



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FINAL CO-DEFENDANT CONVICTED IN COCAINE CONSPIRACY AFTER 11 KILOS ARE DISCOVERED AT NORTHLAND APARTMENT

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a California man was convicted by a federal jury today in a conspiracy to distribute cocaine. Federal law enforcement agents seized nearly 11 kilograms of cocaine when they arrested five co-defendants at a Northland apartment complex on Oct. 28, 2002.

Roger Salcedo, 30, of Inglewood, Calif., was found guilty of conspiring to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine, which occurred on Oct. 28, 2002.

Following **Salcedo's** trial, Graves said, the jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City deliberated about three hours before returning the guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith, ending a trial that began May 27, 2003.

Salcedo is one of five co-defendants indicted by a federal grand jury on Nov. 7, 2002, Graves said. Four co-defendants have pleaded guilty to their role in the conspiracy to transport cocaine brought into Kansas City en route to New York.

Co-defendant **Luis Fernando Lopez**, 42, of Bronx, New York, pleaded guilty on May 27, 2003, on the morning his trial was scheduled to begin.

On March 12, 2003, co-defendants **Armando Urrueta**, also known as Aron Garcia-Martinez, 30, of Kansas City, Mo., and **Sergio Ramos-Munoz**, 29, of Denver, Colo., pleaded guilty. Both **Urrueta** and **Ramos-Munoz** are citizens of Mexico. On March 22, 2003, co-defendant **Jenny Maria Moreno**, 20, of New York, N.Y., pleaded guilty to her role in the cocaine conspiracy.

Graves explained that **Lopez** arranged for approximately 11 kilograms of cocaine to be brought from Denver, Colo., to Kansas City, Mo., for further transport to New York. **Lopez** hired a female from Maryland (who is an unindicted co-conspirator) to drive the cocaine from Kansas City to New York, Graves said, and instructed the other co-defendants on where to take the cocaine and how to hide it during transportation.

Lopez met **Moreno** and **Salcedo** in Chicago and traveled with them to Kansas City. Upon arriving, Graves said, they checked into a hotel and arranged to pick up the cocaine from **Garcia-Martinez** and **Ramos-Munoz**.

According to Graves, Drug Enforcement Administration agents were conducting surveillance on **Salcedo** on Oct. 28, 2002, at a Kansas City hotel, where he met **Lopez**, **Moreno** and the Maryland female. Surveillance led agents to Sycamore Hills Apartments at 504 N. W. 55th Terrace in Kansas City, Mo., where **Urrueta** and **Ramos-Munoz** picked up a box containing the cocaine. Surveillance then led agents to Kelly Crossings apartment complex at 7831 N.W. Roanridge Road in Kansas City, Mo. Agents observed the defendants engaged in activity in and around one of the garages. **Urrueta** and **Ramos-Munoz** were stopped by agents as they were driving out of the apartment complex, Graves said, and **Salcedo**, **Lopez** and **Moreno** were confronted by agents in front of the garage. Graves said the DEA agents found the box containing 11 one-kilogram bundles of cocaine sitting open on the floor of the garage.

A search warrant was obtained for the apartment at Sycamore Hills, Graves added, where agents found a loaded Spanish-made Llama .32 caliber automatic pistol, more cocaine and items used to measure and package bulk narcotics.

Under the terms of his plea agreement, **Ramos-Munoz** also agreed to forfeit to the United States a 2002 Ford F-150 truck that was used to facilitate the distribution of cocaine.

As a result of today's conviction, **Salcedo** could be subject to a sentence of not less than 20 years in federal prison without parole, up to life imprisonment, plus a fine up to \$4 million. The 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. Attorneys Candace R. Cole and Jeff Valenti. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration and DEA Task Force officers.

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