




MEMORANDUM  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**DATE:** January 10, 2006

**TO:** George M. Burgess  
County Manager

**FROM:**   
Carlos Alvarez, Mayor  
Miami-Dade County

**SUBJECT:** Ongoing Investigation into Prison Escape of Inmate Reynaldo Rapalo

We as a community are certainly proud and extend commendation for the tireless efforts expended by the dozens of law enforcement professions that sacrificed long hours - during a holiday season - that ultimately led to the successful apprehension of suspected serial rapist Reynaldo Elias Rapalo. While I am certainly relieved that a very dangerous individual no longer remains a fugitive of the law, there are several issues that do remain unanswered.

As the investigation spearheaded by the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) now focuses on the causes and origins of such causes that resulted in the recent breach of security at the Turner Guilford Knight (TGK) facility, I urge you to ensure that this inquiry maintain a comprehensive and holistic approach. In doing so, we must systematically dissect the many components of the Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation Department (MDCRD). The investigation must seek to identify and rectify any and all issues that stem from dysfunction in areas such as, but not limited to, management, budget, policy, procedure, training, or personnel issues.

Certain issues have been raised and brought to the attention of my office by members of the MDCRD. Of particular mention are the following allegations that certainly merit further inquiry and confirmation.

1. On the date of Reynaldo Elias Rapalo's escape (December 20, 2005) several cameras located throughout TGK were inoperable and the cameras located in the Shift Commander's area that are designed to assist supervisors in the monitoring of officers and inmates were not recording.
2. The day after inmate Rapalo's escape (December 21, 2005) yet another hatch in the very same cell that Rapalo occupied on the date of his escape was detected as partially opened - please refer to (I/R K05-005688A).
3. The Corrections Facilities Management Unit currently maintains a three (3) month backlog on service tickets for the TGK, Metro West Detention Center (MWDC), and Pre-Trial Detention Center (PTDC) facilities, resulting in obvious security, safety, and health risks.

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4. Electronic gates in most of the safety cells at the PTDC are not operating properly and; thus, despite the hundreds of dollars spent on installing these gates, officers still open these gates manually using keys.
  
5. Vendors and contractors who enter the TGK, MWDC, or the PTDC are often not escorted while working throughout the facilities.

The public demands and deserves that all County departments operate with the utmost levels of efficiency, effectiveness, professionalism, and most of all, accountability. Certainly, the MDCRD, which is entrusted with the paramount task of safely securing prisoners, should, like all public safety departments, be held to equal or greater standards. The dedicated, fine men and women of the MDCRD as well as the citizens of Miami-Dade County expect no less – and neither do I.

c: Honorable Chairman & Members Board of County Commissioners  
Harvey Ruvlin, Clerk of Courts  
Murray Greenberg, County Attorney  
Kay Sullivan, Director, Clerk of the Board