



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**REMARKS OF DOI COMMISSIONER ROSE GILL HEARN ON INDICTMENT OF  
3 CITY CORRECTION OFFICERS AND 12 INMATES CHARGED IN  
AN ASSAULT CONSPIRACY ON RIKERS ISLAND**  
*Three inmates also charged with Manslaughter*

The brutal scheme revealed in the indictment announced today by DA Johnson began with the probe into the homicide of 18-year-old inmate Christopher Robinson at the Davoren Center on Rikers Island. Last October, Christopher Robinson was found dead in his cell, his body having been beaten; the Medical Examiner determined he died from internal injuries.

Investigators uncovered a conspiracy in which three Correction Officers are charged with ignoring their responsibility to keep the facility safe and instead ceding a degree of control to a shadow inmate-regime of intimidation and violence. Adolescent inmates were beaten for such things as commissary money and use of the telephone, and, assuming they survived, were allowed to move up in status in a hierarchy they called "The Program," in which some inmates gained positions of power over others. This scheme exemplified the worst in predatory behavior, which Correction Officers are there to prevent. And unfortunately, Mr. Robinson did not survive. It was the investigation of his death at Rikers that exposed this corrupt and violent enterprise.

DOI investigators pursued a tip we received on our hotline right after Robinson was killed, which led to our discovery of details about the organized beatings of inmates charged today by DA Johnson. DOI investigators began to interview numerous inmates and correction officers. Recognizing that a broader criminal conspiracy was at work, investigators have examined Correction Department documents involving inmate assaults and use of force complaints.

The criminal conduct charged in this case is made all the more disturbing by the actions of the indicted Correction Officers who compromised their integrity and abused their authority by participating in a criminal conspiracy that was centered on gang violence.

By delving deeply into the facts behind how and why this hierarchy developed, DOI and our partners here have conferred with Commissioner Horn to recommend procedural changes to eradicate the conditions and practices in the facility that allowed the organized violence and exploitation to thrive: for example, the need for additional video cameras; the need to analyze changes to the way inmates have access to telephone privileges, which is a valuable commodity in jail and can fuel intimidation, corruption and even violence. Similarly, because extortion of commissary items was a byproduct of "the Program," we believe that

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there needs to be a review with a view toward considering limits, or at a minimum, looking for suspicious activity like stockpiling.

These cases demonstrate the commitment by DOI and its law enforcement partners to investigate and prosecute those responsible for inmate abuse and perversion of the City's correction system.

I am thankful to District Attorney Johnson, NYPD Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and DOC Commissioner Martin F. Horn, and their staffs, for their work on this investigation.

I would like to recognize all the DOI investigators who tirelessly pursued this investigation under the supervision of Robert Gigante.

Indictments are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

(212) 266-1900 is DOI's hotline number for complaints regarding the Department of Correction.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.*

**Get the worms out of the Big Apple.  
To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**