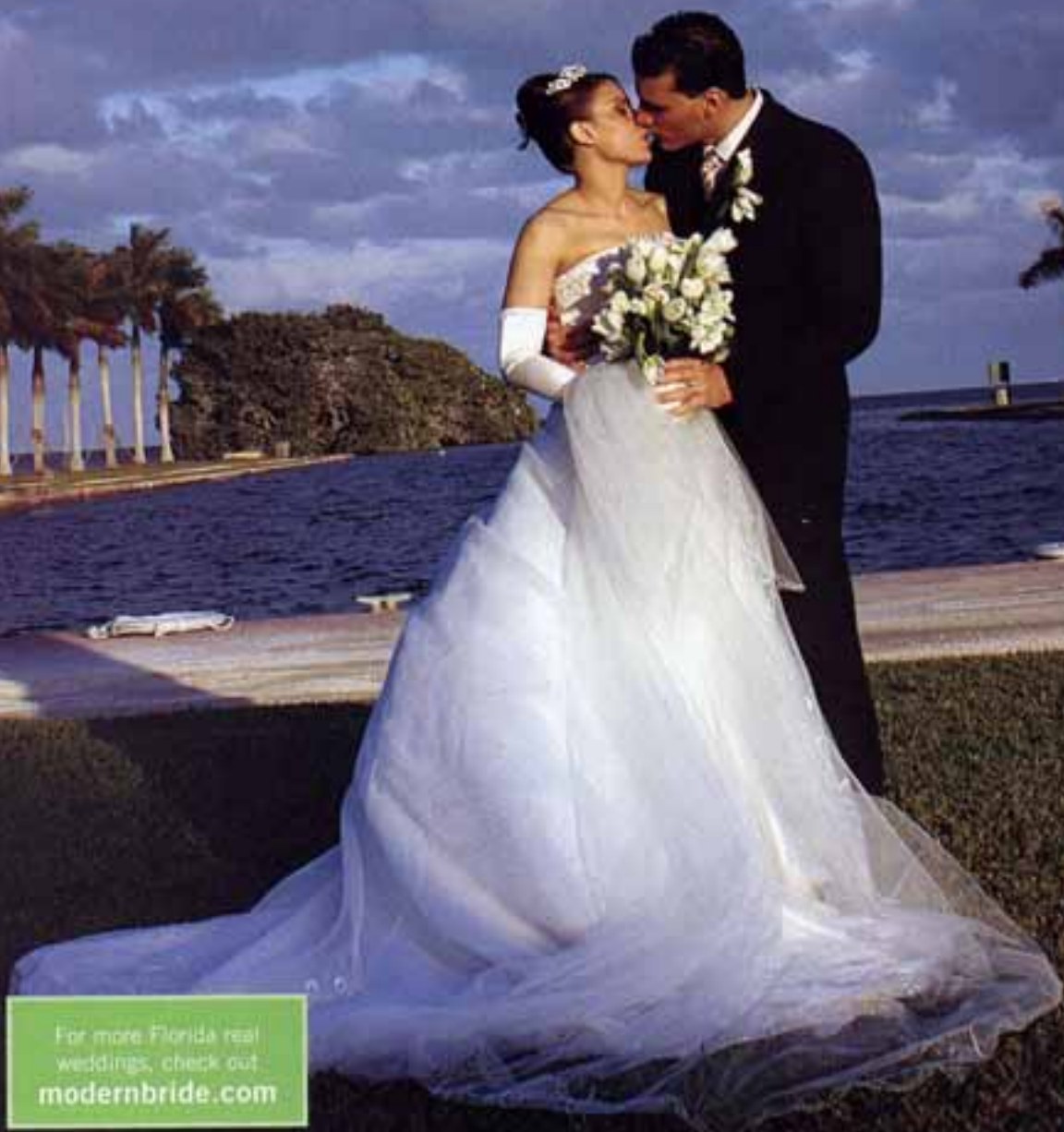


REAL WEDDINGS

# WALKING ON SUNSHINE

Ellen Couto and Karim Izmero

BY LISSA POIROT



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SOME PEOPLE SEARCH FOR DECADES BEFORE FINDING THE love of their lives. For Ellen Couto and Karim Izmyer, love struck while they were still in high school. It was during French class that Karim, then 17, and Ellen, then 15, first met. While the teacher was writing on the blackboard, Karim would slowly switch seats with other students, inching his way closer and closer to Ellen until she would turn and find him sitting right behind her. And although they were only in high school, both knew they had found the person with whom they would share the rest of their lives.

"I knew the moment we met," says Ellen. "He was such a gentleman; he had qualities that you just don't see in boys that age...

Opposite, The newlyweds steal a kiss. *This page, clockwise from top left, Sugar flowers cascade down the grand five-tiered confection. The Deering Estate makes a posh wedding venue. A flower girl wears a crown of yellow roses and white orchids. Dinner tables, each adorned with yellow or white flowers and red cocktails, await guests.*

Even today, more than 10 years later, I still get butterflies when I see him."

### a valuable surprise

For the next several years, the duo followed their life plans, graduating from college and finding professional work before they decided to settle down. But even though they always knew they were meant to be, Karim found a way to surprise Ellen with the proposal. It was just a typical Friday evening in June when Karim

asked Ellen to go to Houston's, their favorite restaurant in Coral Gables. When the bill came, Karim asked Ellen if she wouldn't B