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*Freedom Rider  
Drug Money Wins Olympics  
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In the recent winter Olympics, American Julia Mancuso won a skiing gold medal in the women's giant slalom. Before winning the gold, Mancuso was best known for bragging about her family's criminal past:

"My grandfather had his family in Chicago, and his dad was working for the mafia; he was a rum runner. I don't know too much about it. I just like to joke about it."

Having a rum running grandpa in the distant past is no big deal if your father was a major drug dealer. Mancuso's father, Ciro Mancuso, ran a \$120 million marijuana and cocaine smuggling empire until he was arrested in 1990, the early days of the horrendous war on drugs.

The story of Ciro Mancuso is a story of corruption in the criminal justice system. The system never was very just, especially for black people. The war on drugs resulted in the largest numbers of black people in shackles since the days of slavery. There are now more black faces behind bars than there were during the Jim Crow era. Of course, segregation and lynch law precluded the need for jails.

For decades Black Americans complained about the ravages wrought by drugs in their communities. First heroin, then cocaine, then crack cocaine brought crime, illness and the wholesale destruction of entire communities.

The years of pleading resulted in very little help. It was always possible to get rid of drugs, but the powers that be were never interested in doing so. Thai war lords, Central American contras, and the Sicilian mafia were allowed to bring drugs into the United States because they were favored by the United States government.

## The Black Commentator – Freedom Rider: Drug Money Wins Olympics

A red flag should have gone up when the same people who allowed drug trafficking to prosper claimed to want to stamp it out. The war on drugs that began with Ronald Reagan and continued with the "first black president" Bill Clinton has created as much damage to black America as the ravages of addiction.

Republicans and Democrats alike outdid one another pledging to put away "kingpins."

If the criminal commercial world is anything like the rest of corporate American, then few drug kingpins are black. Mancuso was a kingpin by anyone's definition, he certainly isn't black, and he was sentenced to 9 years and served only a 5 year stretch. His cooperation with authorities even allowed him to keep some of his ill gotten gains.

One of the most perverse aspects of the war on drugs is that it empowered the Mancusos of the drug dealing world. They had the power to snitch. Giving up names brings a lighter sentence and sometimes no sentence at all. Mancuso ratted on and helped get convictions for 25 people.

Mancuso's snitching gave him most favored drug dealer status. Anthony White, a prosecutor with a grudge, even indicted Mancuso's defense attorney, Patrick Hallinan, after Mancuso played let's make a deal. He would have only been sentenced to probation if Hallinan had been convicted. The miffed prosecutor reneged on his probation deal with Mancuso but was still very lenient. Mancuso remained free during his trial and was allowed to keep between \$2 million and \$4 million in drug dealing profits.

Clarence Aaron was a college student in Alabama who made the mistake of being a low level drug mule and earned a grand total of \$1,500. He is now serving three mandatory life sentences because he had no leverage with the government. He was at the bottom of the food chain and had no snitching victims to offer up to the feds.

Clarence Aaron is the face of black mass incarceration. Thanks to the war on drugs, a new class of criminal was created. "Drug conspirators" like Clarence Aaron had the book thrown at them. Low level dealers, parents who wouldn't rat on drug dealing children, girlfriends who loaned a boyfriend money, a friend or relative who helped get an apartment or a car for a drug dealer could all be convicted of participating in conspiracies and get life sentences in jail.

Julia Mancuso has profited from her dad's malfeasance:

"He came over when I was struggling a couple of years ago, arranged to get a car and a trainer in Austria, and also with an apartment. It's been really great to have that kind of support."

Black American Shani Davis was vilified for denying a less talented white athlete a gold medal. Julia Mancuso is descended from at least two criminals and won a gold medal with the help of drug money. Guess which one was picked apart by the news media.

The war on drugs was just an excuse, a ruse to bring back the bad old days for black people. Ciro Mancuso would still be in jail and Clarence Aaron would be a free man if it amounted to anything else. Julia Mancuso may as well laugh about having mobster forefathers. It makes her a true American after all.

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