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What's Happening

This month's issue highlights evolving trends impacting corrections and detention professionals nationwide, including emerging technology, trafficking awareness, legislative developments, professional growth, and recognition of agencies making a positive impact in public safety. As operational challenges continue evolving both inside and outside correctional facilities; collaboration, awareness, and strong professional partnerships remain more important than ever. This issue also highlights the importance of information sharing, continued training, and recognizing the professionals working daily in difficult and often unpredictable environments. Across corrections and detention settings nationwide, agencies continue adapting to emerging threats while remaining committed to safety, accountability, and public service. Thank you to the professionals working each day behind the walls and beyond them.

Message From the Founder

Can you believe it? We're already approaching the HALFWAY point of 2026. It feels like just yesterday we were ringing in the New Year... and now here we are, summer heat, ballgames, beach trips, lake days, cookouts, vacation plans, and somebody's dad already standing at the grill wearing white New Balance shoes and grass stains on them while talking about how "this charcoal burns differently than it used to." Like many of you, I catch myself asking: "Where in the world has the time gone?" And honestly... we all know the answer. Work.



Responsibilities. Calls after hours. Long shifts. Investigations. Court. Reports. Training. Phones are ringing at the worst possible moment. Life moves 100 miles per hour. In our profession, especially, it's easy to become so focused on protecting everyone else's family that we accidentally forget to slow down and enjoy ours! So, before we get into the "meat and potatoes" of this newsletter, I want to remind every member of the CODIN family of something important: Take time for what truly matters. Take the vacation. Plan the cookout. Enjoy the staycation. Put the phone down for a little while. Go watch the ballgame. Sit on the porch. Take the fishing trip. Make the memories. Because time moves faster than we realize. You've probably heard the saying: "You only get 18 summers with your kids." And the older we get, the more that one hits home.

The first year, you're just trying to keep them alive and figure out how something so small can survive on absolutely no sleep. Then come the toddler years, where silence in the house instantly means something expensive is about to happen. From about 4 to 10... those are the magic years. They want you for everything. Every question. Every adventure. Every bedtime story. Then, somewhere around 11 to 13, friends start becoming the center of their universe. And before you know it, from 14 to 18, you find yourself doing your best to prepare them for the next chapter of life while wondering how they grew up so fast. And this perspective really puts it all into focus: "By the time your child turns 12, you've already spent about 75% of the total time you'll ever spend with them." That one will stop you in your tracks if you let it. The days may feel long sometimes... but the years move unbelievably fast. At CODIN, we talk constantly about intelligence, communication, partnerships, and breaking down silos, but behind every badge, every uniform, every investigator, analyst, deputy, officer, agent, dispatcher, prosecutor, and correctional professional... is a family making sacrifices too. Never forget that the mission matters. But so do the people waiting on us at home.

At the end of the day, the cases will still be there tomorrow. The emails will still come in. The phones will still ring. But the moments with our families... those moments are limited and priceless. So this summer, I encourage every one of you to slow down when you can, laugh a little more, unplug a little longer, and focus on what matters most. Because time well spent... becomes time well remembered. From our CODIN family to yours, enjoy your summer, stay safe, and thank you for all you continue to do.

Greggory W. Phillips
Greggory Phillips
Founder / President

Nelson County Correctional Center Receives Pride in Action Award

CODIN would like to recognize Jailer Justin Hall and the staff of the Nelson County Correctional Center for receiving the Pride in Action Award in recognition of their continued commitment to public safety, professionalism, and service to their community.

State and county detention facilities play a critical role within the criminal justice system, often serving as the front line of public safety from the very beginning of the process. While much of the public focus is placed on corrections after sentencing, detention center staff work around the clock managing the daily realities that come with operating a safe, secure, and professional facility.

Under the leadership of Jailer Justin Hall, the Nelson County Correctional Center continues to demonstrate the importance of professionalism, teamwork, and accountability in detention operations. Staff manage responsibilities that extend far beyond simply housing inmates, including inmate intake and release, transportation, court coordination, medical and mental health needs, visitation, inmate programs, and maintaining facility security in an ever-changing environment.

Like many facilities nationwide, Nelson County Correctional Center also faces the growing challenges tied to substance abuse, mental health concerns, and increasingly complex inmate populations. Despite these challenges, staff continue working to balance security, professionalism, and inmate care while maintaining the safety of the facility and surrounding community.

The facility's commitment to rehabilitation and structured support programs also reflects the broader role detention centers play in preparing individuals for a successful return to society. Through accountability, structured supervision, work opportunities, and available resources, staff continue working to create positive outcomes both inside the facility and throughout the community they serve.

The work performed by detention staff often goes unnoticed by the public, despite the long hours, difficult environments, and unpredictable situations they routinely face. Recognition such as the Pride in Action Award highlights the dedication and professionalism required to perform this work each day.

