



For Immediate Release
January 29, 2009

New York City Department of Correction
Martin F. Horn, Commissioner

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NEW JAIL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM AIDS IN DRUG BUSTS

NYC Commissioner of Correction Martin F. Horn today heralded the role of jail-based gang intelligence and phone-monitoring systems in Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau's arrest of 15 people--including three current Rikers Island inmates--involved in or related to an uptown narcotics ring.

Press Release

Commissioner Horn noted that jail staff worked with prosecutors to provide recordings of inmate telephone calls and other inmate-related information which were useful in establishing connections to the drug gang known as the "Stack Money Family" charged today.

"We know that some inmates will use their phone access to arrange criminal activity in the jails, such as attacks on others and the delivery of contraband. And we know that inmates will use phones to continue their criminal activities and even to direct criminal enterprises outside the walls. However, prosecutors are once again proving the value of our phone call-monitoring systems and our in-jail intelligence systems when it comes to preventing and detecting criminal activity and protecting the public even outside the jails," Commissioner Horn said. "In this case, Correction investigators who worked on gang intelligence were able to provide useful background on inmate-suspects and our system-wide phone recording and monitoring system provided valuable guidance to investigators."

Since the system was installed, prosecutors have reported its usefulness in several important cases. In one, phone system information prevented an inmate from enlisting witnesses in a bogus insanity defense. In another, it helped protect a witness from threats and harassment by friends being directed by an inmate in custody. In a third, phone call information prevented further injury to a victim of elder abuse.

The Department of Correction installed and activated a new phone monitoring system to capture inmate calls last year, after the city Board of Correction amended its minimum jail standards to allow such surveillance without a warrant. With the system operating through all jails, every inmate's phone calls can be recorded and monitored. The change brought New York City jail policy in line with the phone monitoring policies of other jails systems all around the state and nation.

Inmates are advised in handbooks, wall posters and recorded messages that their call could be recorded and monitored. Privileged phone calls such as those to physicians and attorneys are not monitored.