

GAO

Report to the Honorable  
Charles B. Rangel, House of  
Representatives

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May 1998

# LAW ENFORCEMENT

## Information on Drug-Related Police Corruption



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**General Government Division**

B-277817

May 28, 1998

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Rangel:

Recent police corruption cases in several cities, including New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, highlight the association of police corruption with illegal drug activities. You asked us to study the impact of drug trafficking on the corruption of police in large cities that have a high incidence of drug trafficking and drug abuse. As agreed with your office, in conducting our preliminary work, we sought to identify commission reports and research studies on drug-related corruption in city police departments, as well as to identify relevant databases and other pertinent information.

We did not locate any central data sources that would allow us to reliably estimate the extent of police corruption or how much of corruption is drug-related. However, the reports and studies we reviewed, as well as our interviews with officials and academic experts, provided descriptive information on the (1) nature and extent of known drug-related police corruption in certain large cities; (2) factors associated with known drug-related police corruption; and (3) practices that have been recommended or implemented to prevent or detect drug-related police corruption.

We briefed your office on these developments and on the information we gathered during our preliminary work, and your office asked us to summarize the results of our work, focusing on these three areas. This report responds to that request.

To determine what information was available on drug-related police corruption, we (1) conducted a literature search and review to identify relevant commission reports, academic studies, symposium results, and other literature (see bibliography); (2) interviewed academic experts on police corruption and members and/or staffs of two anti-police-corruption

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commissions—one in New York City<sup>1</sup> and the other in Chicago;<sup>2</sup> (3) interviewed officials with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Attorneys' Offices for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); and (4) contacted international, national, and state law enforcement associations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). In addition, we met with officials from the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) and the current New York City Commission to Combat Police Corruption.<sup>3</sup>

We did our work in Washington, D.C., and New York City, New York, from August 1997 through April 1998. The information we provide in this report is derived from our review of a limited number of existing reports and studies, as well as interviews with various officials and academic experts, not from any primary data collection or analysis undertaken by us. We did not attempt to verify the adequacy of the methodologies used to produce the various findings, nor did we attempt to assess the appropriateness of the conclusions. Accordingly, our presentation of the findings and conclusions of these reports and studies should not be construed as our endorsement of them. Moreover, we recognize that the policies and practices of the police departments discussed in the reports and studies may subsequently have changed. However, reviewing current policies and practices in particular departments was beyond the scope of this report. Appendix I includes further details on our scope and methodology.

We provided copies of a draft of this report for a review of the facts, as presented, to various DOJ units and selected police organizations and academic experts. At an exit conference, we discussed the contents of the draft with DOJ officials, including the Criminal Division's Deputy Executive

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<sup>1</sup>The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Procedures of the Police Department, commonly referred to as the Mollen Commission, was established in July 1992 by an executive order of New York City Mayor David N. Dinkins. The commission was given a threefold mandate: (1) to investigate the nature and extent of corruption in the New York City Police Department, (2) to evaluate the department's procedures for preventing and detecting corruption, and (3) to recommend changes and improvements in those procedures. The commission issued its report in July 1994 and was subsequently disbanded.

<sup>2</sup>The Commission on Police Integrity, also referred to as the Chicago Commission, was appointed on February 7, 1997, by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. The commission's charge was to examine the root causes of police corruption, to review how other urban police departments approach the issue, and to propose possible changes to Chicago Police Department policies and procedures. The commission issued its first report in November 1997 and was still active as of April 1998.

<sup>3</sup>In response to a recommendation of the Mollen Commission, the New York City Commission to Combat Police Corruption was created on February 27, 1995, by an executive order of Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani. The New York City Commission was established to monitor the performance of the NYPD's systems for combatting corruption. This commission is charged with, among other things, performing audits, studies, and analyses to assess the quality of these systems.

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Officer and representatives of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA), and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. We also contacted the Chief of the FBI Criminal Investigative Division's Public Corruption Unit; the Commanding Officer, Office of Chief, NYPD's IAB; the Director of Research, IACP; Judge Milton Mollen (retired), former Chairman of the Mollen Commission; and Richard H. Ward, Professor of Criminal Justice, University of Illinois at Chicago and Executive Director for the Chicago Commission. The various officials and experts provided technical comments, which have been incorporated in this report where appropriate.

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## Results in Brief

According to a number of commission reports, academic publications, and other literature we reviewed and the officials and academic experts we interviewed, drug-related police corruption differs in a variety of ways from other types of police corruption. In addition to protecting criminals or ignoring their activities, officers involved in drug-related corruption were more likely to be actively involved in the commission of a variety of crimes, including stealing drugs and/or money from drug dealers, selling drugs, and lying under oath about illegal searches. Although profit was found to be a motive common to traditional and drug-related police corruption, New York City's Mollen Commission identified power and vigilante justice as two additional motives for drug-related police corruption. The most commonly identified pattern of drug-related police corruption involved small groups of officers who protected and assisted each other in criminal activities, rather than the traditional patterns of non-drug-related police corruption that involved just a few isolated individuals or systemic corruption pervading an entire police department or precinct.

Regarding the extent of drug-related police corruption, data are not collected nationally. Federal agencies either do not maintain data specifically on drug-related police corruption or maintain data only on cases in which the respective agency is involved. Thus, it was not possible to estimate the overall extent of the problem. However, the academic experts and various officials we interviewed, as well as the commission reports, expressed the view that, by and large, most police officers are honest.

The FBI provided us with data on FBI-led drug-related corruption cases involving state and local law enforcement officers. However, since the

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total number of drug-related police corruption cases at all levels of government is unknown, the proportion constituted by FBI cases also is unknown. Data from local sources, if collected, pose several problems. For example, drug-related police corruption cases may not be readily identifiable from the offense charged or departments may view this information as proprietary or confidential and may not release it. Notwithstanding the lack of systematic data, the commissions and some academic experts described cases of drug-related police corruption in large cities such as Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia.

Many of our sources consistently reported certain factors to be associated with drug-related police corruption, although these factors may also be associated with police corruption in general. Not every source identified every factor, and the sources differed to some degree on the emphasis to be placed on a factor. However, if all of the factors are considered together, they provide a consistent framework. Also, the factors discussed in this report may not encompass all factors associated with drug-related police corruption, since the identified factors are based on publicly reported incidents of drug-related police corruption.

One commonly identified factor associated with drug-related corruption was a police culture that was characterized by a code of silence, unquestioned loyalty to other officers, and cynicism about the criminal justice system. Such characteristics were found not only to promote police corruption, but to impede efforts to control and detect it. A second associated factor was the maturity (e.g., age) and education of police officers. Officers lacking in experience and some higher education were considered to be more susceptible to involvement in illicit drug-related activities.

Several of our sources also identified a variety of management-related factors associated with drug-related corruption. These factors included ineffective headquarters and field supervision, the failure of top police officials to promote integrity, and weaknesses in a police department's internal investigative structure and practices. In addition, on-the-job opportunities to commit illegal acts; inadequate training, particularly integrity training in the police academies and on the job; police brutality; and pressures arising from an officer's personal neighborhood ties were also believed by some sources to be associated with drug-related police corruption.

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Our sources also identified practices that they believed could prevent or detect drug-related police corruption. These practices, although often directed toward combatting police corruption in general, also were viewed as effective steps toward specifically addressing drug-related police corruption. Again, while every source did not conclude that every practice was effective or suitable for local conditions, considered together, the practices offer a starting point for prevention strategies.