CODIN congratulates Jailer Justin Hall and the entire Nelson County Correctional Center team on this well-deserved recognition and thanks them for their continued commitment to public safety and professional service.



What We're Watching

- Increased national prosecutions involving drones being used to introduce narcotics, contraband phones, weapons-related items, and other prohibited materials into correctional facilities.
- Continued concerns surrounding third-party communication systems and technology that may obscure the true identity of outside participants communicating with incarcerated individuals.
- Growing awareness surrounding how communication platforms, social media, and pen-pal style services may be used for grooming, manipulation, financial exploitation, or trafficking-related activity connected to correctional populations.
- Increased discussion surrounding the use of artificial intelligence to support investigations through report organization, transcription, pattern recognition, and intelligence analysis.
- Expanding collaboration efforts between corrections, law enforcement, prosecutors, and intelligence professionals focused on criminal networks operating both inside and outside correctional institutions.
- Increased emphasis nationwide on proactive intelligence gathering, interagency communication, and identifying behavioral patterns before incidents escalate into larger security concerns.



Carving the Path: Breaking Into Corrections Investigations

By: Alishia McColl, Chief Investigator/West Coast Representative



One of the most common questions I get asked is:
“How do you get into investigations in corrections?”

For many people, especially those who didn’t come into corrections with a law enforcement or detective background, the path is not always obvious. Most of us did not walk into a prison already knowing how to run investigations, interview people, or conduct complex cases. Some of us were just trying to survive probation and memorize the offender handbook. I know I was.

When I started in corrections twelve years ago, I had absolutely no practical background in the field. Everything came with a big learning curve. There was no fast track and no roadmap. It was a process of learning, making mistakes, adapting, and being willing to step into uncomfortable situations over and over again. That’s the reality of investigations.

Investigations requires grit, resilience, and strong problem-solving skills because very little in that world comes easy. Cases are rarely straightforward. You often have to navigate incomplete information, conflicting accounts, and high-pressure environments where details matter. And no matter how experienced you are; you will eventually go up against a case you’ve never dealt with before. Then it becomes all about strategy and timing.

One of the biggest misconceptions people have is believing investigations is only about degrees, certifications, or prior police experience. While that absolutely matters, some of the strongest investigators I’ve worked with succeeded because they mastered the basics first. They developed instincts, communication skills, observation skills, professionalism, and the ability to think critically under pressure. One thing I cannot stress enough is the importance of developing a reputation as someone people can count on. In corrections, your reputation matters long before your title does.

A lot of the opportunities that eventually lead toward investigations start with consistently doing the tasks that others may try to avoid. Quality tier checks, monthly UA collections, security inspections, last-minute assignments, volunteering to help when staffing is short, or simply being the person leadership knows will handle responsibilities professionally and thoroughly.

People notice that.
Facilities notice that.
Leadership notices that.

Developing a reputation as a “go-getter” and problem solver is huge in corrections because investigations is not just about intelligence gathering or complex cases. It’s about trust, consistency, accountability, and attention to detail.

The staff who master the basics are often the same people who become trusted with greater responsibility later. At the end of the day, investigations is built on fundamentals: understanding policy, operations, behavior, and being someone others can rely on when things get difficult. Corrections itself is layered, and the more layers you understand, the stronger your foundation becomes. One of the best recommendations I give to staff interested in investigations is to stop viewing assignments as “just another position.” Every role teaches you something if you’re paying attention.

For officers interested in investigations, one of the smartest avenues to explore is classification. A lot of people overlook it because it may not seem as exciting as specialty teams or security operations, but classification teaches you how a facility truly functions. It exposes you to case management, housing protocols, reentry planning, behavioral considerations, and institutional decision-making.

More importantly, it teaches you the “why” behind the process.

I still use classification principles every single day in investigations because investigations is not only about safety and security. It’s also about understanding behavior, motivation, vulnerabilities, and institutional dynamics. Specialty teams are another excellent opportunity for growth. These assignments expose staff to advanced training, policy application, critical incidents, and deployments outside of their home facility, giving them a broader understanding of corrections as a whole. If your agency offers critical incident reviews, volunteer for them. Those experiences sharpen your awareness quickly. They expose you to interviews, policy review, documentation analysis, and organizational risk. More importantly, they teach you how quickly complacency can impact culture, safety, and liability. Another important piece many people overlook is tracking their successes. Keep a running log of accomplishments, specialty assignments, deployments, training, and certifications. Update your resume often because after years in corrections, it all starts blending together.

For those looking for additional training, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) offers a large amount of free online training in leadership, supervision, communication, and many other areas that can strengthen your skillset while helping build your resume.

