



## Can Balloon Boy's Family Still Get a Reality Show?

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ABC; Nancy Kaszerman/ZUMApres

**How could Balloon Family get a reality show if the parents get convicted of felonies? Isn't it illegal to profit off of a crime?**

—J., via [\*the Answer B!tch inbox\*](#)

It can be, yes, but from what I hear, even a conviction probably wouldn't stop these people from leaving tire tracks on their own kids in the pursuit of fame. And if there are network execs interested in the Heenes—now infamous for that apparently fake balloon drama—there could still be a reality show.

That is, if network executives aren't already too busy grooming their scales or filing their teeth into sharp points.

So how could **Richard Heene** and his scrappy pack of down-home weather chasers pull that off? Well, all you need to do is look to another celebrity criminal case for guidance...

...[\*\*Martha Stewart\*\*](#).

Or, let's be honest here: Any rap star.

Yes, there have been cases in the past when criminals have tried to publish books or otherwise profit from their misdeeds, and they've resulted in various judgments, court cases and other legal whatnot.

In the **Balloon Boy** case, defense attorneys tell me they wouldn't be surprised if prosecutors ask a court to

bar the Heenes from profiting from their alleged hoax.

But proving a direct link between crime and cash? Not always so easy. Rappers easily boost their cred when they have a decent rap sheet, but does that mean they've directly profited from their drug-dealing and pimping pasts?

Or take Stewart, whose profile only rose after she was jailed for five months for lying about a stock deal. Did she sell any more tassels or duck-printed pillow shams as a direct result of her infamy, or at least rake in more dough in appearance fees after her sentence? Perhaps, but it's hard to directly prove in court, and that's the exact same argument that a Heene attorney would likely use, I am told.

"You could make the argument that no one had heard of the Heenes until last weekend," criminal defense attorney Elizabeth Kelley tells me. "But you could also make the argument that there was a proposal in the pipeline long before last week—that it wasn't the crime that got them the reality show."

(And for the record, yes, the Heenes were reportedly seeking some sort of reality-show fame before they, um, took off.)

Besides, lawyers tell me, any network pondering a Heene show would probably take extra care to avoid too much talk of balloons and B.S., just to avoid any sort of legal liability. Instead the show would likely focus on subjects less directly related, such as the exact flavor of crazy permeating from the Heene household.

As long as all parties are careful, "legally, there is nothing preventing the Heenes from getting a reality show," defense attorney Joseph DiBenedetto tells me.

Instead, the most likely element to kill a reality show will be the Heenes' own disgusting behavior.

"The parents have committed the cardinal sin of exploiting their children," DiBenedetto opines. "Images of Falcon throwing up on TV—Americans are not going to forget that."

Oh really? Look! Over there! **Jon Gosselin!**

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**The Heenes haven't replaced the Gosselins...yet. So catch up on your [Jon & Kate in our gallery](#)**



by **Leslie Gornstein**



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