



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JURY CONVICTS KC MAN OF FIREARM VIOLATION RELATED TO DRUG TRAFFICKING

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a Kansas City, Mo., man has been convicted by a federal jury for using a firearm in a drug trafficking offense.

Vaughn Wattree, 39, of Kansas City, was found guilty on Dec. 1, 2003, of one of three counts charged against him in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Sept. 12, 2003. **Wattree** has already pleaded guilty to the other two counts, related to his participation in a conspiracy to distribute cocaine in Greene County, Mo.

Wattree was arrested on Aug. 29, 2003, in Kansas City, Mo., during an illegal drug transaction in which he had arranged to sell a kilogram of cocaine to a Springfield man for distribution in Greene County, Graves said. **Wattree** carried a loaded Smith and Wesson .357 magnum revolver in his waistband during that transaction.

Following the presentation of evidence in **Wattree's** trial, Graves said, the jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City deliberated about an hour before returning the guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith, ending a trial that began the same day.

The federal jury found **Wattree** guilty of being in possession of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking offense. Specifically, **Wattree** was convicted of possessing a Smith and Wesson .57 caliber revolver while in possession of cocaine with intent to distribute.

Earlier, on Nov. 24, 2003, **Wattree** pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute in excess of 500 grams of cocaine in Greene County between January 2003, and Aug. 29, 2003. He also pleaded guilty to possessing with intent to distribute in excess of 500 grams of cocaine on Aug. 29, 2003, in Jackson County.

Wattree is one of several co-defendants to be convicted in this case. Two others already have pleaded guilty to their involvement in the cocaine conspiracy.

Brandon K. Scott, 28, and **Misty D. Russell**, 22, both of Springfield, Mo., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine between January 2003, and Aug. 29, 2003, in Greene County, Mo. Scott pleaded guilty on Nov. 25, 2003, and Russell pleaded guilty on Nov. 24, 2003.

The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly R. Weber-Dean. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Springfield, Mo., Police Department, the Greene County, Mo., Sheriff's Department and the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team (COMET).

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