Among the prevention practices that our sources identified were (1) making a commitment to integrity from the top to the bottom of the police department; (2) changing the police culture; (3) requiring command accountability (i.e., requiring a commitment to corruption control throughout the entire department, especially by field commanders); (4) raising the age and educational requirements and implementing or improving integrity training in the police academy for recruits; (5) implementing or improving integrity training and accountability measures for career officers; (6) establishing an independent monitor to oversee the police department and its internal affairs unit; and (7) community policing.<sup>4</sup>

The detection practices our sources discussed included integrity testing,<sup>5</sup> early warning systems to identify potential problem officers, and proactive investigations of individual officers or precincts with a high number of corruption complaints.

Lastly, we identified several federal initiatives that were directed toward assisting state and local governments in preventing and detecting police corruption.

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## Background

Police corruption, according to the academic and other literature and anticorruption commission reports we reviewed, is not a new problem and dates back to the establishment of the first organized local police forces.

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<sup>4</sup>Community policing is an approach by which local police departments develop strategies to address the causes of and reduce the fear of crime through problem-solving tactics and community-police partnerships. Community policing programs stress three principles that make these programs different from traditional law enforcement programs: (1) prevention, (2) problem solving, and (3) partnerships. See *Community Policing: Issues Related to the Design, Operation, and Management of the Grant Program* (GAO/GGD 97-167, Sept. 3, 1997).

<sup>5</sup>Police integrity tests include “stings” designed to determine whether officers take advantage of opportunities to engage in corrupt practices that are presented to them by undercover operatives.

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According to a report by the Knapp Commission,<sup>6</sup> when the NYPD was established in 1844 as the first municipal police department in this country, it experienced immediate problems with extortion and other corrupt activities. Subsequently, the NYPD has experienced scandals and investigations approximately every 20 years.<sup>7</sup> As in New York City, corruption has plagued police departments in many major cities at some point in their history, including Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, and Philadelphia.

While it has been a persistent problem for law enforcement, the nature of police corruption has varied over time. Historically, police corruption involved such low-level and passive activities as bribery schemes and nonenforcement of the law. Also, early police corruption was often depicted as the result of a few dishonest individuals—commonly referred to as “rotten apples”—in an otherwise honest department. However, during the police corruption scandals of the 1970s and 1980s, the corruption uncovered in several cities was found to be systemic, rather than attributable to individual behavior.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1970s, New York City’s Knapp Commission identified two general forms of police corruption, which it referred to as “grass-eaters” or “meat-eaters.” According to the Knapp Commission’s report:

“The overwhelming majority of those [police officers] who do take payoffs are ‘grass-eaters,’ who accept gratuities and solicit five- and ten- and twenty-dollar payments from contractors, tow-truck operators, gamblers, and the like, but do not aggressively pursue corruption payments. ‘Meat-eaters,’ probably only a small percentage of the force, spend a good deal of their working hours aggressively seeking out situations they can exploit for financial gain, including gambling, narcotics, and other serious offenses which can yield payments of thousands of dollars.”<sup>9</sup>

The Knapp Commission concluded that, while the meat-eaters receive the large payoffs and the newspaper coverage, the grass-eaters are the heart of the problem because their greater numbers make corruption respectable.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the City’s Anti-Corruption Procedures (commonly referred to as the Knapp Commission), The Knapp Commission Report on Police Corruption (New York: George Braziller, 1972).

<sup>7</sup>The Knapp Commission Report, pp. 61-64.

<sup>8</sup>T. Barker, Police Ethics: Crisis in Law Enforcement (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1996), p. 39.

<sup>9</sup>The Knapp Commission Report, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup>The Knapp Commission Report, p. 4.



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Despite this history, disagreement still exists among criminal justice practitioners, researchers, and the public as to what type of behavior constitutes police corruption. Some definitions include behavior that ranges from brutality to questionable behavior such as verbal attacks on citizens. Two key elements of the various definitions of police corruption, as found in the academic literature we reviewed, are that the acts involve (1) the “misuse” of the officer’s professional role—“authority” or “official position”—and (2) the receipt or expected receipt of material rewards or personal gain.<sup>11</sup>

Enforcement of laws against all forms of vice (e.g., gambling, prostitution, and drugs) reportedly afford opportunities for police corruption. However, drug enforcement often exposes police officers to large amounts of cash and drugs held by individuals who are not likely to complain about illegal police behavior. Recent newspaper accounts, commission reports, academic studies, and other literature we reviewed suggest that today there are more opportunities than in the past for drug-related police corruption.

Although the FBI and DOJ have jurisdiction for investigating and prosecuting public corruption, police corruption is generally investigated internally by local police departments and/or prosecuted by local district attorneys. The FBI, DOJ, and other federal agencies are involved in only some local public corruption cases, including police corruption, and the extent of that involvement varies among cities across the country.

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## Available Information on the Nature and Extent of Drug-Related Police Corruption Is Limited

A number of the commission reports, academic publications, and other literature we reviewed and the officials and academic experts we interviewed described differences between the nature of drug-related police corruption and the nature of other types of police corruption; however, opportunities for financial gain were a key factor in both forms of corruption. Unlike other types of corruption, officers involved in drug-related corruption were found to be actively committing crimes, not just passively ignoring them or protecting criminals. These crimes ranged from stealing drugs and money from drug dealers to lying under oath about illegal searches. Usually these activities were carried out by small groups of officers, rather than by lone individuals. Moreover, drug-related police corruption was not found to be a systemic problem that infected entire departments or precincts. Although cases of drug-related police

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<sup>11</sup>H. Goldstein, *Police Corruption: A Perspective on Its Nature and Control* (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1975), p. 3, and T. Barker, R.D. Hunter, and J.P. Rush, *Police Systems and Practices: An Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Career and Technology, 1994), p. 213.

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corruption have been identified in a number of large cities, we found that only limited data on the extent of the problem were available.

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### Differences Between the Nature of Drug-Related Police Corruption and the Nature of Other Types of Police Corruption

Several of our sources described differences between the types of illegal activities generally associated with drug-related police corruption and those associated with other types of police corruption. Traditional police corruption usually involved a mutually beneficial arrangement between criminals and police officers (e.g., the former offered the latter bribes in exchange for immunity from arrest). In contrast, several studies and investigations of drug-related police corruption found on-duty officers engaged in serious criminal activities, such as (1) conducting unconstitutional searches and seizures; (2) stealing money and/or drugs from drug dealers; (3) selling stolen drugs; (4) protecting drug operations; (5) providing false testimony; and (6) submitting false crime reports. According to NYPD officials, some police officers also engaged in drug-related crimes while off duty.

The Mollen Commission reported in 1994 that the most prevalent form of police corruption in New York City was police committing crimes, especially in connection with the illegal drug trade, whereas the Knapp Commission reported about 20 years earlier that the prevalent form of corruption was police taking money to overlook illegal activities, such as bookmaking. In summary, the Mollen Commission, in contrast to the Knapp Commission, found that the meat-eaters, as opposed to the grass-eaters, had become the rule among corrupt police officers, rather than the exception.

The types of reported drug-related corruption engaged in by police officers, as well as the types of police corruption tolerated, differed among cities and even differed among precincts within the same city. Several academic experts, as well as officials in New York City, indicated that the levels of acceptance for different types of offenses committed in connection with drug enforcement activities varied, and that the perceived line between corrupt and acceptable police behavior was not fixed. For example, some of these sources suggested that an officer might view stealing money from a drug dealer as acceptable behavior, while the officer would draw the line at stealing and selling drugs. Over time, behavior, such as dealing in illegal drugs, which was previously viewed as unacceptable by even corrupt officers might become acceptable or at least tolerated. However, our sources also indicated that formerly acceptable behavior, such as lying under oath, might become unacceptable. In

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addition, certain sources suggested that in one department, officers might be more likely to report drug-related corruption but not acts of brutality; while in another department, the reverse might be the norm.