And finally, setbacks happen. A lot. I was turned down for a classification position eleven times before finally getting my first temporary opportunity. Eleven. It was frustrating, discouraging, and at times made me question whether continuing to try was even worth it. But I’ve always believed in the “24-hour rule.” You get 24 hours to be upset. Then you get back to work. Every setback taught me something. Sometimes it showed me where I needed to improve, while other times it simply came down to timing and opportunity. Investigations within corrections is often a very small network, so openings may not come immediately. But hard work compounds over time. Grit matters. Resilience matters. Reputation matters. People notice the staff who consistently show up, work hard, stay professional, and continue developing themselves even when nobody is watching. That’s what eventually opens doors.

The path into investigations is rarely a straight path. Most people build it one assignment, one challenge, and one uncomfortable learning experience at a time.

You just keep carving the path forward.

Meet Your Legal Advisor

My name is John Regan, and I currently serve as the Gang Resource Prosecutor for the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia (PAC), a role I have proudly held since 2019. Over the course of nearly 25 years as a prosecutor, I have had the opportunity to work alongside some of the finest law enforcement professionals in Georgia in the fight against gangs, organized crime, and criminal enterprises operating both on the streets and within our correctional system.



My role focuses heavily on assisting judicial circuits across Georgia with complex gang and Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) prosecutions. These investigations are often large-scale, intelligence-driven operations requiring extensive coordination between local, state, and federal agencies. Some examples include:

- Operation Kibosh in Augusta, which resulted in the arrest of 77 Ghost Face Gangsters members and associates.
- Operation Lone Ranger in Jones County, resulting in the arrest of 103 individuals connected to a major drug distribution organization.
- Operation Skyhawk, a groundbreaking investigation that led to multiple Gang and RICO indictments across several judicial circuits involving the use of drones to deliver contraband into facilities within the Georgia Department of Corrections.

Throughout my career, I have strongly believed in what I call the “Police-Prosecutor Connection”, a proactive partnership between prosecutors and law enforcement agencies that begins long before a case ever reaches the courtroom. The most successful prosecutions are built from the ground up through collaboration, intelligence sharing, strategic planning, and early involvement between investigators and prosecutors. When prosecutors are involved early in the investigative process, assisting with legal strategy, intelligence analysis, drafting warrants, structuring conspiracy and RICO allegations, and helping develop evidence, the result is stronger investigations and ultimately stronger courtroom outcomes. The Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia remains committed to supporting prosecutors and law enforcement officers across Georgia in whatever capacity we can provide, whether through training, legal research, investigative guidance, drafting indictments and charges or assisting with prosecution strategy.

Partnerships with organizations such as Corrections & Detention Intelligence Network (CODIN) further strengthen these efforts by breaking down intelligence silos and enhancing communication between agencies. Those partnerships create stronger cases, improve officer safety, and lead to better outcomes in our collective fight against gangs and organized criminal networks throughout Georgia.

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Guard Against Trafficking: Bringing Awareness to Corrections



GUARD
— AGAINST —
TRAFFICKING

GUIDING UNDERSTANDING, AWARENESS,
RESEARCH & DEFENSE AGAINST TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is often viewed as a crime that exists only outside prison walls. However, **GUARD Against Trafficking (GAT)** is helping bring awareness to the reality that exploitation, grooming, coercion, and trafficking-related dynamics can also exist within correctional environments.

Founded by **Ali Hopper, President & Co-Founder of GUARD Against Trafficking, Counter-Trafficking Consultant & Speaker**, and **Jarrold Sadulski, Ph.D., Vice President & Co-Founder of GUARD Against Trafficking, Counter-Trafficking Consultant & Speaker**, GAT focuses on bringing trafficking awareness and education directly into corrections settings.

Many trafficking-related situations are rooted not in physical force, but in manipulation, dependency, emotional control, financial instability, and exploitation of vulnerability. Those vulnerabilities do not disappear simply because someone is incarcerated.

Within correctional environments, staff may encounter individuals who:

- Were trafficked prior to incarceration
- Remain vulnerable to exploitation while incarcerated
- Become targets through communication systems, financial dependency, or grooming
- Develop release plans tied to individuals they have never met in person but now depend on for housing, transportation, employment, or stability

Trafficking-related dynamics may also appear through coercive relationships, debts, manipulation tied to protection or commissary, and grooming through phone calls, messaging systems, video visits, or pen-pal style communication platforms.

Recently, GAT partnered with **Corrections Unfiltered** for a podcast discussion focused on human trafficking awareness within correctional settings, vulnerabilities that may exist during incarceration, and the importance of staff awareness. The discussion can be viewed on both YouTube and Spotify.

GAT's work emphasizes that awareness inside corrections matters because staff across all disciplines are often in the best position to recognize behavioral changes, dependency patterns, and indicators of exploitation before they escalate further.

Prevention begins with awareness.

