

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

In 1986 the Jackson County Missouri Drug Task Force (Task Force) was organized as a multi-jurisdictional investigative initiative in response to an emerging drug problem within the county. Throughout the 1980's, drug trafficking and an active drug culture were a part of daily life throughout Kansas City, Missouri, and much of Jackson County. Illicit drugs, such as crack cocaine, methamphetamine and PCP, were openly traded on street corners. Drug houses and methamphetamine labs sprung up throughout our county overnight. During its initial years, the Task Force was funded through private donations and one grant.

In 1989 Jackson County voters approved a new one-quarter of one-percent anti-drug sales tax, which later became known as the Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax (COMBAT). The tax would support a broad-based attack on drug abuse and drug-related violent crimes. One of the enforcement initiatives of COMBAT funding was the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

The tax was renewed for seven-year periods in 1995, 2004, 2009 and 2016. The COMBAT tax now entirely funds the JCDF, providing the Task Force with an adjusted budget of \$2,621,107 in 2021.

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE MISSION

The County of Jackson has approximately 604.84 square miles. With a population of 700,307 according to the Census Bureau, Jackson County is the second most populous of Missouri's 114 counties, after St. Louis County. The Task Force's focus is Jackson County, which includes all suburban jurisdictions and unincorporated areas. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide a combined and unified response to the drug- and narcotics-related violent crime problem as it exists in Jackson County.

While the Task Force participates with all federal, state and local Kansas City area law enforcement agencies, its primary investigative mission and focus continues to be in Jackson County and the outlying areas of the county, which are not adequately serviced by other law enforcement agencies. Task Force Detectives work in unison with other agencies' personnel assigned to the Task Force to investigate drug- and violent-related crimes. These investigations range from Jackson County to anywhere in the continental United States. Task Force Detectives are specially trained in undercover operations, long-term investigations and covert surveillance techniques.

In 2021 the Task Force participated in multiple Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) operations in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Homeland Security. These partnerships allowed the Task Force to be partially reimbursed for narcotics buy money and overtime costs associated with the OCDETF investigations. The Task Force was actively involved in five OCDETF investigations in 2021.

In 2011 an agreement was signed with the Missouri National Guard to provide one Intelligence Analyst to assist with long-term investigations. This agreement continued in 2021.

A Task Force Detective obtained a high-level security clearance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to assist in investigations involving large-scale Transnational Criminal Drug Organizations. Additionally, the Task Force is coordinating with the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Force to address the increasing problem of violent crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) with ties to Mexico. These Drug Trafficking Organizations have set up sophisticated distribution networks in Jackson County and are obtaining large amounts of illegal drugs from Mexican-based Drug Trafficking Organizations for distribution in Jackson County.

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

The Jackson County Drug Task Force is a voluntary law enforcement organization that operates under the direction of an Executive Board comprised of representatives from fourteen (14) law enforcement agencies in Jackson County. Each of these law enforcement agencies signed an Agreement for Law Enforcement Services with the Task Force.

The Executive Board of the Task Force includes the Police Chiefs from each of the participating cities and the Sheriff of Jackson County. A representative from the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation attend the Executive Board meetings in a spirit of cooperation and to coordinate efforts.

Seven (7) of the participating law enforcement agencies and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office contribute or "loan" manpower to the Task Force. All salaries, benefits, equipment and other associated costs with personnel assigned to the Task Force are reimbursed 100% by the Task Force. Costs for reimbursement are paid from grants and funding generated by the county-wide anti-crime sales tax (COMBAT) that provides funding for the Task Force.

Participating agencies include:

- **Blue Springs Police - 3 Investigators**
- **Buckner Police**
- **Grain Valley Police – 1 Investigator**
- **Grandview Police - 1 Sergeant, 2 Investigators**
- **Greenwood Police**
- **Independence Police – 1 Sergeant, 1 Investigators (5 vacant)**
- **Jackson County – 1 OIC, 1 Administrative, 1 Property/Evidence Officer**
- **Jackson County Sheriff – 3 Investigators**
- **Lake Lotawana Police**
- **Lee's Summit Police - 4 Investigators**
- **Lone Jack Police**
- **Missouri State Highway Patrol**
- **Oak Grove Police - 1 Investigator**
- **Raytown Police**
- **Sugar Creek Police - 1 Investigator**

The Task Force also has two positions on loan from the following:

- **Missouri National Guard – 1 Analyst (Non-Sworn)**
- **Drug Enforcement Administration – 1 Special Agent (vacant)**

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE VIOLENT CRIME INITIATIVE

KANSAS CITY METRO ORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE STRIKE FORCE

The Jackson County Drug Task Force continued the partnership with the Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Force (KCMSF). The Jackson County Drug Task Force is one of four local agencies participating in the KCMSF, along with the Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, police departments and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will be joining forces with multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Department of Homeland Security; the Postal Inspection Service; and Internal Revenue Service.

The Kansas City metropolitan area is near the geographical center of the United States and at the intersection of several of the nation's busiest interstate highways, thus making it a major transit point for the transportation of drugs, firearms, and illicit proceeds to and from significant market areas across the country.

The KCMSF focus will be major criminal organizations, including criminal gangs, transnational drug cartels and other groups engaged in illicit activities that present a threat to public safety. The KCMSF will place special emphasis on addressing the significant methamphetamine threat identified in Jackson County and the Kansas City metropolitan area.

The KCMSF presents a united front against drug trafficking and violent crime throughout the metropolitan area coordinating agents and officers from both Missouri and Kansas with additional investigative resources to better protect our community from the violent scourge of drug trafficking.

Greater Kansas City joins these other metropolitan regions with Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Forces: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, North Texas, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego, San Juan, southeast Michigan and Tampa.

NATIONAL INTERGRATED BALLISTICS IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Task Force established a program in which all recovered firearms will be test fired and the shell casings will be submitted into the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) through the use of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBS).

NIBEN is a national network system administered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to assist law enforcement in solving firearms-related crimes. IBS is the collection of electronic images of ballistic evidence recovered from crime scenes and test-fired firearms that have been taken into law enforcement custody. IBIS is a proven investigative and intelligence tool that can assist in the identification of leads that were not previously available, can link firearms evidence from multiple crimes committed with the same firearm and can link firearms evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm.

In June 2021 the Missouri Second Amendment Preservation Act (SAPA) became law dramatically decreasing the pursuit of firearm investigations and the purchase of illegal firearms in connection with controlled buys of illegal narcotics. As a result the Task Force was prohibited from test firing or submitting shell casings into the NIBIN system in 2021.

VIOLENT CRIME INVESTIGATIONS

In 2009 the COMBAT program expanded to include violent crime and became known as the Community Backed **Anti-Crime** Tax. In addition to joining forces with the Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, the Jackson County Drug Task Force plays a vital role in local law enforcement's ability to confront violent crime and works in unison with area law enforcement agencies on a wide variety of crimes, including homicide, armed robbery and burglary.

Raytown Police Homicide Investigation

Task Force detectives provided analytical support for the investigation by analyzing a Microsoft Excel reverse location file through the Task Force "TRAX" system. The system processed the raw data in the file to generate a Google Earth kmz file to map the location data. That file was then provided to the case detective in the homicide investigation.

Lee's Summit Police Homicide Investigation

Task Force detectives assisted in locating and surveilling the suspect and suspect vehicles until the suspect was arrested and his vehicle was seized and held as a search warrant for the vehicle was obtained.

Independence Police Homicide Investigation

Task Force detectives worked in unison with homicide detectives and the Independence Police Street Crimes Unit in locating, identifying and covertly surveilling the suspect until his arrest.

Oak Grove Police Burglary Investigation

Task Force detectives, utilizing sophisticated surveillance techniques, assisted the Oak Grove Police Department with surveillance of an identified burglary ring responsible for dozens of burglaries in Jackson County, Missouri and Kansas. With live time surveillance information provided by Task Force detectives the suspects were arrested in Lafayette County, Missouri on their way back to Jackson County after committing a burglary in Columbia, Missouri. Thousands of dollars of stolen equipment was recovered from the burglary in Columbia.

Drug Distribution and Sex Trafficking

Task Force detectives executed a search warrant at a residence in Independence. The suspect of this investigation, a convicted felon, associated with defendants in an investigation by the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation involving the distribution of controlled substances and sex trafficking.

Grandview Homicide Independence missing person Investigation

Task Force Detectives assisted in locating and surveilling the suspects in a Grandview homicide that was related to an Independence missing person's case. Suspects were covertly surveilled until arrest warrants and search warrants could be obtained. Victim was recovered buried in a yard of a residence in Grain Valley.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

STRIVIN'

Striving Together to Reduce Violence In Neighborhoods

Jackson County COMBAT strives to ensure a strong, safe community for its residents free from the dangers of illegal drugs and violent crime through the use of prevention education, treatment services and support of the criminal justice system.

Striving Together to Reduce Violence In Neighborhoods (STRIVIN') is COMBAT's initiative to address violence in Jackson County's most vulnerable neighborhoods. STRIVIN' hinges on collaboration and brings together educators, elected officials, law enforcement officers, family court administrators, social workers, mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, faith-based leaders and concerned citizens to join forces, pool resources, provide services and find solutions. In working together, the STRIVIN initiative addresses the core issues triggering much of the violence in the county's hot spots.

The Task Force is actively involved with Jackson County's COMBAT STRIVIN' initiative hosted by the COMBAT administration in Kansas City, Independence and Raytown, Missouri.

FIRST CALL

First Call, a COMBAT funded agency, provides clinical, educational and prevention services to individuals and families in the Greater Kansas City area impacted by alcohol and drug addiction.

Additionally, First Call operates a 24-hour, seven day a week crisis hotline that can connect an individual seeking help to a clinician or recovery advocate. Advocates are able to provide support/guidance to people at any stage of the recovery process and make sure people are connected to the resources they need in the community.

Task Force Detectives have access the First Call electronic health data base, Community Care Link. The Community Care Link website allows detectives of the JCDF to select the services needed and then "filter" those search results, if desired, based on gender, age, insurance status and geographical area in order to obtain specific resources for individuals requesting help with drug addiction.

Task Force Detectives refer individuals who request help and are non-violent drug offenders, for treatment to programs provided by COMBAT's STRIVIN initiative and First call drug/alcohol recovery services.

Citizen Police Academy

The Task Force participated in the Oak Grove Police Department's Citizens' Police Academy. The Citizens' Police Academy is designed to develop positive relationships between the police and the community through education.

The Citizen's Police Academy presents a look at the internal operation, values and philosophy of the Police Department. Participants learn more about how the Police Department and the Task Force operates and the policing challenges the cities face.

National Night Out Against Crime

Task Force detectives participated in the 2021 National Night Out Against Crime. Local businesses, civic organizations and law enforcement agencies attend these events designed to generate support for and participation in local anti-crime programs and to strengthen police-community awareness. Citizens were provided with informational brochures and Task Force detectives answered questions and addressed concerns about illegal drug activities within local communities.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED/PURCHASED

2021	Grams	Dose	Value
Methamphetamine	80,364.90		\$9,643,788
Cocaine	5,841.10		\$788,549.00
Heroin	9,116.40		\$1,823,280.00
Fentanyl (pills)		12,943 pills	\$258,860
Oxycodone (pills)		unknown	\$0
MDMA (Ecstasy) (pills)		294 pills	\$4,998
LSD (dose)		5 tablets	\$50.00
Phencyclidine (PCP)	0		\$0
Psilocybin (Mushrooms)	64.7		\$1,423
Prescription Pills	4,026		\$40,260
Marijuana	70,006.00		\$1,750,150.00
THC Edibles	12,610		\$643,110.00
THC Wax/Oil/Cartridges	566		\$28,866
Anabolic Steroids		5 vials	\$750
TOTAL			\$14,984,084

FIREARMS SEIZED/PURCHASED

Long Guns \$500 / each	Hand Guns \$400 / each
32	50
\$16,000	\$20,000

TOTAL VALUE OF ALL SEIZED CONTRABAND

Drug values based on adjusted street prices for illegal drugs 2020 Office of National Drug Control Policy Data

\$15,020,083.50

STATISTICS

	Cases Opened	Cases Closed	Search Warrants	Knock-n-Talks	Presentations	Narcotics Purchases	Money Recovered	Meth Labs Processed	Marijuana Grow's Processed
2010	149	67	71	78	6	178	\$140,602	7	8
2011	201	32	42	56	12	127	\$111,134	4	1
2012	124	206	73	66	10	180	\$411,048	1	3
2013	119	173	92	30	21	408	\$275,876	0	3
2014	74	208	48	48	1	158	\$424,762	0	2
2015	127	199	58	82	1	218	\$330,372	0	1
2016	132	301	61	21	4	170	\$136,261	1	0
2017	92	114	50	10	9	140	\$135,475	0	0
2018	80	110	50	6	8	170	\$302,206	0	2
2019	76	204	54	12	3	123	\$216,246	0	0
2020	76	45	32	0	1	135	\$64,479	0	0
2021	112	192	51	7	1	138	\$733,749	0	1

CASE COMPARISON

	Total Cases Presented	Federal Cases	State Cases	Arrests	Warrant Arrests	Defectives Funded	Value of Seized Narcotics
2010	52	5	47	227		14	\$1,054,321
2011	271	186	85	244		14	\$4,871,131
2012	339	250	89	427		13	\$4,116,215
2013	205	128	65	177		11	\$7,568,018
2014	204	106	98	209		11	\$8,894,042
2015	216	122	82	262	225	12	\$6,530,240
2016	290	215	75	292	222	13	\$5,218,156
2017	213	166	47	269	200	11	\$13,461,484
2018	92	65	27	187	94	14	\$16,149,483
2019	204	172	35	228	106	13	\$30,451,473
2020	180	135	45	159	64	15	\$9,635,079
2021	192	161	31	268	218	16	\$14,984,084

PROSECUTION COMPARISON

Cases presented for prosecution

Federal											
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
5	186	250	128	106	122	215	166	65	172	135	161

State											
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
47	85	89	65	98	82	75	47	27	35	45	31

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

2021

PRESS RELEASES

Award Earned For The 5th Time In 10 Years

Joe Loudon • COMBAT Communications Administrator

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2021

The **Jackson County Drug Task Force** has earned high praise from its peers in law enforcement yet again. During the organization's annual conference last week, the Missouri Narcotic Officers Association (MNOA) named the task force the "Law Enforcement Unit of the Year" for 2020.

The **MNOA** has now given the Jackson County Drug Task Force its highest honor five times in the last 10 years. The Association has 500 active members across Missouri but emphasizes on its website "all police officers are narcotic officers."

"We certainly appreciate the recognition coming from our fellow officers in the state," Drug Task Force Officer-In-Charge Dan Cummings said. "I believe this, as much as anything else, signals we are being effective pursuing the drug traffickers who try to bring their poison into Jackson County."

COMBAT Funds Task Force

The notoriously camera-shy Cummings, a longtime narcotic officer with the Independence Police Department, added, "Of course, because of the nature of our work, we try to avoid being recognized, but it's nice when those in your profession give you a pat on the back and tell you you're doing a good job."

The Jackson County Drug Task Force consists of detectives and other personnel from 12 area police departments, as well as the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and Missouri Highway Patrol. The Task Force receives more than \$2 million in annual funding from COMBAT.

"The Task Force conducts investigations on a scale that would be beyond the resources of any one of these local 12 police departments," COMBAT Director Vince Ortega said. "The Task Force has, to its credit, changed with the times because the nature of drug trafficking has really shifted in the last 25 years. We now have international drug cartels supplying most of the illegal drugs in our communities."

Investigations Leading To Federal Prosecutions

Because many of its investigations now involve the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and/or the FBI, resulting in federal prosecutions, the Task Force's contributions can often be overlooked or underappreciated locally.

"Who is to say how many lives the Task Force saves by confiscating what might have otherwise been someone's lethal dose of meth or heroin?" Ortega said. "I very much consider what they do—apprehending these high-level criminals profiting off the suffering of those who have addictions—to be an extension of COMBAT's mission to be prevent substance abuse."

The 2020 MNOA award was originally scheduled to be presented to the Task Force a year ago, but the COVID-19 pandemic caused the Association to cancel its March 2020 conference. Oak Grove Police Chief Bryon Price nominated the Task Force for the “Law Enforcement Unit of the Year” honor in late 2019, citing what would be a record-setting year of \$30.4 million in seizures.

Operations 'Slippery Roads' & 'Dirty Ash Tray'

Price noted the collaborative efforts of the Jackson County Task Force, FBI and DEA to conduct numerous Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force investigations. These investigations were either initiated by or led by the Jackson County Task Force. They each led to large seizures of drugs, firearms and cash, in addition to multiple arrests. “Operation Slippery Roads” spanned 17 months (February 2018 – June 2019) and resulted in 84,971 grams—more than 187 pounds—of methamphetamine being seized or purchased in “controlled buys” by undercover detectives.

In a single search the Task Force found 144 pounds of meth hidden in metal canisters tucked inside a Toyota pick-up’s tires. Cumming estimated that methamphetamine had a “street value” of \$12.4 million and seizing it prevented more a quarter-million “doses” of the illicit drug from ever being sold on the streets of Jackson County.

Between them Operations “Slippery Roads” and “Dirty Ash Tray” resulted in 40 defendants being indicted in federal courts on more than 90 charges—with the investigations extending far beyond Jackson County to Phoenix and Los Angeles, then into Mexico.

“The Jackson County Task Force is really making a difference in and beyond Jackson County,” Ortega said. “I congratulate Dan and his staff for winning this award and want to tell them to just keep up the good work.”

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 18, 2021

KCK Man Sentenced for Meth Trafficking

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Kansas, man was sentenced in federal court today for distributing methamphetamine.

Jeffery N. Sharp, 33, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs to 10 years in federal prison without parole.

On Nov. 10, 2020, Sharp pleaded guilty to five counts of distributing 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. Sharp sold methamphetamine to an undercover law enforcement officer on five separate occasions from Aug. 6 to Nov. 1, 2018.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Greg R. Coonrod and Mary Kate Butterfield. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Topic(s):

Drug Trafficking

Component(s):

[USAO - Missouri, Western](#)

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Kansas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Four People Sentenced in Drug Trafficking Ring

KANSAS CITY, KAN. – Four people received prison sentences following convictions in relation to a drug trafficking ring that operated for years in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

According to court documents, the Jackson County Drug Task Force began an undercover operation in 2016 surrounding a drug trafficking ring. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) later partnered in the investigation which included controlled purchases of confirmed methamphetamine and surveillance. In 2019, law enforcement arrested Juan Cenicerros, 28, of Kansas City, Missouri, and several of co-conspirators including Ryan Goodall, 25, Julio Rodriguez, 57, and Donald Brown, 51.

Juan Cenicerros was sentenced to 144 months in prison for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. He also pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

Ryan Goodall was sentenced to 124 months in prison for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute of 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. Goodall also pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

Julio Rodriguez of Glendale, Arizona, was sentenced to 70 months in prison for possession with the intent to distribute a mixture and substance containing 50 grams or more of methamphetamine.

Donald Brown of Kansas City, Missouri, was sentenced to 81 months in prison for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribution of methamphetamine.

“The fact that this investigation spanned several years is a testament to the patience and steadfast dedication of local and federal law enforcement agencies. Their commitment to staying with the investigation as long as necessary ensured appropriate convictions for this illegal behavior which harms our communities,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Duston Slinkard.

The Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated the case. The United States Marshals Service assisted with identification and apprehension in this matter.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Sheri Catania prosecuted the case.

OCDETF STRIKE FORCE CASES

This prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations. The Kansas City Metro Strike Force's mission also includes disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations and transnational drug cartels, with emphasis on groups engaged in illicit activities involving methamphetamine and firearms that present a threat to public safety in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Seven KC-Area Defendants Charged in Cocaine Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Seven residents of the Kansas City, Missouri, metropolitan area have been indicted by a federal grand jury for their roles in a conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

Irfan Causevic, also known as “Jonny,” 37, a citizen of Bosnia, Christopher C. Oregel, 29, Nicholas Carrillo, also known as “Nicco,” 32, Admir Suljic, also known as “Babo,” 34, and Augustine Charles Aviles, also known as “Gus,” 32, all of Kansas City, Mo.; Jacob Daniel Craven, 24, of Independence, Mo.; and Micah N. Bond, also known as “Nate,” 36, of Parkville, Mo., were charged in a six-count superseding indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo., on Oct. 27, 2021.

The superseding indictment unsealed today replaces the original indictment returned on June 23, 2021, which charged only Causevic. The superseding indictment, which includes six additional defendants, was unsealed and made public today following the arrests of the six additional defendants.

Causevic was arrested on June 3, 2021, and remains on pretrial release. The remaining six defendants were all arrested early this morning.

According to court documents, Causevic was arrested after he agreed to sell cocaine to an undercover detective in the Jackson County Drug Task Force. In his first transaction with the undercover detective, Causevic allegedly sold 113.1 grams of cocaine for \$3,500. A few days later, Causevic allegedly agreed to sell the undercover detective nine ounces of cocaine for \$6,000. Although Causevic agreed to sell cocaine, according to court documents, he did not possess any cocaine when he arrived at the arranged meeting to conduct the second transaction. He later told investigators he planned to take the money from the undercover detective with a promise of obtaining cocaine, but actually intended to steal the money without providing any cocaine.