As in the case of other types of police corruption, a primary reported motive for drug-related police corruption was financial gain, but profit was not the only motive identified. The Mollen Commission identified three motivating factors for corruption: (1) profit, (2) power, and (3) perceived “street” law enforcement ends. The commission further explained that while corrupt police officers usually raided drug locations for profit, they sometimes carried out raids because they (1) wanted to show that they were in control of the precinct’s “crime-ridden streets,” (2) wanted to feel the “power” and “thrill” of their badges and uniforms, or (3) believed that vigilante justice was the way to punish those who might otherwise go unpunished. Similarly, some of the officials we interviewed suggested such motives as job cynicism due to the perception that the revolving door of justice lets criminals go free, or officers’ dissatisfaction with how they were viewed and treated by the people in the community.

Our sources also identified differences between the pattern of drug-related police corruption and patterns of other types of police corruption. The commissions and academic experts reported that drug-related police corruption typically involved small groups of officers. For example, the Mollen Commission described these groups, such as those found in New York City’s 73rd precinct case,<sup>12</sup> as “crews” akin to street gangs. Similarly, the Chicago Commission reported that the officers they surveyed characterized corruption as isolated in small groups. In other cities, identified drug-related police corruption cases usually involved from 9 to 30 officers often working together, not individuals or entire departments. Drug-related police corruption usually did not involve such non-drug-related patterns as (1) just a few isolated individuals within a department who engaged in illegal acts or (2) low-level corruption pervading entire departments or precincts.

The commission reports, as well as several federal and New York City officials and academic experts we interviewed, generally described drug-related police corruption as being organized differently from the corruption of earlier eras; however, these sources varied in their characterization of the new organizational forms. For example, in

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<sup>12</sup>The Mollen Commission reported that in New York City’s 73rd precinct between 1988 and 1992, a tightly knit group of 8 to 10 officers who worked together on steady tours of duty routinely conducted unlawful raids on drug locations while on duty.

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describing New York City's 30th precinct case,<sup>13</sup> a DOJ official said that, although numerous officers were involved, it was not one large enterprise. Rather, officers moved in and out of groups, depending on how opportunities presented themselves. The Mollen Commission compared the "standardized and hierarchical—almost bureaucratic" organizational forms of traditional corruption with the street-gang-like structure of the drug-related crews, which were "small, loyal, flexible, fast moving and often hard hitting." The commission also noted that, in some cases, there were explicit agreements or pacts between officers to help ensure that officers observing criminal behavior would not report this behavior.

The information sources used in this report generally concurred in their description of the nature of drug-related police corruption. However, since these sources' observations were based on publicly identified cases of such corruption, which may not be representative of all drug-related police corruption cases, these observations may not completely portray the nature of the problem.

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**Extent of Drug-Related Police Corruption Is Unknown**

We did not locate any centralized, systematically gathered, nationwide source of data that could be used to estimate the extent of the problem nationally. Some data on drug-related police corruption were available from federal agencies, such as the FBI, and local agencies. These data usually included only information about cases in which the reporting organization had been involved or were of limited use because of inconsistencies or anomalies in the data-gathering and tabulating methodologies. However, our sources provided accounts of some drug-related police corruption cases in several large cities.

**Lack of Centralized, Systematically Gathered Data to Estimate Extent of Problem Nationally**

During our review, we were unable to identify nationwide data sources for quantifiable information on the extent of drug-related police corruption. In this regard, we contacted appropriate DOJ agencies, including the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section, the FBI's Public Corruption Unit, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP); national and state police organizations; and academic experts in the field of police research. However, various academic experts

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<sup>13</sup>During the course of its investigation in 1993, the Mollen Commission uncovered allegations of corruption against several officers in New York City's 30th precinct (Manhattan). The commission brought this information to the attention of city and federal officials. The U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York investigated the allegations with the commission; NYPD's IAB; and, subsequently, the local district attorney's office. Ultimately, 30 officers were convicted of primarily drug-related offenses. An additional officer was acquitted, but the officer was later found guilty of administrative charges and was fired by the NYPD.

## Some Data Provided by Federal Organizations Involved in Corruption Investigations

and officials we interviewed and the commission reports reviewed expressed the view that, by and large, most police officers are honest.

Although we could not locate any databases from which to estimate the extent of drug-related police corruption, DOJ agencies provided us with some data. DOJ investigative and prosecutorial agencies, including the FBI's Public Corruption Unit, EOUSA, the U.S. Attorneys' Offices in the Southern and Eastern District of New York, and the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section,<sup>14</sup> had data on the number of corruption cases in which they were involved. BOP maintained some data on former law enforcement officers in federal correctional facilities. NJJ provided us with information on two NJJ-sponsored police integrity studies. However, officials indicated that NJJ did not collect or maintain quantitative data.

The FBI provided us with data on the number of drug-related corruption cases involving state and local law enforcement, between fiscal years 1993 and 1997, in which it was the lead law enforcement investigative organization.<sup>15</sup> (See app. II for a comparison of total and drug-related FBI-led law enforcement corruption cases/convictions for fiscal years 1993-97.) An official in the FBI's Public Corruption Unit told us that the FBI has jurisdiction in local police corruption cases (i.e., when an officer is alleged to have abused his or her official capacity to advance a criminal cause). However, this official also indicated that the FBI usually only investigates local police corruption matters when (1) "systemic" corruption problems were identified but were not being addressed by local officials, (2) no one was designated at the local level to investigate allegations of corruption, (3) the police department's internal investigative bureau was unwilling or unable to investigate itself, or (4) a police department or local government requested an FBI investigation. These situations generally involved small police departments with 20 or fewer officers. Frequently, according to the official, the FBI provided the local police department with the resources, expertise, and required technology to conduct the investigation.

<sup>14</sup>DOJ's Public Integrity Section collected information from U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the country.

<sup>15</sup>The FBI reported that it investigates public corruption, including drug-related police corruption, under the following statutes: 18 U.S.C. §371, Conspiracy to commit an offense; 21 U.S.C. §841, Possession with intent to distribute drugs; 18 U.S.C. §1951, Interference with commerce by threats or violence (Hobbs Act); 18 U.S.C. §1952, Interstate Transportation and Racketeering; 18 U.S.C. §§1961-68, Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organization (RICO) provisions; and 18 U.S.C. §924(c), Carrying dangerous weapons in conjunction with committing a crime of violence or a drug-trafficking related crime.

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Because the FBI is selective in the drug-related police corruption cases it handles, for the reasons discussed above and because of resource constraints, these cases may not be representative of the nature, geographic distribution, or other characteristics of drug-related police corruption cases. Moreover, the number of cases handled by the FBI may not be indicative of the total number of drug-related police corruption cases occurring in cities across the country.

The DOJ Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section provided us with data, reported annually, on public corruption cases handled (1) solely by the Section, (2) by the Section in conjunction with a U.S. Attorney's Office, or (3) solely by a U.S. Attorney's Office.<sup>16</sup> These data included public corruption cases involving illegal drug activities. However, not all cases involving such activities by public officials are handled as public corruption violations and, therefore, would not be included in the database. Furthermore, these data were not categorized by the type of officials committing the corruption (e.g., an elected political official or a police officer) but by the level of government—federal, state, or local—at which the corruption occurred. Therefore, these data indicated the number of federal prosecutions of corrupt local officials, but not the number of police officers prosecuted.

