



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

PIERCE CITY MAN FIRST OF THREE SENTENCED IN METH CONSPIRACY

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Pierce City, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and for illegally possessing a firearm.

Darryl E. Laytham, 42, of Pierce City, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this afternoon to 11 years and three months in federal prison without parole.

On July 28, 2004, **Laytham** pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Laytham** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute the methamphetamine between January 2002 and Sept. 4, 2003, in Barry County, Mo.

Laytham also pleaded guilty to being an unlawful user of a controlled substance in possession of a firearm. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any unlawful user or addict of a controlled substance to be in possession of a firearm. **Laytham** admitted that he was in possession of a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun, a Norinco SKS rifle, and a FED .380-caliber pistol between January 2002 and March 2, 2004.

Laytham is the first of three defendants to be sentenced in this case.

On Oct. 6, 2004, **David Anthony Torres**, 27, of West Covina, Calif., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distributed 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Torres** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute the methamphetamine between January 2002 and Sept. 4, 2003, in Barry County, Mo.

On Aug. 12, 2004, **Gerald James Douez**, 38, of Aurora, Mo., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distributed 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Douez** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute the methamphetamine between January 2002

and Sept. 4, 2003, in Barry County, Mo. **Douez** also pleaded guilty to being an unlawful user of a controlled substance in possession of a firearm. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any unlawful user or addict of a controlled substance to be in possession of a firearm. **Douez** admitted that he was in possession of a Ruger .45-caliber semi-automatic pistol with ammunition between January 2002, and July 24, 2003.

Under federal statutes, Graves explained, **Torres** and **Douez** both may be subject to mandatory minimum sentences of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to life in prison without parole, plus fines up to \$4 million.

The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly Weber Dean. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the United States Postal Service and the Monett, 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