



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION X-POSED **TWO OPERATION X-POSED DEFENDANTS PLEAD GUILTY**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that two Springfield, Mo., men pleaded guilty in federal court today to charges stemming from Operation X-Posed, an investigation into ecstasy, cocaine and methamphetamine trafficking in Greene County, Mo.

Operation X-Posed was a long-term, multi-agency investigation into the distribution of tens of thousands of ecstasy tablets throughout southwest Missouri, as well as the Kansas City and St. Louis areas. A series of five indictments returned by a federal grand jury meeting in Springfield on April 3, 2003, also charge some defendants with distributing cocaine and methamphetamine, as well as money laundering and firearms violations. The indictments seek the forfeiture of several vehicles and nearly \$400,000 in cash, all of which was allegedly derived from illegal drug sales or used in the conspiracy to distribute illegal drugs.

* **Adam R. Vuori**, 28, of Springfield, Mo., also known as “Tank Dog,” pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this morning to conspiring to distribute ecstasy and distributing methamphetamine in Greene County.

By pleading guilty, **Vuori** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute ecstasy from at least as early as January 2002 until about April 2002, in Greene County. During the course of the conspiracy, Graves said, **Vuori** contributed to the distribution of at least 310 ecstasy tablets. **Vuori** also admitted that he distributed in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine during the course of the conspiracy.

As a result of today’s guilty plea, **Vuori** could be subject to a sentence of up to 40 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$2 million. **Vuori** sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

* **Christopher L. McClain**, 29, of Springfield, Mo., also known as “DJ Mechanic,” pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this morning to distribution of ecstasy and illegally possessing a firearm while distributing ecstasy.

By pleading guilty, **McClain** admitted that he distributed 100 ecstasy tablets on Feb. 21, 2002. By pleading guilty, **McClain** also admitted that he pointed a .380 caliber semi-automatic handgun at an undercover officer and forced the officer to lift his shirt to check for audio surveillance wires prior to a drug transaction. The gun was loaded at the time. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any person to be in possession of a firearm during the course of an illegal drug transaction.

As a result of today’s guilty plea, **McClain** could be subject to a sentence of up to life in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$1,250,000. **McClain** sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

Eight other defendants also have pleaded guilty to charges stemming from Operation X-Posed.

ADDITIONAL DEFENDANTS

* **Davis F. Henry**, 24, of Springfield, Mo., pleaded guilty on July 22, 2003, to conspiracy to distribute ecstasy.

By pleading guilty, **Henry** admitted that he was involved in a conspiracy to distribute ecstasy from at least as early as March 1, 2002, to April 12, 2002, in Greene County, Mo. During the course of the conspiracy, Graves said, **Henry** distributed approximately 3,800 ecstasy tablets to co-conspirators, who re-distributed the tablets in the Springfield area.

* **Jonathan C. Davis**, 22, of Springfield, Mo., pleaded guilty on June 17, 2003, to conspiracy to distribute ecstasy.

By pleading guilty, **Davis** admitted that he was involved in a conspiracy to distribute ecstasy from at least as early as April 2001 until Sept. 11, 2001, in Greene County, Mo. During the course of the conspiracy, Graves said, **Davis** distributed approximately 5,900 ecstasy tablets from one source to co-conspirators, who re-distributed the tablets in the Springfield area. **Davis** also distributed between 1,500 and 2,000 ecstasy tablets from a second source.

Davis also pleaded guilty to a forfeiture count of the federal indictment, which requires him to forfeit to the United States \$1,318 that was seized by law enforcement officers at the time of his arrest.

* **Ricky J. Smith**, 26, **Damon Z. Robirts**, 24, **Corey J. Merriman**, 26, and **Monica L. Losack**, 23, all of Springfield, pleaded guilty on June 10, 2003, to their role in one of the conspiracies uncovered by Operation X-Posed. Each of the four co-defendants admitted they

were involved in a conspiracy to distribute ecstasy in Greene County between April 2001 and Sept. 11, 2001.

Merriman also admitted to money laundering, Graves said. **Merriman** conspired to conduct financial transactions that involved the proceeds of the illegal ecstasy distribution. When **Merriman** sold ecstasy, Graves explained, he used those proceeds to pay his supplier, to purchase more ecstasy, and for deposit into his personal bank account (where it was co-mingled with funds from legitimate sources). **Merriman** also deposited drug proceeds directly into the personal bank account of his supplier.

Merriman also agreed to the forfeiture of \$21,000 that was seized by law enforcement authorities, which constitutes the proceeds of drug trafficking activities.

* **Anthony J. Ford**, 32, of Springfield, pleaded guilty on June 4, 2003, to conspiracy to distribute ecstasy. **Ford** also pleaded guilty to a forfeiture count, which requires him to forfeit to the United States a 1996 Nissan Pathfinder, which was purchased with proceeds from the sale of ecstasy, and \$1,627 seized from him by law enforcement authorities.

* **Meg Thibodeaux**, 29, of Brooklyn, N.Y., pleaded guilty on May 30, 2003, to a conspiracy to distribute ecstasy.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robyn L. McKee. The case was investigated by the Springfield, Mo., Police Department, COMET (the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team), the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, and the United States Postal Inspection 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