According to a BOP official, the BOP database identifies "special supervision cases," which include former law enforcement officers who have been convicted of various offenses, including drug-related corruption, and incarcerated in federal correctional facilities. He said that this category of cases could include some state and local police officers, but these officers could not be identified. In addition, the official indicated that this category could be analyzed by offense code to determine whether the offender's current conviction was drug-related. However, he noted that drug-related corruption cases could not be identified for two reasons. First, the database does not distinguish between drug-related corruption convictions and other drug-related convictions. Second, some officers involved in drug-related police corruption may have pled guilty to non-drug-related offenses, such as conspiracy; therefore, these officers would not be identified in the database as having been convicted of a drug-related offense, including police corruption. Thus, it was not possible to determine from the BOP database the number of state and local police

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<sup>16</sup>Report to Congress on the Activities and Operations of the Public Integrity Section for 1995, Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Public Integrity Section: Washington, D.C. This report states that it is prepared pursuant to Section 529 of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-521). Part II of the report details the cases prosecuted by the Public Integrity Section; Part III presents data that are based on the Section's annual nationwide survey of U.S. Attorneys.

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officers who were incarcerated in the federal system for drug-related corruption.

Officials from the U.S. Attorneys' Offices for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York told us that they maintained information on the drug-related police corruption cases they handled, but that most drug-related police corruption cases in New York City were investigated by the NYPD's IAB and prosecuted by the local district attorneys. According to these officials, their offices become involved in a police corruption case when the case (1) is egregious and warrants federal involvement—that is, it is precinctwide or large in scope; (2) is generated by their offices; (3) is brought to them by the NYPD's IAB; (4) is cross-jurisdictional—crosses city or state boundaries; or (5) is a case closed by NYPD's IAB or local authorities that a U.S. Attorney decided to review. According to the Eastern District official, that district handled five or fewer cases of police corruption each year. The Southern District official indicated that that district was involved in a small number of police corruption cases referred to it by the NYPD's IAB, and that it also conducted numerous investigations, every year, of police corruption allegations made to the office. Both districts participated in the prosecutions of drug-related corruption cases uncovered during the Mollen Commission investigation.

**Local Police Department Data Reported to Be Incomplete or Noncomparable**

Academic experts and various U.S. Attorney and FBI officials indicated that the primary repository for any data on drug-related police corruption was at the local level, particularly the internal affairs section of local police departments. However, they cautioned that obtaining, analyzing, and trying to create a national database on police corruption from local data sources may present several problems.

First, data from local agencies may not be readily accessible because internal affairs units may view the data as proprietary or confidential. Second, drug-related police corruption cases may not be readily identifiable as such. For example, an officer investigated for such corruption may be charged with perjury, rather than a drug-related offense. Third, available data provided by local officials may not be verifiable because of the lack of access to case files. Even if the files were available, academic experts we interviewed believed that other files concealing allegations of corruption might exist in some police departments. Fourth, available data reflect who has been caught, identified, and recorded, but not necessarily all of those officers who have engaged in drug-related police corruption. Fifth, local information may not be available from a single source, since cases of drug-related police

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corruption may be handled administratively by the police department, prosecuted by the local district attorney, or prosecuted by the local U.S. Attorney's Office.

Finally, available data are not likely to be comparable across police departments because of variations in the definition and handling of drug-related police corruption cases, as well as differences in data collection methods. One researcher characterized local police department corruption data as measures of a department's energy for investigating and its ability to measure corruption, not as reliable indicators of trends in the overall level of corruption in a department.

### Sources Identified Some Cases of Drug-Related Police Corruption

Our sources did identify examples of publicly disclosed cases of drug-related police corruption in several cities during the past decade. The Mollen Commission investigated and uncovered drug-related police corruption in New York City. The Chicago Commission described identified cases of drug-related police corruption in Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, Miami, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and Detroit. In addition, we identified accounts of drug-related police corruption in Atlanta and Cleveland. (App. III contains a synopsis of drug-related cases in several cities.)

However, since the publicized cases only provided information about those officers convicted of identified drug-related corruption offenses in cities where the problem had been reported, these individuals and cities may not be representative of officers who commit such offenses or of the locations where such crimes are committed. From the case information available, no conclusions can be drawn about (1) which types of officers are involved in drug-related corruption; (2) the extent of drug-related police corruption within cities where it has been identified; or (3) the incidence of drug-related police corruption in cities across the country.

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### Sources Identified Various Factors Associated With Drug-Related Police Corruption

The commission reports, much of the academic and other literature we reviewed, and officials and academic experts we interviewed, identified a variety of factors as being associated with drug-related as well as other types of police corruption. These factors included (1) opportunities to commit illegal acts or crimes on the job—for example, the availability of large sums of money; (2) the maturity-level (age) and education-level of the officer; (3) inadequate training, particularly integrity training, in the police academies and on the job; (4) a police culture that supported or ignored corruption; (5) ineffective headquarters and field supervision;



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(6) management's failure to enforce a code of integrity; (7) weaknesses in a police department's internal investigative structure and practices; (8) involvement in police brutality; and (9) pressures arising from an officer's personal neighborhood ties.

Our sources did not rank the factors according to their impact on drug-related police corruption; therefore, we had no basis on which to assess their relative importance. Moreover, since these factors were only associated with identified drug-related police corruption cases that have been publicly disclosed, they may not be all inclusive or necessarily representative of the universe of drug-related police corruption cases. Also, to our knowledge, no systematic studies of the causal link of these factors to drug-related police corruption have been undertaken.

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### Opportunities to Commit Illegal Acts or Crimes on the Job

Our sources described police recruits, generally, as individuals who had become police officers for the right reasons. They also said that once on the job, however, officers working in precincts with a high level of drug activity may be confronted with opportunities to commit illegal acts or crimes, such taking large sums of money from drug dealers, who are generally reluctant to complain about thefts by police officers. Without support and experience, these temptations are hard for some officers to resist. Moreover, federal officials, academic experts, and the commission reports described how some police officers who engaged in illicit drug-related activities were able, through a "de-sensitizing" or rationalization process, to justify their behavior on the basis of, for example, the notion that they were only harming or disrupting illegal drug dealers.

Academic sources and DOJ Criminal Division Public Integrity Section officials suggested that police officers working in certain situations, such as in undercover operations, could be more vulnerable to involvement in illegal drug-related activities. For example, the nature of undercover work generally places an officer in a criminal environment conducive to corruption. In addition, these federal officials opined that corruption was more likely to result from day-to-day contacts between police officers and informants. Academic and other sources also suggested that special drug investigation units with low levels of supervision were also considered to be high-risk environments for drug-related corruption.

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**Maturity- and Education-Level of the Officer**

The commission reports we reviewed and various officials and academic experts we interviewed indicated that certain recruitment policies, such as lower age and education requirements, might be related to incidents of police corruption. An official in the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Southern District of New York and academic experts indicated that in New York City and Chicago, for example, most of the officers involved in recent drug-related corruption cases would not have been hired under previous higher age and education criteria.

Moreover, rapid recruitment initiatives to meet major, time-critical hiring demands appeared to be associated with episodes of drug-related police corruption in some cities. For example, police departments in Miami and Washington, D.C., went through major hiring initiatives during the 1980s, and these departments subsequently experienced corruption problems. Academic sources and some federal officials suggested that, for various reasons, including inadequate screening (e.g., inadequate or incomplete background checks), such rapid recruitment initiatives might have permitted the hiring of recruits who might not otherwise have been hired.

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**Inadequate Police Academy and On-The-Job Training**

Inadequate training, particularly integrity training, in the police academies and especially on the job, was identified as another factor associated with drug-related corruption. According to a member of the Mollen Commission we interviewed, before the establishment of the commission and the implementation of its recommendations, the NYPD's integrity training consisted of the message "don't get caught." Moreover, the Mollen Commission found that the NYPD police academy's integrity training at that time was based on the types of corruption uncovered by the Knapp Commission, such as gambling and vice rackets. The Mollen Commission concluded that this training not only had little relevance to the temptations confronted by police officers about 20 years later, but the training sent a message of departmental disinterest in integrity matters.<sup>17</sup> Asserting that the real test of the effectiveness of the Chicago Police Department's training strategies comes when new police officers are assigned to districts and begin to face the challenges inherent in their work, the Chicago Commission found that the department could do a better job in this crucial area.

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<sup>17</sup>NYPD officials told us that the integrity training program subsequently had been changed, and they provided us with a copy of the student training guide.

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## Police Culture That Supported or Ignored Corruption

The relationship between police culture and police corruption, including drug-related police corruption, was a recurring theme articulated by our various sources. They generally concurred that although police culture may be positive (i.e., supportive of integrity), a negative culture (i.e., one that supported or generally ignored corruption) was a key factor associated with drug-related police corruption. Among the attitudes and values identified as characteristics of a police culture that supported corruption were the following: (1) a code of silence with grave consequences for those violating it; (2) loyalty to other officers above all else; (3) police cynicism or disillusionment about their jobs, the criminal justice system, and public support for those who performed properly; and (4) indoctrination on the job as to what is acceptable behavior—for example, ignoring corruption. The Mollen Commission concluded that such aspects of a police culture primarily facilitated corruption by (1) setting the standard that nothing was more important than the loyalty of officers to each other (e.g., not stopping even the most serious forms of corruption) and (2) thwarting efforts to control corruption, thereby leading officers to cover up for other officers' crimes.

The literature we reviewed and some academic experts suggested that the relationship between culture and corruption is complex. For example, one expert asserted that police behavior was affected by three levels of culture: (1) the culture of the police profession in general, (2) the culture of a particular police department, and (3) the culture of the city. He also suggested that the code of silence may be a characteristic that is common to the culture of police departments in general, while attitudes toward brutality or stealing illegal drugs may be more a part of a particular police department's culture. The literature indicates that tolerance of corruption varies among cities and even within a city, over time. In addition, the previous discussion on the lack of integrity training suggests an acculturational process, whereby new officers learn the rationalizations and accepted behaviors from more experienced officers.

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## Ineffective Headquarters and Field Supervision

At the systemic level, the commission reports identified poor or inadequate supervision in police departments from the top down—at headquarters and in the field—as a factor associated with corruption. For example, the Mollen Commission found a widespread breakdown in field supervision in the NYPD. The commission asserted that this breakdown fueled and protected the police corruption they observed, and it primarily blamed NYPD's management for the poor state of police supervision. The Chicago Commission found the Chicago Police Department lacking in

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supervisory accountability and emphasized the importance of the supervisory role of sergeant to an effective police organization.

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### Management's Failure to Enforce a Code of Integrity

Various sources acknowledged the critical role of department management in promoting ethics and integrity and the serious consequences of management's failure to provide such leadership. Although major police departments historically have distributed rules and guidelines proscribing unethical and potentially corruptive conduct, an article from a recent symposium sponsored by the FBI and Major City Chiefs Administrators concluded that these guidelines may be confusing or misleading, and consequently can contribute to corruption.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in some departments, operational goals conflict with written policies. For example, a police department may have rules, which are consistently enforced through disciplinary actions, against accepting gratuities from the business community with corresponding sanctions, but the chief and other high-ranking commanders may be the guests of these same business representatives at their country clubs. Also, police organizations have generally claimed the privilege of self-regulation. The Mollen Commission concluded that the failure of NYPD's corruption controls reflected the inevitable consequence of allowing the police to "police themselves."

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### Weaknesses in a Police Department's Internal Investigative Areas

Our sources identified problems in a police department's internal investigative structure and practices as another aspect of inadequate management associated with drug-related police corruption. Corruption control was negatively affected by such factors as the lack of respect for internal affairs units; flaws in investigative techniques; the lack of resources; inadequately skilled internal affairs staff; the lack of autonomy of the internal affairs bureau; and the minimizing or concealing of police corruption incidents (e.g., by putting allegations of police corruption in a special file rather than initiating an investigation). By 1992, according to the Mollen Commission, NYPD's corruption control system had collapsed, but no one in the department had the incentive to fix what was broken. Also, the Chicago Commission reported hearing evidence of substantial delays in addressing the corruption in one district. At the same time, however, the commission asserted that the Chicago Police Department's leadership, particularly its Internal Affairs Division, should be given some credit for taking a proactive role in exposing recent police corruption scandals.

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<sup>18</sup>Alfred E. James and Charles V. Campisi, "Organizational Culture and Values," *Maintaining Integrity in Law Enforcement Organizations: Selected Readings, Major City Chiefs Administrators and National Executive Institute Associates* (Quantico, VA: FBI Academy, January 1994), p. 30.

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Our literature review and expert interviews indicated that cities varied in the structures, procedures, and practices employed to identify and investigate corruption. For example, New York used field associates—line officers recruited to report covertly to the internal affairs unit on any misconduct or illicit activities that they observed while at work—but other cities did not.

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### Police Brutality

Among other factors that the commission reports and several academic experts we interviewed found could be associated with drug-related police corruption was police brutality. In Chicago, for example, one researcher found that, while not all officers involved in police brutality were also engaged in drug-related police corruption, a number of police officers involved in drug-related corruption also had histories of the use of excessive force. The Mollen Commission reported a similar finding. DOJ public integrity officials suggested that, if there is a violation of the civil rights of a drug dealer, little support for the dealer would come from other police officers; rather, the code of silence would likely be invoked, creating an environment supportive of corruption.

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### Pressures From an Officer's Personal Neighborhood Ties

Still another factor associated with drug-related police corruption and identified during our review was pressure arising from an officer's personal neighborhood ties. That is, some sources indicated that neighborhood ties to friends, family members, or even associates, for example in gang-plagued areas, might make it difficult for officers raised in those communities to avoid situations that promote corrupt behavior. Alternatively, however, some sources suggested that neighborhood ties might deter corruption because officers would have a stake in the community.

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### Sources Identified Some Practices That Might Prevent and Detect Drug-Related Police Corruption

The commission reports and many of the academic and other publications we reviewed and the officials and academic experts we interviewed identified and/or recommended various practices to prevent and detect drug-related police corruption. We did not evaluate and do not necessarily endorse these practices. Although these practices generally are said to address the previously discussed factors that are associated with drug-related police corruption, the practices may also combat other types of corruption.

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The prevention practices that were identified included (1) making a commitment to integrity from the top to the bottom of the department, (2) changing the police culture, (3) requiring command accountability, (4) raising the age and educational requirements and implementing or improving integrity training in the police academy for recruits, (5) implementing or improving integrity training and accountability measures for career officers, (6) establishing an independent monitor to oversee the police department and its internal affairs unit, and (7) community policing.

Among the detection practices recommended and/or implemented were integrity testing, early warning systems to detect potential problem officers, and proactive investigations of individual officers or precincts with a high number of corruption-related complaints. Several factors, such as available resources or the culture of the department, affected the appropriateness or implementation of these practices in particular cities. While some departments were already implementing some of the recommended prevention and/or detection practices, a recommendation usually was based on the perceived merits of the practice, which were grounded in policing experience, rather than a formal evaluation of that practice.

In addition, we identified several federal initiatives that were directed toward assisting state and local governments in preventing police corruption.

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## Practices to Prevent Drug-Related Police Corruption

Our various sources identified and/or recommended practices to prevent police corruption in general and drug-related police corruption in particular. Although some practices, such as making a commitment to integrity, were generally recommended, the merits of other practices, such as establishing an independent monitor to oversee the police department and its internal affairs unit, were the subject of some disagreement and debate.

