



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LENGTHY PRISON SENTENCE FOR DRUG DEFENDANTS

(Tyler, Texas) Two defendants arrested last August in a roundup of suspected drug dealers in Tyler and Smith County have been sentenced to lengthy prison sentences. This morning, U.S. District Judge Leonard Davis sentenced **JENNIFER SMITHA** to 60 months in federal prison for her role in the distribution of cocaine and crack cocaine in Smith County. Judge Davis also sentenced **MARTIN VERGARA** to 30 months in federal prison for distribution of methamphetamine and crack cocaine, and ordered him deported to Mexico after his sentence is complete.

According to information prosecutors presented in court, Smitha, Vergara and others were involved in different crack cocaine and methamphetamine distribution organizations in Tyler and Smith County. The conspirators utilized various suppliers to acquire quantities of crack cocaine, cocaine and methamphetamine to sell, and recruited others to distribute these illegal controlled substances varying quantities. Recognizing the growing problem, Smith County Sheriff J.B. Smith requested federal assistance in the fall of 2002. Soon thereafter, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) from Dallas launched an intensive investigation with local law enforcement into the criminal activities of drug dealers in Smith County. It culminated in the indictment of 14 people last August.

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Smitha, 28, pleaded guilty Possession with Intent to Distribute Crack Cocaine and Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine. Vergara pleaded guilty to Possession with Intent to Distribute Methamphetamine, and Possession with Intent to Distribute Crack Cocaine.

U.S. Attorney Matthew D. Orwig praised the work of the MET and Smith County Sheriff's Office for their coordinated efforts, "The law enforcement agents did an outstanding job of infiltrating the drug conspiracies and identifying those who distributed this poison in our communities. The disruption and dismantling of conspiracies like these will continue to be a top priority of law enforcement in East Texas."

The sentencing of Smitha and Vergara means 6 of the 14 defendants indicted last August have now been sentenced to prison. Tyronne Scott was sentenced to 120 months in prison, Simmie Davan Cooks was sentenced to 110 months in prison, Frederick Ladale Attaway was sentenced to 108 months in prison, and Richard Travail Jackson, Sr. was sentenced to 50 months in prison. Seven other defendants have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. One defendant, Saleem Jaffer Jiwani, was scheduled to plead guilty last November but did not show up for his plea hearing. He is still a fugitive.

The investigation was led by the Drug Enforcement Administration MET, Smith County Sheriff's Office, Smith County District Attorney's Office, the Tyler Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the FBI, the IRS, the U.S. Marshal Service, and the Northeast Texas Narcotics Task Force. Assistant U.S. Attorney Allen Hurst is prosecuting the cases.