

Rights Action  
Oct. 31, 2015

## Who Is The Canadian "Porn King", On Trial (November 13, 2015) in Honduras?

- **Below:** article by Karen Spring (Honduras Solidarity Network)

Canadian tourism operator Randy Jorgensen (the "Porn King") is charged with illegal seizure and possession of Garifuna territories for his tourism operations and investments. Other Canadian and American tourism operators and investors are quite possibly at risk, due to corruption, repression and legally questionable land titles.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Randy Jorgensen, the Canadian "Porn King", To Appear in Honduran Courts for Illegal Possession of Garifuna Lands for Tourist Projects

By Karen Spring, Friday, October 23, 2015

<http://www.karenspring.com/2015/10/randy-jorgensen-canadian-porn-king-to.html>

Randy Jorgensen will appear in Honduran courts under charges of usurpation, related to the illegal possession of Afro-indigenous, Garifuna lands in Trujillo, Honduras. Jorgensen, also known as the Canadian Porn King, is a major investor in various tourist projects in the Trujillo Bay area along Honduras' northern Caribbean coast, including the 'Banana Coast' (<http://www.bananacoast.com/>) cruise ship terminal, and various gated-community projects.

Charges against Jorgensen involve the illegal purchase and on-going use of land within a community land title belonging to the Garifuna communities of Cristales and Rio Negro, located in Trujillo Bay.



Photo caption: The Banana Coast cruise ship terminal, in the Rio Negro neighborhood in Trujillo. Local residents no longer have free access to the beach.

The legal hearing will take place on November 13 and the charges come after years of investigation of the illegal land sales. In June of this year, an arrest warrant for Jorgensen was issued by the Honduran Attorney General's office.

The majority of the alleged "land sales" in Rio Negro were made under threat of expropriation and repression, given the tense political environment following the June 2009 military coup in Honduras.

The Garifuna are an Afro-indigenous people that have lived for over 200 years along the Caribbean coast of Honduras, on lands now threatened by the foreign and national tourism industry (<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/content/view/1195/1/>).

In the Trujillo region, Garifuna communities are also being evicted from their ancestral lands amid the possible construction (<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/honduras-archives-46/4905-puerto-castilla-honduras-corporate-and-military-interests-above-garifuna-community-survival>) of an Economic Development and Employment Zone (ZEDE) or Model City. Jorgensen's investments are seen as the seed of a future ZEDE or parts of what could grow into a free trade, special development zone in the region.

### **Slow Tourism-Related Ethnocide**

The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH by its Spanish acronym) has been publicly condemning (<https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2011/12/15/comunidad-garifuna-de-trujillo-demanda-al-rey-del-porno-canadiense/>) tourism-related repression and illegal land sales for years.

In December 2011, Rio Negro and Cristales, accompanied by OFRANEH, "filed a lawsuit demanding absolute nullity of several fraudulent land sales made in favor of Randy Roy Jorgensen. ... Jorgensen, in the midst of the Honduran political tragedy in 2009, managed to suddenly obtain environmental licenses to build in an area declared a buffer zone of the Capiro and Calentura National Park."

Regarding the recent charges, OFRANEH released a statement that can be found [here](#).



Photo caption: The ruins of a house in Rio Negro, with one of the last houses standing in the backdrop at the location where the Banana Coast cruise ship terminal is now located. Picture taken in 2011.

The piece of land that Jorgensen is illegally occupying consists of over 76 manzanas [approximately 132 acres] within the Rio Negro land title dating back to 1901. Upon obtaining the land, Jorgensen has since built the 'Banana Coast' cruise ship terminal that received over 50 international cruise ships last season. The Garifuna community of Rio Negro has largely been 'disappeared' by the project and the few houses remaining are regularly affected by severe flooding caused by the design and construction of the cruise ship terminal adjacent to their houses. Residents of Rio Negro and surrounding Garifuna communities have also lost access to the beach, a lifeline for the Garifuna that rely on fishing for local consumption.

### **Tourism, Dispossession and Repression**

In her excellent article (<http://this.org/2010/11/04/canada-snowbirds-honduras/>) about Canadian tourism interests in Trujillo, journalist Dawn Paley reports that Jorgensen was nicknamed the 'Canadian Porn King' in a 1993 publication of MacLean's magazine in Canada. The nickname is a play on how Jorgensen earned his fortune by distributing and selling pornographic films in 'Adults Only Video' (AOV) stores across Canada and online.