Focusing on a positive approach to preventing police corruption, commission reports and a recent NJ symposium emphasized the importance of police departmental leadership in instilling a commitment to integrity. According to the Mollen Commission, such a commitment cannot be just an abstract value statement but must be reflected in the actions of the Police Commissioner, the department's top commanders, and the field supervisors who shape the attitudes of the rank and file. The

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message must be sent throughout the department that corruption will not be tolerated. Similarly, the Chicago Commission asserted that supervisors must constantly reinforce the value statement and code of ethics through example and through a system of rewards for proper behavior. The NJ symposium underscored the importance of developing a “healthy” police organization to reinforce and maintain the good character and constructive motivations of individuals who join law enforcement.

Our various sources generally concluded that instilling a commitment to integrity and developing a healthy police organizational environment required changes in the police culture. Even though police culture was identified as a negative factor associated with drug-related police corruption, a positive police culture, supportive of integrity and commitment, was also identified as a factor that could prevent such behavior. For example, the police culture of the San Diego Police Department, a department reportedly not experiencing drug-related police corruption, was characterized by one source as discouraging an officer from taking anything except his or her paycheck. Among the aspects of a positive police culture that the sources identified were loyalty to the department’s integrity, rather than loyalty to corrupt colleagues; positive peer pressure, supportive of integrity, that helped the department to regulate itself; pride in the organization; and positive incentives for reporting corruption.

The commissions, in particular, emphasized command accountability (i.e., requiring a commitment to corruption control throughout the entire department, especially by field commanders) as a key component of a department’s anticorruption strategy. The Mollen Commission concluded that command accountability was the cornerstone of a department’s anticorruption strategy. Similarly, the Chicago Commission affirmed its belief in the principle of supervisor accountability and asserted that supervisors who did not know of or did nothing to stop wrongdoing in their command should be disciplined. Moreover, the commission recommended a meaningful ethics training component and a probationary period for new supervisors.

Our sources recommended several recruiting practices to help prevent police corruption. These practices included (1) better candidate screening, for example, completion of background checks; (2) raising the age of recruits; (3) raising educational standards, for example, requiring at least some college education; (4) incorporating integrity training into police academy curricula; (5) reviewing police officers’ integrity as part of

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probationary period evaluations; and (6) extending the probationary period. Some of these recommendations emphasized selection of those candidates with the maturity to deal with the temptations and pressures presented by modern policing, particularly in neighborhoods with high levels of drug-related activities. Generally, some college or military experience was considered an indicator of maturity because it provided an opportunity for prospective candidates to live away from home and establish a work record. However, the commission reports, studies, and experts often differed regarding the specific age and educational requirements recommended (e.g., 22 or 23 years old and 2 or 4 years of college).

Our sources stressed that, since drug-related police corruption and the influences of a negative police culture continue to confront officers during their careers, prevention activities should continue beyond the police academy. The prevention practices that our sources advocated included (1) integrity training as part of the continuing education of officers, (2) the inclusion of integrity assessments in in-service evaluations, and (3) a consideration of integrity assessments when determining promotions. In addition, DOJ public integrity officials suggested rotational assignments, that is, moving officers to different precincts as a means to remove local police officers from the pressures of personal ties in their own communities that provide opportunities for corruption. This is a practice generally followed by some federal law enforcement agencies.

To ensure the accountability of police departments to the public, one approach our sources recommended was external oversight of police departments, particularly their internal affairs bureaus, by an independent review board or commission, special prosecutor, or inspector general. The Mollen Commission recommended an independent oversight commission with (1) a small permanent staff; (2) the ability and authority to bring on additional staff, as needed, from law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration; and (3) subpoena power to enable the commission to carry out its own investigations. Subsequently, the Commission to Combat Police Corruption was established by the current New York City Mayor to oversee the NYPD's implementation of its anticorruption systems and controls. However, according to commission officials and documents, the commission has no independent subpoena power or authority to conduct its own independent investigations. According to various sources, because police departments historically have been self-regulating, some departments may oppose proposals for independent review mechanisms, particularly with independent



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investigative authority, as recommended by the Mollen Commission. NYPD officials told us they did not oppose the creation of an independent commission, but opposed its having independent investigative authority because it duplicated the authority of local district attorneys and federal agencies.

Among the new approaches to local law enforcement being implemented in numerous cities is community policing. We found differences of opinion among our sources regarding the effectiveness of community policing in preventing police corruption. The Chicago Commission reported anecdotal evidence suggesting some connection between building community relations and a reduction in aggressive forms of police corruption. The commission concluded that once the community is exposed to positive reform and gang and drug violence are reduced it is no longer fertile ground for police corruption. Nevertheless, the Mollen Commission, noting the concern of many in law enforcement that the close relationship between officers and citizens required for successful community policing may also increase opportunities for police corruption, concluded that “the value of the [community policing] program to effective law enforcement and its commensurate benefits to the community far outweigh[ed] the risks involved.”

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## Practices to Detect Drug-Related Police Corruption

Our various sources also identified and/or recommended several practices to detect police corruption in general and drug-related police corruption in particular. As with police corruption prevention practices, we found differences of opinion among our sources regarding the effectiveness of particular practices.

A recurring theme among the officials we interviewed was that departments should apply their drug enforcement investigative techniques to investigations of drug-related police corruption. For example, investigators might employ such techniques as (1) placing officers suspected of being involved in illicit drug-related activities under surveillance, (2) getting drug dealers and corrupt officers to testify against other dealers or traffickers or other corrupt officers, or (3) debriefing arrested drug dealers to obtain information on police corruption. New York City officials recommended that police departments engage in proactive investigations of areas showing a high concentration of drug-related corruption complaints against police officers. NYPD officials told us that the department was using pin-mapping to track precincts with high levels of corruption complaints. This technique is typically used to

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identify high crime areas by putting pins on a map where crimes have occurred.

Some departments, such as the NYPD, used and recommended integrity testing to detect drug-related police corruption. According to NYPD officials and documents, the IAB conducted both targeted integrity testing, which is directed at officers suspected of involvement in corrupt activities (about 25 percent of the total tests conducted), and random integrity testing, which is directed at precincts or duty shifts that might be prone to corruption based on statistical data. Generally, NYPD's targeted integrity testing is more sophisticated and might involve setting up a sting. For example, as part of a sting operation, undercover officers might pose as a married couple involved in the local drug trade. The operation would then be videotaped to determine whether the targeted officer(s) would commit corrupt acts, such as buying drugs from the couple.

Academic experts we interviewed indicated that police departments disagreed about the cost-effectiveness of integrity testing, particularly random testing, in terms of the number of prosecutions it is likely to generate. Chicago Commission staff indicated that several commission members were concerned that integrity testing might (1) constitute entrapment, (2) have a deleterious effect on the morale of the department, and (3) involve the inefficient use of resources. NYPD officials, in contrast, told us that integrity testing often helped convince corrupt officers to cooperate with the investigation and identify other corrupt officers. However, a study of New York's random integrity-testing program, carried out by KPMG Peat Marwick LLP for the New York City Commission to Combat Police Corruption, found that, although random integrity testing was not an effective tool for identifying and weeding out corrupt police or serving as a barometer of corruption in the department, it can be useful for identifying patrol officer training needs. The KPMG study did not attempt to determine whether the program had a deterrent effect or met its objective of creating a sense of IAB's "omnipresence" (i.e., to have each officer believe that each assignment might be an integrity test). NYPD officials told us that, on the basis of another consultant study, they found that officers believed many more random integrity tests were being conducted than actually were, and that the program was having a deterrent effect.

