

Politicians' Children's Encounters with Marijuana Prohibition

POLITICAL FAMILY BUSTS (A.K.A. 'HYPOCRISY 101')

Randall Todd Cunningham

The son of Duke "Death Penalty for Drug Kingpins" Cunningham (R-CA) was convicted for possession of 400 pounds of marijuana. In court, the congressman cried and pleaded for mercy, explaining that his son "has a good heart. He works hard. He's expressed to me he wants to go back to school." While out on bail, the hard working son tested positive for cocaine three times; when an officer tried to apprehend him following the third positive test, Randy hurled himself out a window and broke his leg. Still, the congressman--who has denounced Clinton's "soft-on-crime liberal judges" and railed against "reduced mandatory-minimum sentences for drug trafficking"--won for his son the mercy denied so many others. Randy got 30 months--half the federal "mandatory" minimum sentence.

Source: *Mother Jones*, May/June 2000

Morgan Grams (21), son of Senator Rod Grams (R-MN). "was stopped in July in a borrowed rental vehicle after his father called the Anoka County sheriff for help finding his son. A deputy found 10 bags of marijuana and the beer cans in the Isuzu Rodeo,"

Source: *Associated Press* 1/12/00.

Grams had been previously jailed twice on drug-related offenses. Chief Deputy Peter Beberg "found Grams driving a sport utility truck with 10 bags of marijuana inside-an unspecified amount. A 17-year-old passenger was charged with possession of nine of the bags and later spent time at a juvenile detention center. The 10th bag was found under Gram's seat, according to a report by deputy Todd Diegnau,"

Source: *Associated Press* 11/14/99.

Sara Kenney (19), daughter of New York Lt. Governor Mary Donohue (R), was stopped for speeding when troopers spotted marijuana in the vehicle. Kenny was charged for speeding and possession of less than 25 grams.

Source: *Associated Press* 8/26/98

Richard Riley, Jr., son of Education Secretary Richard Riley (D), was sentenced to six months' house arrest in June of 1993 for conspiring to sell up to 25 grams of cocaine and

100 grams of marijuana in South Carolina. The initial charges carried a penalty of ten years to life in prison. Riley's light sentence allowed him to continue his work at an environmental consulting firm.

Source: James Bovard, "Prison Sentences of the Politically Connected," *Playboy*; July 1999.

Gayle Rosten, daughter of former House Ways and Means Committee chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL), was charged with possession of 29 grams of cocaine with intent to deliver in June of 1990. Rosten, facing up to 15 years in prison, plead guilty to a lesser charge and received three years probation and 20 hours of public service, paid a fine of \$2800, and forfeited the car in which the cocaine was found. Three years later, Rosten was found with a gram of cocaine in her possession. In violation of her probation, Rosten could have faced up to three years in prison. However, the charge was dismissed by one judge, then reinstated after Rosten was indicted by a county grand jury. On April 12, 1994 Cook County Circuit Judge Michael Toomin ruled that the search of Rosten had been illegal. Ironically, Judge Toomin ruled that the packets of cocaine were admissible evidence against the two passengers that supposedly "dropped" the packets in Rosten's car.

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Cindy McCain, wife of former Presidential candidate John McCain (R-AZ), "admitted stealing Percocet and Vicodin from the American Voluntary Medical Team, an organization that aids Third World countries. Percocet and Vicodin are schedule 2 drugs, in the same legal category as opium. Each pill theft carries a penalty of one year in prison and a monetary fine." However, McCain did not face prosecution. She was allowed to enter a pretrial diversion program and escaped with no blemish to her record.

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Dan Burton, II (18), son of Representative Dan Burton (R-IN), was busted in January of 1994 on charges of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. Allegedly, Burton II was transporting seven pounds of marijuana in a car from Texas to Indiana when he was caught in Louisiana. Burton II plead guilty to felony charges of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. Rather than face ten to sixteen months in federal prison, Burton was sentenced to five years probation, 2000 hours of community service, three years of house arrest and random drug screening. Five month later police found 30 marijuana plants and a shotgun in Burton's apartment in Indianapolis. Under federal mandatory minimum rules, Burton should have received at least five years in federal prison, plus a year or more for arrest while on probation. State prosecutors decided that the total weight

of marijuana from the 30 plants was 25 grams (about one ounce), thus reducing the charge to a misdemeanor. The Indiana prosecutor threw out all the charges against him saying, "I didn't see any sense in putting him on probation a second time."

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

John Murtha (35), son of Representative John Murtha (D-PA), received a sentence of 11 to 23 months in jail after pleading guilty to selling a gram of cocaine to an informant. Murtha has been busted for two burglaries in 1980 and for armed robbery in 1985. Murtha was on parole at the time of his arrest and could have faced more than ten years in prison if he'd been prosecuted under federal guidelines. The judge hearing Murtha's case allowed him to temporarily withdraw a plea bargain and resubmit it at later date so he could enter the jail's school-release program and continue his education.

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Susan Gallo (33), daughter of former Representative Dean Gallo (R-NJ), was charged with five counts of cocaine possession, five counts of intent to distribute, five counts of distribution, and five counts of conspiracy. Facing five to ten years in prison for each charge, Gallo plead guilty to one count of distribution and one count of conspiracy to distribute cocaine. Gallo was sentenced to five years' probation in 1992.

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Warren Bachus (19), son of Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-AL), was busted in 1993 for possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Bachus was not convicted and in a "pretrial diversion remedy," he was set free. Bachus paid \$56 in court expenses and was required to submit to drug testing twice in the following six months.

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Josef Hinchey (26), son of Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), was charged with intent to distribute individual cocaine doses. Hinchey could have been sentenced to 20 years in prison. He plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and received a sentence of 13 months in prison. The prison term was suspended until Hinchey completed a drug-treatment program.

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Al Gore III (13), son of Vice President Al Gore (D), was caught smoking what appeared to be marijuana by school authorities at St. Alban's School. Al III was suspended as a

result of the incident. While the story appeared in the foreign press, the story was suppressed in the US media. London's Daily Telegraph charged, "The crusading American media and Washington's political elite have closed ranks to protect Vice President Gore from embarrassment over his teenage son's indiscretion."

Source: James Bovard, *Playboy*; July 1999

Claude Shelby (32), youngest son of Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), was arrested at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport on drug charges, where a US Custom's drug-sniffing dog found 13.8 grams of hashish in his possession. Shelby was given a \$500 administrative penalty and turned over to Clayton County Sheriff's Department for prosecution.

Source: *USA Today*; 7/29/98

Robert Lugar (40), son of Richard Lugar (R-IN), the town manager of McCordsville, IN, was pulled over for expired plates and a sheriff's deputy claimed to smell marijuana. The deputy found a plastic bag with marijuana under a floor mat of the jeep.

Lugar denied the marijuana was his but was arrested and made to post a \$200 bail.

Source: *Associated Press*, 7/6/00