



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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APRIL 14, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALIFORNIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE 76.9 KILOS OF COCAINE IN CALLAWAY COUNTY

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a California man pleaded guilty in federal court today to possession with intent to distribute almost 77 kilograms of cocaine in Callaway County, Mo.

Mario Alberto Bueno, 45, of Southgate, Calif., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to possession with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Bueno** admitted that on Jan. 9, 2001, in Callaway County, Mo., he possessed with an intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine. **Bueno** was indicted on the charge by a federal grand jury in Jefferson City. He also pleaded guilty to a forfeiture count of the indictment, which requires him to forfeit assets obtained as a result of the federal law violation, which includes a 2000 Ford Excursion and \$1,635.

Bueno was arrested while driving the Ford Excursion eastbound on Interstate 70 in Callaway County. He was pulled over for driving without a proper license plate or registration. Upon stopping **Bueno**, Graves said, law enforcement officers requested consent to search his vehicle and found that the Ford Excursion had been modified to conceal drugs within the floorboard. The compartment contained 78 bundles of cocaine, each weighing one kilogram. The total weight of the cocaine was 76.9 kilograms or 169.5 pounds.

As a result of the guilty plea, **Bueno** faces a maximum sentence of up to life in federal prison without parole, plus a fine of up to \$4 million. **Bueno's** sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Lynn. The case was investigated by the Missouri State Highway Patrol and MUSTANG.

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
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow