



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KC MAN SENTENCED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN ST. JOSEPH MARIJUANA DISTRIBUTION RING

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute marijuana in St. Joseph, Mo

Phillip J. Calandra, 26, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this morning to four years in federal prison without parole.

On Nov. 20, 2001, **Calandra** pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana in St. Joseph, Mo., and elsewhere. **Calandra** admitted that the marijuana distribution began in June 1997 and continued until the date that he was indicted by a Kansas City federal grand jury on Aug. 22, 2001.

Calandra is the second of six co-defendants to be sentenced for being involved in the conspiracy to distribute more than 2,200 pounds of marijuana in the St. Joseph area. All six co-defendants were charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Aug. 22, 2001, in Kansas City.

Joshua M. Brightwell, 21, of Kansas City, was sentenced to five years in federal prison without parole on Aug. 15, 2002. On Jan. 4, 2002, he pleaded guilty to his role in the conspiracy.

Four other co-defendants also have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing hearings.

On Feb. 14, 2002, **Arturo Velasquez**, 38, of El Paso, Texas, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana between Jun 1997 and Aug. 22, 2001.

On Aug. 14, 2002, **Gerry Taylor**, 27, of Faucett, Mo., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana between the same dates.

On Feb. 14, 2002, **Angel M. Torres**, 28, of El Paso, also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms of marijuana between June 1997 and Aug. 22, 2001.

On Feb. 1, 2002, **Darrell L. Harris, Jr.**, 25, of Faucett, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms of marijuana between June 1997 and Aug. 22, 2001.

As a result of pleading guilty, each of the remaining co-defendants may face a maximum sentence of up to life in federal prison without parole, plus fines up to \$4 million. Their sentences will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence report by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lajuana M. Counts. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Buchanan County, Mo., Drug Strike Force, and the Independence, Mo., Police Department.

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