



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Plattsburgh, New York]—United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Acting Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Division Wilbert L. Plummer and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent in Charge James Spero announced today that JACQUES PERREAULT, YVAN CHANDLER, DENIS VACHON and NICK VARACALLI were arrested in the early morning hours on December 6, 2011 in Quebec, Canada. On December 5, 2011, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) applied for and received provisional arrest warrants for PERREAULT, CHANDLER, VACHON and VARACALLI. The provisional arrest warrants were issued by the Canadian Crown. The provisional arrest warrants were issued pursuant to a Superseding Indictment in the Northern District of New York and in anticipation of a formal request for extradition by the United States Government.

In addition, co-defendant MICHEL COTE was arrested on June 25, 2011 in the Southern District of Florida. A removal hearing was held on July 1, 2011 and COTE was removed to the Northern District of New York. A detention hearing was held on August 2, 2011 in Syracuse, New York and COTE was ordered detained pending trial.

On February 23, 2011, the grand jury returned a Superseding Indictment charging PERREAULT, CHANDLER, VACHON, VARACALLI and COTE with conspiracy to possess

with intent to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846 (Count 1) and conspiracy to launder monetary instruments in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h) (Count 2). Additionally, PERREAULT and CHANDLER are charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 50 kilograms of marijuana in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846 (Count 4) and CHANDLER is charged with possession with intent to distribute marijuana in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a) (Count 3).

PERREAULT, 45, is a resident of Saint Jean Sur Richelieu, Quebec, Canada. CHANDLER, 67, is a resident of Saint Blaise Sur Richelieu, Quebec, Canada. VACHON, 63, is a resident of Saint Roch Sur Richelieu, Quebec, Canada. VARACALLI, 63, is a resident of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. All four individuals are citizens of Canada. On Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment, PERREAULT, CHANDLER, VACHON, VARACALLI and COTE face a maximum penalty of up to life imprisonment, a \$10,000,000 fine, or both, and a period of at least five years of supervised release up to life to follow any term of imprisonment. On Count 2 of the Superseding Indictment, PERREAULT, CHANDLER, VACHON and VARACALLI face a maximum penalty of up to twenty (20) years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, and a period of up to three years supervised release. On Count 3 of the Superseding Indictment, CHANDLER faces a maximum penalty of up to twenty (20) years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both, and a period of at least three years supervised release up to life to follow any term of imprisonment. On Count 4 of the Superseding Indictment, PERREAULT and CHANDLER face a maximum penalty of up to twenty (20) years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both, and a period of at least three years supervised release up to life to follow any term of imprisonment.

Special Agents (SA) from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Office of the Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) Rouses Point, New

York and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Plattsburgh, New York have conducted a twenty four month long investigation into a Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) led by PERREAULT, CHANDLER, VACHON and VARACALLI. The indictment of PERREAULT, CHANDLER, VACHON and VARACALLI was the result of a joint investigation by the DEA, ICE, the New York State Police, the Plattsburgh Police Department, the United States Border Patrol, and the Clinton County Sheriff's Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel C. Gardner.

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Wilbert L. Plummer stated, "This multimillion dollar drug operation brought thousands of pounds of marijuana across the border for distribution throughout the northeast. By working with our international, federal, state and local law enforcement partners, this three year investigation culminated with the arrests of these defendants, seizures of over one thousand pounds of marijuana and drug proceeds. This investigation and these arrests prove DEA and our law enforcement partners are working diligently in order to dismantle drug trafficking organizations throughout the world and keep our communities safe."

Inquiries may be directed to Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel C. Gardner at (518) 314-7800.