



United States
Department
Of Justice



U.S. Attorney's
Office
Northern District of
Indiana

5400 Federal Plaza
Suite 1500
Hammond, IN 46320
219.937.5500

Joseph S. Van Bokkelen
U.S. Attorney

Inside This Issue

Headline News	
Local News	Page 1
Regional News	Page 2
National News	Page 5
	Page 7



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Youth, Gang Crimes Increasing

05/15/2007 Washington, DC | Increasing violence among teenagers and other youths appears to have contributed to a nationwide crime spike, the Justice Department said Tuesday.

Gangs and gun violence are partly to blame for the rise in crime that is on pace to increase for the second straight year, says Attorney General Alberto Gonzales in a prepared speech.

In response, the Justice Department is pledging to spend nearly \$50 million this year to combat gangs and guns, and will push Congress to enact new laws to let the federal government better investigate and prosecute violent crime.

FBI data from last fall show violent crimes, including murders and robberies, rose by 3.7 percent nationwide during the first six months of 2006. Those findings came on top of a 2.2 percent crime hike in 2005 _ the first increase since 2001.

Faced with the discouraging data, Gonzales last fall ordered a study of 18 cities and suburban regions to show why crime is surging.

The Justice Department plans to distribute \$18 million in grants nationwide this year to prevent and reduce illegal gun sales and other firearms crimes.

Gonzales also will announce spending \$31 million in new funds this year to combat gangs, according to the Justice Department fact sheet. The department also is working on a new crime bill to help federal authorities assist local and state police in cases involving juvenile crime.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/15/AR2007051500333.html>

According to Gonzales' prepared remarks and a Justice Department fact sheet, obtained by The Associated Press, the study found:

- That a growing number of offenders appear to be younger, and their crimes more violent, and that laws in some states provide few, if any, tough penalties on juvenile offenders.
- Many youths have little parental oversight and are too easily influenced by gang membership and glamorized violence in popular culture.
- Loosely organized gangs present the biggest concern for law enforcement officials because they are hard to investigate and their members often commit random acts of crime out of self-protection.
- Offenses committed by people using firearms pose a major threat not only to communities, but also to police. So-called "straw purchases," where gun owners buy their firearms through a go-between is an area of concern.

Charges Filed After Photos Found of Northrop Student Holding Gun

Article published in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette

05/06/2007 Fort Wayne, IN | The Allen County Prosecutor's Office has filed felony gun charges against a 17-year-old Northrop High School student who police said took digital pictures of himself flashing gang signs and brandishing a handgun.

According to court documents filed Friday, Edin Husidic, of the 200 mm handgun and West El Dorado Trail, showed his manager at McDonald's a black 9 a magazine loaded with hollow-point ammunition on Oct. 17.

The manager contacted police who approached Husidic at Northrop High School and asked him about the gun, police said.

Officers searched Husidic and found a cell phone and a digital camera, both of which are prohibited at the school, police said.

The pictures on the camera contained images of Husidic making gang signs and holding the gun, police said.

Husidic told police that his cousin was holding the gun for him and when officers approached the cousin, he told them that they could find the gun hidden in a heat vent at his home, court documents said.

When officers went to the cousin's home they found the gun and saw that the serial number and markings had been partially removed, court documents said.

Husidic, who had not been arrested by Saturday afternoon, is facing felony charges of possession of a handgun with obliterated identification marks and carrying a handgun without a license.

Source: The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette



Agent: Region Addicts Fuel Gangs

Article published by the Times

05/06/2007 Hammond, IN | To Mark Becker, it's no great mystery why Northwest Indiana has major problems with gangs and drugs. Becker's job as head of the FBI's anti-gang task force, GRIT, gives him a bird's-eye view of all the contributing factors, including close proximity to Chicago's established trafficking pipeline and a wide availability of undereducated youths to peddle drugs.

None of it would be possible without the insatiable demand for street drugs in the region's cities, suburbs and rural areas, Becker told a group of civic leaders Thursday during the second session of the FBI's Citizens' Academy.

A federal study to be made public in the near future estimates Lake County has 2,500 gang members who are affiliated with at least 76 local gang "sets," Becker said. But those factions are only marginally connected to the 17 national gangs to which they claim affiliation, including the Vice Lords, Gangster Disciples and Latin Kings, he said. "You can have six or seven sets of Vice Lords, but they don't know each other," said Becker, who also heads the FBI's Merrillville office.



Most of the gangs' funding comes from drug sales, primarily crack cocaine, Becker said. But it's not unheard of for gangs to use bank robbery and even mortgage fraud to obtain money. The gang-and-drugs formula also creates female addicts who turn to prostitution for their habits, he said.

While Porter County is not seen as having a major gang problem, the per-capita rate of heroin usage in the county is higher than in Chicago, Becker said. But since most local gangs don't keep heroin in stock, many Porter County residents drive to Chicago's South Side to get their fixes, he said.

