

LORI LOUGHLIN • Published 6 days ago

Lori Loughlin's daughter Olivia Jade could be implicated in college admissions scam, legal analyst says

By Julius Young | Fox News



Lori Loughlin pleads not guilty in college admissions scam

Actress Lori Loughlin and her husband Mossimo Giannulli are charged with paying \$500,000 in bribes to get their daughters admitted to the University of Southern California as crew recruits.

After rejecting a plea bargain and pleading not guilty to fraud and money laundering charges in the multimillion-dollar [college admissions cheating scam](#) last week, [Lori Loughlin](#) and [Mossimo Giannulli](#) could now be under more pressure to reach an agreement with federal prosecutors or risk possible implications for their daughters.

Legal experts differ on whether the couple's youngest daughter, [Olivia Jade Giannulli](#), could be complicit in the criminal conspiracy surrounding the college admissions scam because she was copied on a damning email Loughlin sent to William "Rick" Singer. In that email, Loughlin asked for guidance on "how to proceed" in filling out and submitting Jade's college applications after Jade's

“provisional acceptance as a recruited [crew] athlete” – a task the mastermind allegedly [instructed an employee to complete on Jade’s behalf](#) – this according to the 200-plus page criminal affidavit obtained by Fox News.

LORI LOUGHLIN TERRIFIED DAUGHTERS WILL HAVE TO TESTIFY AT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCAM TRIAL: REPORT

According to one former federal prosecutor, this is all the ammunition prosecutors would need to potentially bring charges against the 19-year-old YouTube star if Loughlin and Giannulli fail to cooperate and admit their guilt in the scheme dubbed “Operation Varsity Blues” by the federal government.



In this Aug. 13, 2017 file photo, actress Lori Loughlin, center, poses with her daughters Bella, left, and Olivia Jade at the Teen Choice Awards in Los Angeles. (AP)

“The government has a ton of evidence here – they have incredible leverage over Loughlin and her husband and the daughters,” former federal prosecutor Naema Rahmani told Fox News. “And they have this leverage for a few reasons. If you review the evidence, it’s incredibly strong in terms of recorded phone calls, in terms of emails, financial records and so forth.

“There really could have only been two things – and it’s all the government has to prove,” Rahmani continued. “One is that they agreed to commit an unlawful act, and two is if they committed one overt act within the conspiracy. If you prove those two things, then the kids are on the hook as well. You can easily, easily argue that Olivia knew what was going on, she agreed to engage in this unlawful act by not filling out the application, by taking the picture – it can be an overt act to create liability for criminal liability.”

LORI LOUGHLIN APPEARED 'ARROGANT' IN COURT WHILE FELICITY HUFFMAN LOOKED 'MORE GENUINE,' SAYS SKETCH ARTIST

Circumstantial evidence could be used to demonstrate the actions constituted a criminal conspiracy to commit fraud, said Rahmani, adding that prosecutors would not have to prove that Olivia Jade Gianulli actually saw the email.

"There doesn't have to be a smoking gun where she told someone either verbally or not that I knew I was doing this," Rahmani said. "They can say there is circumstantial support that someone that is not an athlete, someone that doesn't have the grades, someone that gets into USC and is supposedly participating in crew and having never rowed crew – they knew that they did not get in legitimately."



According to the criminal complaint, prosecutors allege that on or about July 28, 2017, Giannulli copied Loughlin, 54, on an email sent to Singer and attempted to mislead education and admissions officials by submitting a photograph of Jade on a rowing machine. Both Olivia Jade and her older sister, Isabella, attended USC before reportedly withdrawing amid the scandal.

LORI LOUGHLIN, MOSSIMO GIANNULLI HATE BEING CALLED 'CHEATERS' IN LIGHT OF COLLEGE SCAM

Still, other legal experts questioned whether Olivia Jade could be shown to have knowingly participated in the nationwide deception.

"Posing for a picture is not sufficient to make Olivia Jade a co-conspirator in the College Admissions Scandal," said California-based defense attorney Lara Yeretsian. "In addition, there is nothing peculiar or out of the ordinary about a high school student needing help on a college application."

"In this case, as far as Olivia Jade is concerned, her parents Lori Loughlin and Mossimo Giannulli had enlisted the services of a college admissions consultant specifically for that purpose, to help her through the application process including filling out the application on her behalf."



Olivia Jade Giannulli is a YouTube beauty blogger. (Getty)

"In other words, there is no evidence whatsoever in the affidavit to suggest that Olivia Jade was aware of any alleged conspiracy to funnel money to coaches or athletic directors at USC through Singer's charitable organization. The prosecution does not have sufficient evidence here."

LORI LOUGHLIN'S DAUGHTER ISABELLA GIANNULLI DELETES INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT SHORTLY AFTER PARENT'S 'NOT GUILTY' PLEA

Rahmani, says this is merely a tactic that he's seen all too often in his time prosecuting federal cases and maintains that any indictment brought on by the government could take weeks, months and even years because prosecutors strike only when there is an iron-clad case to present in court – which he is certain can be proved in a case against Jade.

"It's what you do with drug cases – if someone is stopped and they have three keys of methamphetamine in their trunk or wherever. The government regularly proves these cases and

proves knowledge is based on the circumstances because normal people don't drive around with a million dollars worth of drugs in their car. And normal people who have poor grades and aren't athletes don't get into USC through an athletic submission," Rahmani explained.

While Rahmani and Yeretsian agree that Loughlin and Giannulli will likely face an uphill battle in court, Rahmani believes federal prosecutors are roping Jade into the scheme to apply pressure to her parents to admit their guilt.

LORI LOUGHLIN'S 'OPTIONS ARE LIMITED' AFTER PLEADING NOT GUILTY IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCAM, LEGAL EXPERTS SAY

"These deals always get worse over time. Usually, the first deal is the best deal, and it's just going to get worse after that. So, they put out a plea agreement allowing them to plead guilty to just the single count and the amount that they actually paid – Loughlin says no and guess what? They go to the grand jury, they get indicted for money laundering charges – now kids are getting involved," Rahmani said.



Last week, [Felicity Huffman](#), [12 other parents and a coach agreed to plead guilty](#) – signaling an escalation in the case against the parents who are continuing to fight the allegations against them. The "Desperate Housewives" actress announced her decision to plead guilty, explaining that she accepts "full responsibility" for her actions.

Reps and attorneys for Loughlin and Giannulli did not respond to Fox News' request for comment.