

Tough Penalties if Final Four Celebrations are Chaotic

By Iris St. Meran Many people descended upon Marshall Street after the Orange took it all in 2003. Some caused a ruckus by climbing trees and setting fires. But those actions could spell jail time. Tully Rinckey PLLC Partner Donald Kelly said, "If you cause more than \$200 worth of damage, you're looking at felony criminal mischief. If you cause a \$1,000 worth of damage, you're looking at a more serious felony that's punishable by up to seven years in state prison. If you set a car on fire, that's arson." Earlier this week, police told reporters there will be more officers on the streets and more surveillance cameras. Their intent is to identify and arrest those involved, which Kelly says will make it harder for any of the accused to dispute. "When they have a camera on you and they have pictures of you committing the act, that kind of sets things in stone," Kelly added. "And really from the defense perspective, kind of limits your ability to plea bargain." Kelly recommends avoiding the areas with large crowds altogether, but if you do go, just make wise decisions. Anything felony related will have impacts well after the tournament is over. "It can come up at the strangest times. You could be applying for a license to be a teacher or a doctor or lawyer. You could be applying for a security clearance if you wanted to interview a head of state. There's going to be a number of times where this is going to hang over you. It's always going to be over your shoulder," Kelly said. With these warnings, hopefully you won't have to worry about any of that. Kelly suggests avoiding the areas with big crowds all together. But if you see trouble happening, try to go in the opposite direction. If you plan on drinking, he says your best bet is to take advantage of local taxis.