and I agree that none arises.

JUDGMENT in IMM-15198-24

THIS COURT’S JUDGMENT is that:

1. The Judicial Review is granted
2. This matter is returned to a different decision-maker for determination. The
Applicant can make additional submissions in advance of the redetermination.
3. There are no questions to be certified.

“Negar Azmudeh”

Judge

FEDERAL COURT
SOLICITORS OF RECORD

DOCKET: IMM-15198-24

STYLE OF CAUSE: RICHARD RICARDO WILLIAMS v THE MINISTER
OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

PLACE OF HEARING: HELD VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE OF HEARING: JANUARY 13, 2026

ORDER AND REASONS: AZMUDEH J.

DATED: JANUARY 15, 2026

APPEARANCES:

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Ben Bertram	FOR THE RESPONDENT

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