



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION COCAINE COWBOYS **CARTHAGE MAN SENTENCED ON DRUG CHARGES**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Carthage, Mo., man was sentenced today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine in Jasper County. Today's sentencing is part of Operation Cocaine Cowboys, which charged 36 federal defendants with illegal drug trafficking and firearms sales in southwest Missouri.

Antonio C. Macias, 33, of Carthage, was sentenced this morning by U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright to 10 years and one month in prison without parole. **Antonio Macias** was convicted by a federal jury on May 13, 2002, of all federal charges related to a conspiracy to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine. **Antonio Macias** was charged in 11 counts contained in a 22-count indictment.

Martin Macias, 35, of Carthage, was also scheduled to be sentenced this morning by U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright but failed to appear. The court issued a warrant for his arrest. **Martin Macias** pleaded guilty on May 13, 2002, to conspiring with others to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and 500 grams or more of methamphetamine in Jasper County, from as early as November, 1999 to on or about September 6, 2001. By pleading guilty, **Martin Macias** also agreed to the federal forfeiture of \$31,140 in proceeds obtained from that criminal violation.

They are among 10 co-defendants in a 22-count indictment in the case of *United States v. Martin Macias, et al.* Eight co-defendants in *Macias* have now been sentenced, and two have pleaded guilty and await sentencing. 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, 30 have been convicted and two remain fugitives. Charges against two defendants were dismissed in favor of state prosecution.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. Operation Cocaine Cowboys was investigated by officers from the Missouri State 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 the Greene, Jasper and Stone county sheriff's departments, the Joplin, Springfield, Oronogo and Webb City police departments, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

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