



Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2009 By Randy James

<http://www.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1943681,00.html>

Could the White House Party Crashers Go To Jail?

Tareq and Michaela Salahi were hoping for reality TV stardom when they strolled uninvited into a Nov. 24 White House state dinner. Legal experts say the party-crashing duo may have to settle for the reality of a courtroom fight instead — and possibly a prison cell.

5 "There's no question the Secret Service is likely to push very hard for a criminal charge," says George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley. "They are famous for lacking a sense of humor." It would be harm to blame them, given the circumstances. In an alarming security breach, the Salahis managed to schmooze with President Obama, Vice President Biden and a slew of other top figures at the gala event honoring Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. (Photos of their VIP hobnobbing were promptly posted on Facebook.)
10 Though the couple passed through metal detectors, observers noted they could have potentially smuggled in anthrax or other unconventional weapons, as well as espionage tools such as electronic listening devices. The House Homeland Security Committee has scheduled hearings on the intrusion for Dec. 3. The Salahis have been invited to testify, along with Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan. They have not publicly responded to the request.

15 It remains unclear just how the attention-hungry Virginia socialites were afforded entry into the heavily guarded affair. If the two somehow believed they had been legitimately invited and did not misrepresent themselves to authorities, experts say they most likely did not commit a crime. But if they lied to security officers manning the entrances, that could put them afoul of federal laws barring trespassing onto government property and making false statements to government officials.

20 "You've got an obligation to be honest when you're talking to the government or to government agents," says Michael O'Neill, a criminal law professor at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia. Whether the Justice Department opts to prosecute the pair "would all be based on what it is they said to those agents." Even if the two were then welcomed into the White House, they could still face a trespassing charge if they were granted permission based on a lie.

25 The false statements charge is a felony, and trespassing can be charged as a felony if it was committed in order to advance another felony crime. Each of the charges carries a prison term of up to five years, but experts call a long sentence highly unlikely. "You don't come across cases like this too often," says Orin Kerr, another George Washington law professor. "The trial judge would have a lot of discretion to pick an appropriate sentence."

30 Turley says many judges would forego a prison sentence, considering the blow of a felony conviction along with fines or probation time ample punishment for first-time offenders. He also offered some advice for potential future scofflaws: if you're going to commit a crime, at least keep the photos off Facebook. "These people took something that would have been a memorable keepsake and turned it into criminal evidence," he says. "This act of vanity could cost them dearly."

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Could the White House party crashers go to jail?

1. *Read the article and say whether the following statements are true or false. Circle T (for "true") or F (for "false"). If the text does not give you the necessary information to decide, circle ?.*

1. According to the journalist, Tareq and Michaela invited themselves to the White House party because they wanted to be famous and on TV.
2. Tareq and Michaela Salahi destroyed furniture in the White House during the party.
3. The Secret Service agents usually like jokes.
4. Tareq and Michaela were carrying unconventional weapons.
5. The couple lied to the security officers guarding the entrance of the White House to make sure they could go in.
6. They are not likely to be condemned to a long prison sentence.
7. Turley advises potential law-breakers to avoid putting pictures of their crimes on Facebook.

Answer below by circling your choice:

1. T F
2. T F
3. T F
4. T F
5. T F
6. T F
7. T F

2. *Here are six words from the article. For each word, circle the appropriate definition in this context.*

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. to schmooze | 4. scofflaws |
| a. to fight | a. scones |
| b. to chat | b. legal advisers |
| c. to mock | c. law violators |
| 2. to smuggle in | 5. stardom |
| a. to import clandestinely | a. publicity |
| b. to sell | b. celebrity |
| c. to dance | c. kingdom |
| 3. to trespass | 6. a breach |
| a. to die | a. a rupture |
| b. to reject | b. a breezy beach |
| c. to enter illegally | c. trousers |

