



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**DECEMBER 18, 2003**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

OPERATION COCAINE COWBOYS  
**JOPLIN MAN SENTENCED FOR HIS ROLE  
IN SOUTHERN MISSOURI COCAINE RING**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Joplin, Mo., man was sentenced today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine in southern Missouri.

The co-defendant is part of Operation Cocaine Cowboys, which charged a total of 36 federal defendants with illegal drug trafficking and firearms sales in southwest Missouri.

**Pedro C. Baldovinos**, 39, of Joplin, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to 11 years and eight months in federal prison without parole. The court also ordered **Baldovinos** to forfeit to the government \$1,800 gained from the sale of cocaine to undercover law enforcement officers.

On Oct. 10, 2002, **Baldovinos** pleaded guilty to his role in the conspiracy to distribute cocaine in Jasper and Lawrence counties from at least as early as November 1999 to Nov. 25, 2001. **Baldovinos** admitted that he sold cocaine that he obtained from a co-defendant, and provided cocaine to others for resale.

**Baldovinos** is among 19 co-defendants in the case of *United States v. Caasimoro G. Gonzales, et al.* Graves explained that this case was part of a series of federal indictments and federal criminal complaints filed in January and February 2002 as a result of the 27-month multi-agency investigation into illegal drug trafficking and firearms sales.

Operation Cocaine Cowboys focused on an organization of individuals who were allegedly responsible for the delivery and distribution of multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and other drugs from sources in California, Texas and Guatemala. As charged in a series of federal indictments and federal criminal complaints, Graves explained,

36 federal defendants allegedly distributed illegal narcotics, primarily in Jasper County, but also in at least four other southwest Missouri counties (Christian, Greene, Lawrence and Webster) and elsewhere. Graves said that undercover officers made numerous purchases of illegal drugs and weapons as part of the investigation. In addition to the federal defendants, about 26 other individuals, including adults and juveniles, face a variety of state charges in related cases, primarily in Jasper County.

Of those 36 federal defendants, Graves said, 32 have been convicted and two remain fugitives. Charges against two defendants were dismissed in favor of state prosecution.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. Operation Cocaine Cowboys was investigated by officers from the Missouri States Highway Patrol and the Combined Ozarks Multijurisdictional Enforcement Team (COMET), in cooperation with numerous other law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Jasper County Drug Task Force, Mid-States Organized Crime Information Center (MOCIC), and the Carthage Police Department. Assistance to Operation Cocaine Cowboys was provided by Greene, Jasper and Stone counties' sheriff's departments, the Joplin, Springfield, Oronogo and Webb City police departments and the U.S. Marshal's Service.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at  
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