Major Updates

I often joke that John Regan is the guy I call when I need the “fancy courthouse wording,” but honestly, there’s a lot of truth to it. Through Operation Skyhawk, John Regan, William Schwartz, and I saw firsthand what can happen when investigators, prosecutors, intelligence professionals, correctional staff, and lawmakers work together from the beginning. As contraband drone activity impacting correctional facilities continued growing, we partnered with professionals in Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana to help strengthen legal tools surrounding prosecution, forfeiture, and drone mitigation efforts. Using operational lessons learned from Skyhawk, John and his team at the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia helped turn those recommendations into legislative language that ultimately became HB 1230.



Pictured L-R) - Prosecutor John Regan, Special Agent Gregory Phillips and Special Agent William Schwartz after presenting to the Georgia Sheriffs Association regarding "Operation Skyhawk" and counter drone issues.

And thanks to the leadership and support of State Representatives Jones of the 25th, Thomas of the 21st, Crowe of the 118th, Hitchens of the 161st and Lumsden of the 12th, the bill passed through both the House and Senate and was signed by Governor Brian Kemp. The law officially takes effect July 1, 2026. HB 1230 is a GAME CHANGER for corrections and detention facilities across Georgia. The law now:

- Makes it a felony to fly a drone over correctional facilities without permission
- Makes it a felony to allow someone to launch a drone from private property for this purpose
- Classifies drones involved in these activities as contraband subject to seizure
- Allows law enforcement to actively mitigate drones using kinetic and non-kinetic methods to prevent these dangerous flyovers

This legislation gives our agents, correctional officers, investigators and facility leadership stronger tools to combat a threat that has rapidly evolved nationwide. More importantly, it makes facilities safer. Safer for the officers who work there. Safer for the inmates who live there. Safer for the communities outside those walls. Operation Skyhawk proved that when you let “cops do cop things,” groundbreaking results can happen. What started as an investigation into contraband drones ultimately helped influence both state and federal conversations surrounding correctional security, drone interdiction and organized criminal enterprises operating from inside prison walls. And I can honestly say, I’m proud of that.

Proud of our agents. Proud of our correctional officers. Proud of our prosecutors. Proud of the partnerships.

And thankful for lawmakers willing to listen to the men and women working this problem every single day. That’s what happens when intelligence sharing, relationships and proactive partnerships come together “From the Street to the Cell and From the Cell to the Street.”

National Trends & Legislative Watch

Federal Lawmakers Continue Push for Contraband Cellphone Jamming in Prisons

Federal lawmakers continue advancing the **Cellphone Jamming Reform Act of 2025**, legislation that would allow state and federal correctional facilities to deploy cellphone jamming systems targeting contraband devices inside prisons and jails. Supporters of the legislation argue contraband phones continue facilitating gang coordination, drug trafficking, violence, witness intimidation, and organized criminal activity both inside facilities and throughout surrounding communities. The proposal has gained increasing national attention as correctional leaders continue identifying illicit communication systems as a major public safety concern.

At the same time, telecommunications groups and civil liberty organizations continue raising concerns surrounding signal interference and unintended impacts on lawful communications outside correctional facilities.

Sources: [Senator Tom Cotton Press Release](#) | [Congressman David Kustoff Press Release](#) | [SC Daily Gazette](#)

States Expand Legislative Efforts to Combat Drone Contraband Drops

Multiple states are increasing efforts to combat drones being used to introduce narcotics, weapons, cell phones, intoxicants, and other contraband into correctional facilities. Georgia lawmakers recently advanced legislation restricting drone operations near prisons and jails after officials reported increasing drone-related contraband activity impacting institutional safety and security. Correctional leaders described drones as a growing and evolving threat that existing regulations struggle to address.

New York officials are also pushing for expanded drone enforcement authority following multiple incidents involving drones dropping knives, drugs, intoxicants, and communication devices directly into correctional facilities. State officials continue advocating for stronger penalties, expanded drone tracking capabilities, and increased counter-drone authority for correctional institutions.

Sources: [Axios Atlanta](#) | [Associated Press](#) | [Georgia Attorney General Press Release](#)

Artificial Intelligence Continues Expanding Into Corrections and Investigations

Artificial intelligence continues gaining traction nationwide as correctional agencies and investigative units explore how AI-supported technology may assist with intelligence gathering, report writing, transcription review, communication analysis, and identifying patterns within large volumes of investigative data. The National Institute of Corrections and other criminal justice organizations continue publishing guidance and educational resources focused on the future role of AI within corrections. Agencies nationwide are increasingly exploring how AI may support investigators by reducing administrative workload, improving organization of intelligence, and helping identify connections faster across large-scale investigations.

While agencies continue discussing policy, ethics, and privacy considerations, many investigators now view AI technology as an emerging operational tool rather than a future concept.

Sources: [National Institute of Corrections](#) | [Urgent Communications](#)