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Lori Loughlin now faces 20 or more years in prison after being indicted on money laundering, fraud charges

Actress, husband among group of parents indicted by federal grand jury

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Lori Loughlin may reportedly be relying on yoga and her faith to help her cope with being charged in the nationwide college admissions scandal, but neither will help the Hollywood star avoid the strong possibility that she could be going to prison — for up to 20 years.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Massachusetts announced Tuesday that the "Full House" actress, husband Massimo Giannuli and 14 other parents, including six from the Bay Area, were indicted with conspiracy to commit fraud and money laundering. The indictments came from a federal grand jury that convened to consider additional charges against wealthy parents who already had been charged in the wide-ranging conspiracy investigation but who apparently delayed or refused to strike cooperation deals with prosecutors.

According to an earlier report Tuesday [from TMZ](#), Loughlin and her fashion designer husband had been offered the chance to plead guilty to charges of paying \$500,000 to get their daughters — Olivia Jade, 19, and Isabella, 20 — falsely admitted to the University of Southern California as crew athletes.

TMZ reported that Loughlin and Giannulli could have gotten away with a minimum two-year prison sentence if they had made a deal with prosecutors. Now they face charges that each carry a maximum of 20 years in prison, though how much time they actually would face depends on U.S. sentencing guidelines and other factors.

Los Angeles-based defense lawyer Lara Yeretsian estimated that the guidelines mean that Loughlin and Giannulli are looking at around 57 to 71 months, or four to five years. "If she accepts responsibility, it could lessen the sentence," Yeretsian said. "We all knew this was coming, that there were going to be additional charges."

Meanwhile, actress Felicity Huffman is facing a much more favorable outcome in her legal case: a possible four-month prison sentence after agreeing Monday to enter a guilty plea for her role in the scandal, TMZ said.

Huffman may receive a much lighter sentence than Loughlin and Giannulli for two reasons, TMZ said: One, she reached a plea deal quickly; and two, the case against her is viewed as less serious than the case against Loughlin and Giannulli.

Huffman was accused of paying the relatively low amount of \$15,000 to college admissions consultant William "Rick" Singer to illegally boost her older daughter's SAT scores.

"The Government has all the leverage here," said Neema Rahmani, a former federal prosecutor, in an email to this news organization. "It's not surprising that so many parents have signed plea agreements, and done so quickly. For those parents who have dragged their feet, or gone so far as to publicly deny the allegations, the U.S. Attorney's Office is asserting that leverage by going to the grand jury to seek additional charges and, therefore, lengthier sentences. I'd expect more parents to enter into plea agreements soon, when they and their

TMZ reports that all of the dozens of wealthy parents implicated in the scandal have been offered plea deals, with prosecutors requiring that all serve some prison time. The length of time varies, according to the amount they paid in bribes and whether they accept responsibility.

Huffman on Monday joined 12 other parents, [including five from the Bay Area](#), who agreed to plead guilty after being accused of engaging in schemes masterminded by Singer to get their children admitted to top U.S. colleges. The schemes involved helping the children cheat on college entrance exams or fake athletic profiles so that they could gain admission on the false pretense of joining a university's sports team.

Neither Olivia Jade nor Isabella Giannulli were crew team members at their elite Los Angeles prep school. Both have been described by sources close to their family as "average" students who were pushed to go to USC to please their competitive parents.

People magazine reported that YouTube star Olivia Jade Giannulli apparently knew about her parents' scheme to buy her way into USC but went along with it because she trusted them. She reportedly would have stopped the scheme if she knew they would be caught, according to People.

In announcing that she was pleading guilty, Huffman issued a lengthy, emotional statement Monday, [acknowledging guilt](#) and expressing shame and regret.

The "Desperate Housewives" actress also offered no excuses in apologizing for the pain she had caused "the educational community" and to her friends and family, notably her older daughter. Huffman was charged with paying Singer \$15,000 to arrange to boost her daughter's SAT scores.

"This transgression toward (my daughter) and the public I will carry for the rest of my life," Huffman said in her statement. "My desire to help my daughter is no excuse to break the law or engage in dishonesty."

A publicist who represents high-profile clients in the entertainment industry said Huffman's apology could be an important first step toward putting this scandal behind her and helping her salvage her reputation and career.

"My number one advice to clients is to always be truthful and hold yourself accountable from the get go, should they find themselves in a situation that

Deraney said he found Huffman's statement to be "eloquent, straightforward and honest." He agreed that Huffman didn't revert to "the non-apology apology" so often employed by public figures whose actions have caused harm to other people.

For example, Huffman didn't make excuses, and she directly apologized for hurting other people. She didn't distance herself from her actions by saying she was sorry "if other people were hurt."

"Holding herself accountable is what is the most important here," Deraney said.

"When you make yourself responsible with your actions, it goes a long way in helping your reputation heal," he said. "You may not work again right away, but you are heading in the right direction to restore what you once had."

This story has been updated to include comments from legal experts.