



January 16, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL OIG STAFF

David Williams

FROM: David C. Williams
Inspector General

SUBJECT: Response to National Association of Letter Carriers
recent President's Message referencing OIG

The January 11 *PostCom Bulletin* contained the reprint of a "President's Message" from National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) President William Young in which he takes issue with the investigative efforts of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Many points he attempts to make are untrue and based on faulty assumptions and incorrect interpretation of facts. In addition, the arguments are disjointed and difficult to follow. Because of this, I do not intend to address each point, but have decided it would be useful to set the record straight on a few egregious comments. Of particular concern to Mr. Young is an arbitrator's ruling on a case that he cites. Mr. Young states the arbitrator's ruling condemned the OIG investigation, when, in fact, the arbitrator relied on the investigative work of our special agents to make his determination. Rightfully or wrongfully, the arbitrator concluded the disciplinary action taken was too severe; in other words, the punishment did not fit the crime. As Mr. Young is well aware, the OIG's role is investigatory; the action taken against an employee, whether criminal or administrative, is handled by the prosecutor or the employee's manager. Both rely on the factual investigative reports of OIG agents. Contrary to Mr. Young's assertion, rarely are cases overturned as a result of the report of the investigative facts. As to the review of medical records in injury compensation fraud cases, the practice is common, has been litigated and our ability to continue these reviews has been upheld.

But there is a bigger picture that Mr. Young misses. The Postal Service has a long and proud tradition of protecting the "sanctity of the seal" of the mail that they handle and deliver. The American public expects that when they entrust

their mail to the Postal Service, it will be delivered in a timely manner, unopened, unread, and its contents intact. In addition, Letter Carriers are the Postal Service's ambassadors to every community in the nation six days per week. Their trucks pass through neighborhoods and carriers visit homes and delivery points. The expectation exists that these trusted couriers are delivering in a safe and professional manner.

The overwhelming majority of postal employees live by the oath they take when being appointed to the Postal Service to protect the mail. Everyday this tradition endures as postal employees tirelessly move the daily volume of 703 million pieces to their proper destination. Unfortunately, a few postal employees betray the trust placed in them. It is our job — the OIG — to identify those few and take steps to have them removed from the Postal Service. In addition to losing their jobs, many face criminal charges.

As an independent agency reporting to the Governors of the Postal Service, the OIG takes its investigative responsibility seriously. Last year, OIG special agents conducted 8,128 investigations and arrested 817 employees and contractors for postal crimes ranging from delay, destruction, and theft of mail to embezzlement; from workers' compensation fraud, to the sale of narcotics while on duty. Administrative action was taken against 4,051 employees as a result of our efforts. No segment of the postal work force was singled out and none was exempt.

The value of our work cannot be understated. No one wants to work with employees who steal from the mail or from the Postal Service. Embezzlements cost the Postal Service millions of dollars in lost revenue. OIG efforts last year resulted in the recovery of a significant portion of those losses. The workers' compensation program provides benefits for employees legitimately injured on the job. However, some employees fake injuries, staying home while their fellow employees dutifully go to work every day. Ferreting out the cheaters last year resulted in the Postal Service realizing a long-term cost savings of over \$208 million dollars as a result of our work.

But the OIG doesn't do this alone. We rely on information from employees, including union members, and mailers to identify and prevent postal crimes. Our hotline received more than 80,000 contacts last year. We regularly make presentations on mail theft and other postal crimes at new employee orientations. We work with mailers to identify opportunities to improve the security of their mailings. In addition, we are responsive to the requests of mailers and the mailing public, combining the forces of our auditors and investigators to ensure the integrity and accountability of America's postal system.

Lastly, I suggest you keep this matter in perspective. Many of you are not familiar with Mr. Young and his reputation for inflammatory rhetoric. I can assure you, the Postal Service, including the coworkers of these offenders, is grateful for your outstanding work in uncovering the truth and I am proud of your efforts.