



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **JURY CONVICTS CALIFORNIA MAN IN CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE TONS OF MARIJUANA IN JASPER COUNTY**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a California man has been convicted by a federal jury for his role in a conspiracy to distribute large quantities of marijuana in Jasper County.

**Luciano Martinez-Figueroa**, 34, of Rialto, Calif., was found guilty on Jan. 16, 2003, of one count of conspiracy to distribute in excess of 100 kilograms of marijuana, and one count of possession with intent to distribute in excess of 100 kilograms of marijuana.

Following **Martinez-Figueroa's** trial, Graves said, the jury in U.S. District Court in Springfield deliberated about four hours before returning the guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr, ending a trial that began January 13, 2003.

Graves explained that **Martinez-Figueroa** was part of a conspiracy to ship truckloads of marijuana, originating in Mexico, from Texas to Missouri for distribution in the Joplin, Mo., area and elsewhere between September and November of 2001. On Oct. 1, 2001, law enforcement officers in Jasper County intercepted a 1996 Kenworth tractor pulling a 1994 Great Dane trailer that was being driven by **Martinez-Figueroa**. The trailer, Graves said, was carrying 41 cardboard boxes of processed marijuana – approximately 455 kilograms – and approximately \$5,000 in U.S. currency.

Three co-defendants have pleaded guilty to their role in the conspiracy to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, Graves said.

On Sept. 6, 2002, **Jamie De La Pena**, 35, from San Marcos, Texas pleaded guilty. **De La Pena** admitted that he helped arrange the for the shipment of marijuana that was intercepted on Oct. 1, 2001, and that he was accompanying the truck in a separate vehicle. According to Graves,

**De La Pena** also admitted that he traveled to Joplin again on Nov. 25, 2001, and provided undercover law enforcement officers with approximately 100 kilograms of processed marijuana. On Nov. 28, 2001, Graves added, law enforcement offices in Dallas, Texas, seized approximately 88 kilograms of marijuana from **De La Pena**.

On Aug. 28, 2002, **Antonio Castro**, 42, of Arlington, Texas, and **Jimmy Jones**, 41, of Seagoville, Texas, both pleaded guilty to helping arrange shipments of marijuana from Texas to Joplin.

**Castro** also admitted that he allowed the use of his Dallas, Texas residence as a storage location for marijuana, Graves said, and that he accompanied **De La Pena** to Joplin on Nov. 25, 2001, and assisted him in the distribution to approximately 100 kilograms of marijuana to undercover law enforcement officers. **Castro** was also present with **De La Pena** in Dallas when officers arrested the defendants in possession of 88 kilograms of marijuana. A subsequent search of **Castro's** residence, Graves added, revealed additional quantities of marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

**Jones** also admitted that he acted as a telephone messenger and "go between" for **De La Pena** and others, passing on information about marijuana shipments while he was incarcerated at the federal prison in Seagoville, Texas.

As a result of today's conviction, **Martinez-Figueroa** could be subject to a sentence ranging from at least 10 years up to 80 years in federal prison without parole. The sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled sometime after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

As a result of their guilty pleas, **De La Pena**, **Castro** and **Jones** could each be subject to a sentence ranging from at least five years to 20 years in federal prison without parole. The sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled sometime after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

All four co-defendants were originally charged in a five-count indictment returned May 1, 2002, by a federal grand jury in Springfield.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randy Eggert. It was investigated by the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration of Springfield, Mo., and Arlington, Texas.

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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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