Our sources also indicated that many police departments have some type of early warning system consisting of identified factors, or patterns of behavior, that may indicate a corruption problem. Some systems are less

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formal in terms of the criteria used to select potentially corrupt officers to be targeted for observation, while other systems have a formal set of criteria for selecting such officers. Moreover, the factors a police department looks at may also vary. Factors relating to an officer that might be monitored include standard of living, indebtedness, type of car driven, and the number of complaints lodged against him or her. Also, how departments address findings may differ. For example, a potentially problem officer may be sent back to the academy for training or to an employee assistance program. The Chicago Commission also highlighted the need for computerized resources to support such systems to allow for the analysis of data indicative of potential misconduct, including corruption.

In addition, according to our sources, drug use was a reported concern and drug testing—whether targeted or random—was a practice employed by some police departments to detect drug use, although such use was not necessarily found to be an indicator of drug corruption. However, how departments treated positive test results varied. For example, in Chicago, drug use is treated as a medical problem. In New York City, according to NYPD officials, an officer who (1) fails a drug screening test; (2) is found in possession of illegal drugs; or (3) refuses to take a drug screening test is dismissed. In either case, positive drug test results are typically not treated as a crime.

Particularly in larger police departments, special internal affairs units may be responsible for implementing detection practices, such as those identified in this report. Both the Mollen Commission and Chicago Commission reports emphasized the need for police department internal affairs units to have high-quality staff and sufficient resources to carry out investigations. However, the Mollen Commission also emphasized that the NYPD's IAB had to first establish its credibility if it were to fight corruption effectively.

Our sources also identified variations among cities in the prevention or detection practices recommended and implemented. According to academic experts, possible explanations for these differences included the (1) availability of resources; (2) strength of and opposition from police unions; (3) police culture; and (4) form of city government (e.g., mayor-council or city manager).

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## Federal Initiatives to Promote the Prevention and Detection of Drug-Related Police Corruption

During our review, we also identified federal efforts to assist local law enforcement in preventing and detecting drug-related police corruption. According to FBI Public Corruption Unit officials, in addition to leading or providing assistance to state and local officials on law enforcement corruption investigations, the FBI is working on a proposal with the IACP and National Sheriffs' Association to proactively address systemic corruption in law enforcement. By using covert investigative techniques, identifying causal factors, and developing and promoting the implementation of internal control models in concert with the law enforcement community, the FBI hopes to assist local law enforcement organizations in preventing and detecting corruption. In addition, the officials told us that the FBI assists local organizations by providing training in corruption prevention and detection techniques.

In July 1996, NIJ and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services sponsored a symposium on police integrity. Attendees at the conference, which provided a forum for the discussion of policing issues such as corruption, included law enforcement executives, researchers, police officers, labor organizations, community and political leadership, and related disciplines. The symposium achieved consensus, and made short- and long-term recommendations, on a number of issues. The recommendations included (1) continued dialogue at a level closer to the practitioners, through additional national or regional meetings at which information could be collected and shared; (2) national workshops inviting representatives from leading police development programs throughout the country (e.g., the FBI National Executive Institute) to discuss infusing integrity and ethics throughout the curriculums for greater effectiveness in police leadership development programs; (3) the development and implementation of a national "teach the teachers" program to create a corps of instructors versed in ethical theory and practice in police services; and (4) assessment of entry-level screening and hiring processes to determine if they are reliable predictors of ethical behavior.

Further information on the practices for preventing and detecting police corruption recommended appear in the DOJ publication, Police Integrity: Public Service With Honor. Presently, NIJ is also sponsoring studies on police misconduct and police integrity.

Finally, the 1998 National Drug Control Strategy,<sup>19</sup> prepared by ONDCP, discusses additional federal programs that assist state and local law

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<sup>19</sup>The National Drug Control Strategy, 1998: A Ten Year Plan (Washington, D.C.: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1998), pp. 35 and 36.

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enforcement or deal with public corruption. DOJ's Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program provides support to state and local law enforcement organizations in the form of grants that can be used to, among other things, improve the investigation and prosecution of drug-related public corruption crime. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces, which were established in 1982 and typically consist of members of 11 federal agencies and state and local law enforcement organizations, have public corruption as 1 of their targeted activities. Moreover, through ONDCP's High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)<sup>20</sup> Program, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies undertake cooperative investigations that could involve drug-related activities by police officers. ONDCP officials told us that, while ONDCP presently has no strategic initiatives that directly address drug-related police corruption, they are likely to consider specifically addressing this issue in the future.

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As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies of this report to the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the congressional committees with jurisdiction over drug control and criminal justice issues; the Attorney General and heads of Justice's law enforcement agencies; the Secretary of the Treasury and heads of Treasury's law enforcement agencies; the Director of ONDCP; and the heads of nongovernmental organizations and associations representing law enforcement interests, such as the IACP, that we contacted during our work. Copies will also be made available to others upon request.

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<sup>20</sup>HIDTAs are regions with critical drug-trafficking problems that harmfully affect other areas of the United States. The ONDCP Director, in consultation with the Attorney General, heads of drug control agencies, and governors, designates the HIDTA locations, of which there are currently 17. HIDTAs, among other things, facilitate cooperative investigations, intelligence sharing, and joint operations against trafficking organizations. Federal resources support these initiatives.

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The major contributors to this report are listed in appendix IV. If you have any questions about this report, please call me on (202) 512-8777.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard M. Stana".

Richard M. Stana  
Associate Director  
Administration of Justice Issues

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**Table II.2: Officers Convicted as a Result of FBI-Led Law  
Enforcement Corruption Investigations, Fiscal Years 1993-97**

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**Abbreviations**

BOP	Federal Bureau of Prisons
DOJ	Department of Justice
EOUSA	Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HIDTA	High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
IAB	Internal Affairs Bureau
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NYPD	New York City Police Department
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy

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# Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

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Congressman Charles B. Rangel requested that we conduct a study on the impact of drug trafficking on the corruption of police in large cities having a high incidence of drug trafficking and abuse. In conducting our preliminary work, we sought to identify commission reports and research studies on drug-related police corruption, as well as relevant databases and other pertinent information. However, we could not identify any central data sources to quantify the extent of drug-related police corruption and the linkage between illegal drugs and corruption. Therefore, we agreed to provide descriptive information on the (1) nature and extent of drug-related police corruption in certain large cities, (2) factors associated with drug-related police corruption, and (3) practices that have been recommended or implemented to prevent or detect drug-related police corruption.

To address our three objectives, we conducted an extensive literature search, using automated information services, such as the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and Westlaw, to identify relevant academic publications, symposium reports, and reports issued by city police commissions established to investigate and propose methods for countering police corruption. The number and scope of the reports and studies we identified were limited, and the results they provided may not be entirely reliable, nor generalizable. The studies and reports identified and used in the preparation of this report are listed in the bibliography.

We interviewed officials with the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section, National Institute of Justice, Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys; the Federal Bureau of Prisons; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Public Corruption Unit. We also contacted the Office of National Drug Control Policy. In addition, we contacted several international, national, and state law enforcement associations to determine whether they could identify any related studies and provide us with additional information sources. These associations included the Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), National Organization for Black Law Enforcement Executives, National District Attorneys Association, National Association of Police Organizations, National Sheriffs' Association, Police Executive Research Forum, and Police Foundation. We also discussed the issues with a number of academic experts in police research.

We conducted our fieldwork in New York City, where we met with officials from the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Internal

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Affairs Bureau (IAB), U.S. Attorneys' Offices for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, the current City of New York Commission to Combat Police Corruption, and officials associated with New York City's former Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Procedures of the Police Department, commonly referred to as the Mollen Commission. We also interviewed representatives of the current City of Chicago Commission on Police Integrity and contacted the current City of Philadelphia Police Corruption Task Force, which is presently conducting its study.

