Bob?!

Kristine Gebbie’s White House AIDS bash turns ugly

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What transpired at the White House on a humid evening in June would be fodder for a FOX television situation comedy if it weren’t so sadly indicative of the gargantuan problems AIDS Policy Director Kristine Gebbie and her staff continue to have.

During the annual AIDS Watch Week -- five days when AIDS lobbyists, policy makers and activists all converge on our nation’s capital for a series of meetings and conferences -- Gebbie decided to host a VIP cocktail party at the Old Executive Office Building, a complex that is ostensibly part of the actual White House. Accordign to people who were at the Gebbie fete, the party quickly deteriorated and became nothing short of a federal disaster.

According to sources, the following is what actually transpired: When invited guests to the Gebbie soiree started showing up, some 60 invitees were not allowed in because they were not on the Secret Service clearance list. When the Clinton Administration’s only openly HIV positive official, Bob Hattoy, got to the party and saw what was going on, he pressed Gebbie to quickly rectify the situation. Gebbie scolded him for intervening, hissing, “Bob, some of these people have arrest records!” Hattoy, flabbergasted, responded, “Kristine, Jesse Jackson has an arrest record, members of Congress have arrest records, any activist worth his salt has an arrest record. The problem with you is that you don’t have an arrest record!” After storming past Hattoy, Gebbie went outside where she, reportedly, told the impatient invitees who had been waiting in the humid afternoon sun, “Please go home. There is nothing I can do. I have no power to fix this.” In point of fact, Gebbie could have averted the entire situation by simply getting waivers in advance from either George Stephanopoulos’ or former Chief of Staff Mack McLarty’s offices. Incredulous, guests that had been admitted to the party soon joined the shut out invitees outside where they formed a circle and started chanting “we shall overcome.”

To add to the chaos, Gebbie Chief of Staff, Andrew Barrer, told members of AIDS advocacy group Housing Works to “go to the Hilton and have a party on my credit card and we’ll [Gebbie and Barrer] try to stop by later.” Clearly offended, the Housing Works personnel did not take Barrer up on his offer.

One can only imagine Suzanne Pleshette starring as Gebbie. Remember, we said FOX.

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