The federal indictment alleges that all seven defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute cocaine from Oct. 1, 2019, to June 3, 2021.

In addition to the conspiracy, Causevic is charged with three counts of distributing cocaine. Causevic and Bond also are charged together in one count of distributing cocaine. Causevic, Craven, Bond and Aviles also are charged together in one count of distributing cocaine.

The charges contained in this indictment 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.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brad K. Kavanaugh. It was investigated by the FBI, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, and IRS-Criminal Investigation.

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Jury Convicts Two Mexican Nationals for \$2.1 Million Meth Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Two Mexican nationals have been convicted by a federal trial jury for their roles in a \$2.1 million conspiracy to distribute over 100 kilograms of methamphetamine in the Kansas City metropolitan area and in northwest Missouri.

Juan Guzman, also known as “Flaco,” 40, of Kansas City, Missouri, and Maria De La Cruz Nava, 25, of Kansas City, Kansas, were found guilty on Tuesday, Nov. 9, of participating in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and in a money-laundering conspiracy over a nearly four-year period from Jan. 1, 2015, to Nov. 14, 2018. In addition to the conspiracies, Guzman and Nava were found guilty of possessing firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking. Guzman was also found guilty of illegally reentering the United States after having been deported.

Guzman was the supplier for the drug-trafficking conspiracy, selling multiple kilograms of methamphetamine on a regular basis, sometimes daily, to multiple co-conspirators who then distributed methamphetamine to others. Guzman also involved others in storing methamphetamine. The jury found Nava assisted Guzman in his drug trafficking and money laundering activities.

Guzman, Nava, and several others were arrested at Guzman's residence on Oct. 18, 2018. At the time of their arrest, officers seized two rifles, five handguns (one with an extended drum magazine), ammunition, 688 grams of methamphetamine, cash, and drug paraphernalia – including drug ledgers and drug packaging – from Guzman's residence.

The federal indictment also requires the defendants to forfeit to the government \$2.1 million, representing the proceeds of the drug-trafficking conspiracy (based on a sale price of \$600 per ounce and distribution of more than 3,500 ounces – nearly 100 kilograms – of methamphetamine).

Five defendants have pleaded guilty in this case: Chanthacone Senthavy, 47, a citizen of Laos residing in Independence, Mo., Luis Carlos Ramos Caraveo, 26, a citizen of Mexico residing in Kansas City, Mo., Christopher Shawn Sharp, 43, and John Paul Gnat, 31, both of St. Joseph, Mo., and Jacob Dale Walsh, 35, of Denton, Kan.

Following the presentation of evidence, the jury in the U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., deliberated for less than two hours before returning guilty verdicts on both defendants on all counts to U.S. District Judge Brian C. Wimes, ending a trial that began Friday, Nov. 5.

Under federal statutes, Guzman and Nava are subject to mandatory minimum sentences of 15 years in federal prison and maximum penalties of life in federal prison, all without parole. The minimum and maximum statutory sentences are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the Court based on the statutory sentences, the advisory sentencing guidelines, and other statutory sentencing factors. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Bruce Rhoades and Robert M. Smith. It was investigated by the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Buchanan County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Buchanan County Drug Strike Force, Midwest HIDTA, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the FBI.

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE COMMITMENT

Jackson County is a primary market area for production, distribution and abuse of dangerous drugs. Although progress has been made in many areas, continued vigilance, enforcement, treatment and education are required. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue its successful tradition through community partnerships and a united, cooperative effort against illegal narcotics.

Although limited by financial and personnel constraints, the Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue to provide the citizens of these communities the professional service that they have come to deserve and expect. The members of this Task Force have made a commitment to this office, the law enforcement profession and the citizens of this community that no information concerning the illegal sales of narcotics will go without proper investigation. With that in mind, we will strive to continue to improve on the quality of service to this community.

The Jackson County Drug Task Force actively solicits tips and information regarding all illegal narcotics activity. Should the information be related to a jurisdiction outside of Jackson County, personnel from this office will assure that the information is passed on to the proper investigative agency. Individuals having information to pass on may contact this office through phone in complaints at 816-655-DRUG or through the TIPS hotline, 816-474-TIPS.