Upon moving to Honduras in 2007, the Porn King has since become the major promoter and investor of a Cancun-style tourism economy in Trujillo Bay. Besides Banana Coast, Jorgensen owns another company, Life Vision Developments (<http://lifevisionproperties.com/>) that is selling small lots of land to North Americans through various real estate firms based in Canada, and a money-making scheme known as Fast Track Group (<http://www.fasttracktocashflow.com/>) based in Alberta, Canada.

These lots – many of which were illegally purchased by Life Vision Developments and are inside Garifuna land titles – are located within gated-communities Campa Vista, Coroz Alta, Alta Vista, and New Palm Beach.



Photo caption: The entrance of NJOI Trujillo.

Other North American projects have since begun construction and land sales in the last few years, following in Jorgensen's footsteps. "NJOI Trujillo" (<http://www.njoitrujillo.com/>) and "NJOI Santa

Fe”, owned and managed by Canadians Gino and Cristina Santarossa, and Paul and Lucio Todos, are real estate, resort-style projects for sale.

Journalist Sandra Cuffe writes (<https://ricochet.media/en/243/little-canada-displacing-afro-indigenous-communities-in-honduras>) about NJOI’s projects built illegally inside land owned communally by the Garifuna community of Guadalupe.

It is likely that many, if not all of these tourism-related investments are in serious risk, given that most, if not all recent tourism investment projects, going back to before the 2009 military coup, and particularly since the coup, are being constructed on Garifuna lands and territories that have been illegally acquired, in one fashion or another. Garifuna community and human rights defenders believe, and hope, that the usurpation charges against Randy Jorgensen are only the first of many legal challenges to come.

### **Jorgensen’s Legal Problems, Past and Present**

The current charges against the Porn King are not Jorgensen’s first run-in with the Honduran legal system. In 2001, Jorgensen and his father, Roy Jorgensen, fought charges of *proxenetismo de menores* or prostitution of minors, all the way to the Honduran Supreme Court. There are concerns of corruption related to how the charges were ultimately dropped.

Then in 2011, Jorgensen reported (<http://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/548832-97/empresario-de-la-pornografia-dirige-proyectos-en-trujillo>) to the Honduran press that Honduran banks had closed his accounts for “unknown reasons”.

Locals in Trujillo Bay also report that Jorgensen has strong ties (<https://lifevisionproperties.wordpress.com/2010/11/29/randy-jorgensen-meets-with-president-lobo/>) to the Lobo family that have been accused of drug trafficking. Fabio Lobo, the son of former Honduran President Porfirio “Pepe” Lobo, was arrested (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/son-honduras-president-arrested-haiti-drug-bust-article-1.2231767>) in May of this year by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency on drug trafficking charges in connection to the drug cartel operating in the Trujillo area, known as “Los Cachiros.” Lobo was extradited to stand trial in the U.S.

The most recent usurpation charges against Randy Jorgensen come as a surprise given the high levels of corruption and impunity in the Honduran judicial system. Although the recent charges seem hopeful, many are skeptical that the charges will proceed, if at all, in Honduran courts.



Photo caption: Randy Jorgensen (left) with Ramon Lobo (center) and former President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo (right). Photo from Life Vision Development.

\*\*\*\*\*

**OFRANEH and Rights Action call on journalists, human rights groups, companions to attend and report on the trial**

**More Info in Honduras**

OFRANEH (Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondureña)

[garifuna@ofraneh.org](mailto:garifuna@ofraneh.org)

[www.ofraneh.org](http://www.ofraneh.org)

<http://www.ofraneh.wordpress.com>

Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network

[Spring.kj@gmail.com](mailto:Spring.kj@gmail.com)

**More Info In Canada/ U.S.**

Grahame Russell, Rights Action

[info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & United States)**

To support community organizations – like OFRANEH - working for real democracy and justice, for locally-controlled development, the environment and human rights in Honduras and Guatemala, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8
- USA: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091

Credit-Card Donations: <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>

Stock donations: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Honduras Fact-finding Delegation, March 19-26, 2016**

Rights Action invites you to join this educational-seminar trip to Honduras. Cost: US\$750, covering seven nights of lodging, and six days of: transportation, two or three meals/day, trip

coordination and guiding, translation, and honorariums for some groups we meet with. Participants are responsible for their own travel to and from Honduras. Learn more: Grahame Russell, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

- Receive print newsletter: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)
- Join Listserv: [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)
- [www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org](https://www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org)
- @RightsAction

\*\*\*\*\*