



Posted on July 28, 2009 by [Robert A. Kraft](#)

Severe Penalties for Sham Marriages to Gain Citizenship

On July 24, 2009, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested an Ohio immigration attorney and a businessman on charges of marriage fraud. The Ohio-based immigration attorney and the businessman were alleged to have entered into separate sham marriages with two U.S. citizens in order to obtain citizenship. A marriage entered into for the purpose of gaining citizenship carries severe penalties of up to a \$250,000 and/or five years imprisonment.

To convict a person of marriage fraud, the government must prove the following:

- 1) the person knowingly entered into a marriage;
- 2) the marriage was entered into for the purpose of evading immigration laws; and
- 3) the person knew or had reason to know of the immigration laws.

The above illustrates that anyone trying to evade the immigration laws by entering into sham marriages might not obtain citizenship, but rather might enjoy the harsh penalties that could be imposed. The article about this case is available at the [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Web site](#).