



U.S. Department of Justice
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PRESS RELEASE

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**FLORIDA MAN CONVICTED ON FEDERAL METHAMPHETAMINE
AND MARIJUANA TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

ALBUQUERQUE – Late on Friday afternoon (February 24, 2012), a federal jury convicted **Joaquin Bassols, Jr.**, 33, of Miami, Fla., on methamphetamine and marijuana trafficking charges, after a four-day trial, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales.

At sentencing, Bassols faces a mandatory minimum ten years of imprisonment and a maximum of life imprisonment based on his conviction. Bassols, who had been on release under pretrial supervision since his arrest in June 2010, was remanded into the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service after the jury returned its guilty verdict. He will be detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

Bassols was arrested on June 16, 2010, and charged by criminal complaint after law enforcement authorities found a pound and a half of methamphetamine and 26 pounds of marijuana concealed in a car that he was driving. Thereafter, Bassols and his co-defendant, **Anthony James Aiello**, 33, also a Miami resident, were charged in a four-count second superseding indictment alleging that the two men (1) conspired to distribute methamphetamine; (2) conspired to distribute marijuana; (3) possessed more than 50 grams of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; and (4) possessed marijuana with intent to distribute.

After an April 2011 trial resulted in a mistrial when the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict, Bassols' retrial commenced on February 21, 2012.

The evidence at Bassols' second trial established that, on June 16, 2010, an officer of the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, Motor Transportation Division, executed a traffic stop on a car that Bassols was driving for a moving violation. After issuing a citation to Bassols, the officer requested and obtained permission to search the car from Bassols, the driver, and Aiello, his passenger. After the officer's narcotics canine alerted to the right front bumper of the vehicle, the officer found a package wrapped in grey duct tape that contained marijuana and was secured with foam spray to the inside of the bumper. A further search of the car uncovered a total of 28 duct taped packages that were secured with foam spray in the natural voids in the front and rear bumpers. One of the packages contained a pound and a half of methamphetamine and the other 27 contained an aggregate of 26 pounds of marijuana.

Trial testimony established that Bassols and Aiello had traveled from Miami to Phoenix, Az., where they rented a car and drove to Los Angeles, Ca. In Los Angeles, the two men obtained the methamphetamine and marijuana and travel expense money from a friend. Their plan to deliver the drugs to Miami was thwarted when they were stopped by the officer, who discovered the drugs. Testimony also established that Bassols and Aiello had transported drugs from Los Angeles to Miami on two prior occasions in April 2010.

The jury deliberated for approximately 45 minutes before returning a verdict of guilty on all four counts of the indictment.

Co-defendant Aiello entered a guilty plea to all four-counts of the indictment on January 20, 2012. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for April 26, 2012.

The case was investigated by the DEA and the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, Motor Transportation Division, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nicholas J. Ganjei and James R.W. Braun.

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