Regarding our first objective, we obtained some descriptive information on the nature of drug-related police corruption from the Mollen Commission and Chicago Commission reports and our interviews with officials from the FBI and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices in the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York. We also obtained information from academic reports and studies from our literature search and by discussing the issues with academic experts. These sources provided descriptive information about drug-related police corruption. However, since these observations were based on a limited number of publicly disclosed, large-city, drug-related police corruption cases, this information may not accurately portray or be representative of the nature of such corruption in all large-city cases.

To determine the extent of drug-related police corruption in large cities and the extent of any link between drug trafficking and police corruption, we attempted during our preliminary work to identify a central repository or collection point for relevant quantitative data. DOJ component agencies, law enforcement organizations, and academic experts could not identify any such central repository. The FBI was able to provide us with limited data on FBI-led drug-related law enforcement corruption cases. We have used these data to show the extent of the FBI's involvement in drug-related law enforcement corruption investigations. However, they do not reflect the overall extent of drug-related police corruption. Moreover, we did not independently verify the accuracy of the data provided by the FBI.

Regarding our second objective, to determine the factors associated with drug-related police corruption, we reviewed the Mollen Commission and Chicago Commission reports. Moreover, we reviewed academic studies identified during our literature search and obtained the views of several academic experts. We also included those factors identified by officials during our interviews with the NYPD's IAB, the DOJ Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Narcotic and Dangerous Drugs Section, and

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the U.S. Attorneys' Offices in New York City. The same factors were often identified independently by several different sources.

Regarding our third objective, to determine some of the practices recommended or adopted by city police departments to prevent and/or detect drug-related police corruption, as well as police corruption in general, we reviewed and summarized the findings and recommendations of the Mollen Commission and Chicago Commission reports; observations from academic sources; and information provided by federal law enforcement officials, the NYPD's IAB, and the New York City Commission to Combat Police Corruption. We also discussed this topic with academic experts. Moreover, we obtained information from the FBI on its proposed joint initiative with the IACP and National Sheriffs' Association to develop internal control models to prevent and detect police corruption.

It is important to emphasize that we derived the information presented in this report from our review of a limited number of existing reports and studies and interviews with federal and local law enforcement officials and academic experts. We did not undertake any primary data collection and analysis. We found only a limited number of studies and reports, which were carried out in a small number of large American cities. The results of these studies may not be entirely reliable or generalizable. We did not attempt to verify the adequacy of the methodologies used to produce the various findings, nor did we attempt to assess the appropriateness of the conclusions or recommendations. Accordingly, our presentation of reported findings and conclusions should not be viewed as our endorsement of them. Moreover, although we recognize that the policies and practices of the police departments discussed in the reports and studies may subsequently have changed, reviewing current policies and practices in particular departments was beyond the scope of this report.

# FBI-Led State and Local Law Enforcement Corruption Cases Opened and Officers Convicted, Fiscal Years 1993-97

**Table II.1: FBI-Led Law Enforcement  
Corruption Cases Opened, Fiscal  
Years 1993-97**

<b>Fiscal year</b>	<b>Total corruption cases opened</b>	<b>Number of drug-related cases opened</b>	<b>Percentage of cases opened that are drug-related</b>
1993	186	61	33
1994	185	85	46
1995	210	77	37
1996	183	85	46
1997	190	92	48

Note: According to an FBI Public Corruption Unit official, although the FBI was the lead investigative agency in these cases, a significant number of the cases involved the participation of other federal, state, and/or local law enforcement organizations.

Source: Public Corruption Unit, Criminal Investigative Division, FBI.

**Table II.2: Officers Convicted as a  
Result of FBI-Led Law Enforcement  
Corruption Investigations, Fiscal Years  
1993-97**

<b>Fiscal year</b>	<b>Total law enforcement officers convicted<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Number of officers convicted for drug-related offenses</b>	<b>Percentage of officers convicted for drug-related offenses</b>
1993	129	59	46
1994	143	72	50
1995	135	77	57
1996	83	38	46
1997	150	79	53

Note: According to an FBI Public Corruption Unit official, although the FBI was the lead investigative agency in these cases, a significant number of the cases involved the participation of other federal, state, and/or local law enforcement organizations.

<sup>a</sup>Because cases may remain open for a number of years, convictions in a given year may relate to cases opened in previous years.

Source: Public Corruption Unit, Criminal Investigative Division, FBI.

# Examples of Publicly Disclosed Investigations of Drug-Related Police Corruption in Large Cities Between 1988 and 1998

City	Example of publicly disclosed investigations
Atlanta	In 1995, six police officers were convicted of or pleaded guilty to federal corruption charges stemming from an FBI undercover sting. Five other officers were suspended but not charged.
Chicago	(1) Seven officers of the Tactical Unit of the 15th District were indicted in December 1996 on federal charges for allegedly using their positions, skills, and experiences as police officers to rob and extort money and narcotics from drug dealers on Chicago's west side.  (2) Stings conducted by the Police Department's Internal Affairs Division and the FBI led to the arrest in 1997 of three 6th District tactical officers for conspiracy to commit robbery and sales of illegally confiscated narcotics.
Cleveland	As a result of an FBI undercover operation, 44 police, sheriff's department, and corrections officers from 5 law enforcement agencies were charged in January 1998 with taking money to protect cocaine trafficking operations in Cleveland and northern Ohio. Eight of the officers had pled guilty as of April 10, 1998.
Detroit	As a result of an FBI undercover operation, nine officers were charged in 1991 with conspiracy to aid and abet the distribution of cocaine, attempted money laundering, and other charges.
Los Angeles	As a result of an FBI undercover operation, 27 Sheriff's deputies and 1 police officer had been convicted by 1994 for skimming millions of dollars of drug money, while members of an elite narcotics unit.
Miami	The Miami Police Department experienced a series of drug-related cases during the late 1980s, which resulted in the arrest, suspension, or punishment of more than 100 officers.
New Orleans	For 6 months in 1994, New Orleans police officers protected a cocaine supply warehouse containing 286 pounds of cocaine. As the result of an FBI undercover investigation, 11 officers, who were paid nearly \$100,000 by undercover agents, were convicted. Two more officers are under indictment and are scheduled to stand trial at the end of April 1998. The undercover part of the investigation was terminated when a witness was killed under orders of a New Orleans police officer.

(continued)

**Appendix III  
Examples of Publicly Disclosed  
Investigations of Drug-Related Police  
Corruption in Large Cities Between 1988  
and 1998**

<b>City</b>	<b>Example of publicly disclosed investigations</b>
New York	<p>(1) Six police officers from two Brooklyn precincts were arrested in 1992 by Suffolk County, Long Island, police and charged with narcotics crimes arising from their association with a Suffolk County drug ring.</p> <p>(2) Between 1992 and 1996, federal and city investigations and prosecutions led to the conviction of 30 officers in Manhattan's 30th precinct for primarily narcotics-related offenses. An additional officer was acquitted, but later found guilty of administrative charges and fired by the New York City Police Department.</p>
Philadelphia	Since 1995, 10 police officers from Philadelphia's 39th District have been charged with planting drugs on suspects, shaking down drug dealers for hundreds of thousands of dollars, and breaking into homes to steal drugs and cash.
Savannah	As a result of an FBI undercover operation, 10 officers were convicted in 1994 for protecting drug dealers. Officers took guns and drugs from drug dealers on the street and sold them to undercover agents portraying drug dealers.
Washington, D.C.	As a result of an FBI undercover operation, 12 officers were arrested and convicted in 1994 for protecting an undercover agent portraying a drug dealer who was transporting hundreds of kilos of cocaine into Washington, D.C.

Sources: Chicago Commission on Police Integrity (Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, and Philadelphia examples); Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Procedures of the Police Department (New York example); and Public Corruption Unit, Criminal Investigations Division, FBI (Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Savannah, and Washington, D.C., examples).

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