



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OPERATION TARMAC
**FOUR WORKERS AT KC INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
INDICTED FOR VIOLATING FEDERAL LAWS**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that four employees of firms contracted to work at Kansas City International Airport were indicted by a federal grand jury today for separate and unrelated violations of federal law. The four indictments are the result of an Anti-Terrorism Task Force project called Operation Tarmac.

“In the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks,” Graves said, “airport security has understandably become a high priority. Operation Tarmac was part of an ongoing nationwide effort to insure that all individuals who are granted special access to the nation’s airports because of their employment, are in fact legally entitled to that access.”

Launched in August, 2002, Operation Tarmac was a joint law enforcement investigation that involved several federal agencies as well as the KCI Airport Police and other state and local law enforcement agencies. According to Graves, the joint task force conducted background checks of more than 5,000 individuals who had been issued identification badges granting them security access to various areas at KCI, including everything from baggage handlers to construction workers to cab drivers.

Johnmark Elisante Msemembo, 34, of Kansas City, Mo., was charged with falsely representing himself as a citizen of the United States on a Form I-9 (Employment Verification Form) in order to secure employment. **Msemembo** applied for employment on April 5, 2001, and was hired by Huntleigh Corporation, located in Terminal B at KCI. Huntleigh had a contract with the airport for bag screening and bag handling services. **Msemembo** is a citizen of Tanzania.

Michael Patrick Rinehart, 31, of Lone Jack, Mo., was charged with making a false statement when he signed a Criminal History Records Check for the airport on July 3, 2002. The indictment alleges that **Rinehart**, who was employed by Mussleman and Hall/ Gardner Construction Company, signed an application for an identification/access badge that would allow him unescorted access to secured areas of the airport. As part of the application process, Graves explained, **Rinehart** was required to sign a form stating that he had not been convicted of one or more disqualifying criminal offenses listed on the form. Although he signed the form, the indictment alleges that **Rinehart** has two 2000 criminal felony convictions for assault in Jackson County.

Phillip Nelson Suddarth, 41, of Kansas City, Mo., was charged with making a false statement when he signed a Criminal History Records Check for the airport on May 23, 2002. The indictment alleges that **Suddarth**, who was employed by Executive Beechcraft, signed an application for an identification/access badge that would allow him unescorted access to secured areas of the airport. As part of the application process, Graves explained, **Suddarth** was required to sign a form stating that he had not been convicted of one or more disqualifying criminal offenses listed on the form. Although he signed the form, the indictment alleges that **Suddarth** has a 1994 criminal felony conviction for possession of cocaine in Platte County.

Elvin Joel Hernandez, 33, address unknown, was charged with giving a false Social Security number for the purpose of obtaining employment. The indictment alleges that **Hernandez** signed an application for employment with ACM, Inc. on June 20, 2002. ACM, Inc. is a janitorial company that services the FedEx warehouse cargo facility at KCI.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sheryle L. Jeans. The cases were investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service-Criminal Investigation Division, the Social Security Administration-Office of Inspector General, the Transportation Security Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

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