



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**REMARKS OF DOI COMMISSIONER MARGARET GARNETT AT PRESS CONFERENCE
ON INDICTMENT OF ALLEGED GANG MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES ON AN ARRAY OF CHARGES**

Thank you, District Attorney Clark. It is a pleasure to be here today, to be standing with this team of dogged prosecutors and investigators on a case that exemplifies the strength of the law enforcement partnerships you see here today, and the powerful results that those partnerships can produce. To that end, I would also like to thank Chief Tim McCormack, commander of NYPD's Detective Bureau in the Bronx, and Commissioner Brann from the Department of Correction, for the tremendous work of their teams on this case.

The indictments announced today are a reflection of our vitally important law enforcement partnerships and the integral role those relationships play in ensuring that gang activity, drugs, and violence are kept out of our City's jails. DOI's investigations on Rikers have demonstrated how destabilizing these criminal forces can be behind bars and how they undermine the safety of both staff and inmates.

Our presence here today highlights our shared commitment to working with our partners to improve New York City's jail system. We understand the important responsibility of ensuring integrity and safety in our City's jails. And we take it very seriously.

DOI provided foundational assistance in this investigation -- laying the basis for the case -- through our monitoring of recorded inmate phone calls, which uncovered the initial connections between the defendants.

Our work led us first to Donisha Riggins, one of the defendants indicted here, who used her cellphone to allegedly connect inmates to facilitate gang activities at both DOC jails here in the city and in upstate prisons. We notified our partners of the potential violence and contraband smuggling involving members of the Mac Balla set of the Bloods, and the case continued to develop through their expertise in dismantling gang activity.

This scenario -- a network of outside associates conspiring with gang members on the inside to sow violence and further criminal plots -- is a familiar one. DOI has worked on many cases with its partners like the Bronx District Attorney to untangle those webs and get at the source of the corruption. That is work that I intend to continue.

Before I close, I'd also like to recognize and thank the investigators at DOI who worked on this case: Special Investigator Stephen Dumas, and Assistant Inspectors General Michael Garcia and James Christo, under the supervision of Deputy Inspectors General Richard Askin and Whitney Ferguson, Inspector General Dana A. Roth, and Associate Commissioner Paul Cronin, and the NYPD squad assigned to DOI, led by Deputy Inspector Raymond Festino.

An indictment is an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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