Full Story: http://nwitimes.com/articles/2007/05/06/news/lake_county/doc8f8b72ef8875f855862572d2007c2ead.txt

Highland Starts Graffiti Log to Fight Vandalism

Article published by The Times

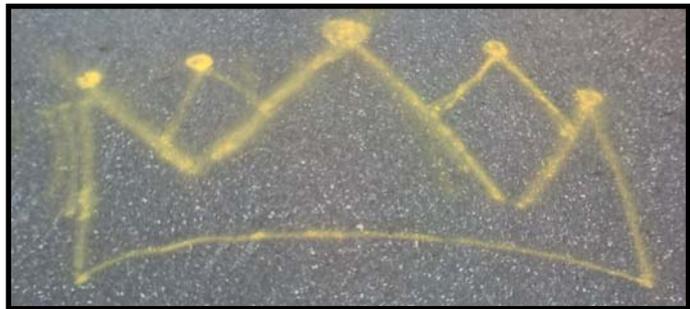
05/15/2007 Highland, IN | Graffiti traffic has escalated to the point the Police Department is now keeping a separate log to track cases.

Another 13 incidents were reported during the weekend. However, police Deputy Cmdr. George Georgeff cautioned Monday that some of those reports could be old incidents that have just been noticed.

To help monitor the situation, the department is building a graffiti log for officers to refer to when they come across graffiti. Much of the logging is being done by the Volunteers in Police Services, or VIPS, Georgeff said. The volunteers scour the town to find graffiti and then record its location, description, when it was found and other details, he said.

"It helps our people when we start mapping this out," Georgeff said.

It helped an officer when he found two words written with a black marker on a traffic sign at Delaware Place and 44th Avenue about 6:44 p.m. Sunday. One word was sexually suggestive and the other was a nickname, police said. A police report said that appeared to be gang-related.



Graffiti found on Ridge Road also might have been gang-related, police said. An officer found various phrases and messages painted on the supports of a bridge.

Source: http://www.nwitimes.com/articles/2007/05/15/news/lake_county/docf79f588bb53726d8862572db008357a3.txt



Prosecutor Hits Snag in 1st Test of Anti-Gang Law

Article published by the Indianapolis Star

05/29/2007 Indianapolis, IN | Joseph Jurgen told police he was aiming to build credibility as a member of the Latin Kings street gang last year when he took part in robberies of gas stations and sandwich shops. But the 21-year-old's word wasn't good enough for a Marion Superior Court judge, who decided Jurgen was a "wannabe," not a real gang member. Jurgen will be sentenced this week on multiple charges, but he avoided any added penalties stemming from gang activities.

Jurgen was the first defendant facing a criminal gang sentence enhancement, part of a new sentencing protocol enacted last year by the Indiana General Assembly. Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi -- who lobbied for the law -- said he hoped to use it more often, despite the initial setback. "We're going to be very aggressive," Brizzi said. "In this particular case, the judge didn't agree with our assessment of Mr. Jurgen."

Gangs are deeply involved with crime in Indianapolis, he said, and stiffer sentences for gang members could prove a vital deterrent.



Under the new law, the criminal gang enhancement requires a judge to double the prison sentence on the defendant's most serious felony charge. But first, prosecutors must prove in court that the defendant was a member of a gang -- and committed the crime "at the direction of or in affiliation with" the gang.

An older provision allows a defendant to be charged with criminal gang activity. Brizzi said the Class D felony's maximum three-year prison sentence makes it ineffective.

Authorities have estimated that 2,500 to 3,000 people are involved with loosely organized gangs in Indianapolis.

Gang experts say offenses ranging from robbery and burglary to murder often are tied to gang activity. Diligent investigators and prosecutors could try to prove the gang affiliation to boost sentences in some cases.

Source: The Indianapolis Star

Officials: Gang Fight Tumbles Into Jail

Article published by the Times

05/23/2007 Crown Point, IN | A street gang feud that police said led to the death of a 7-year-old East Chicago boy continued in the halls of the Lake County Jail, with the boy's father attacking the alleged killer, jail officials said. Lake County police are investigating the alleged May 15 jail-house assault in which former East Chicago City Council candidate Michael Silvas Jr. (right) is accused of attacking the Hammond man who is charged with fatally shooting Angel Silvas.



The suspect, Francisco Avila, was using a wheelchair in the jail after being shot in the leg during the May 7 street-side gun battle that left Silvas' son dead. East Chicago police have said Silvas was a member of the Spanish Vice Lords but lived in an area dominated by the Latin Kings.

Another man charged in the shooting incident said he and Avila went to attack near 144th Street and Tod Avenue because Silvas had pointed a gun at a Latin King gang member, Lake County court records allege.

Eight days later in the jail, Avila had just finished meeting with a defense attorney and was making his way back to his cell in the intake area of the Lake County Jail when Silvas attacked Avila, Lake County police spokesman Michael Higgins said Monday.

Silvas, who was arrested the day before for brandishing a gun during the fatal shootout, was on his way to see a magistrate judge in the hearing room inside the jail at the time of the incident, Higgins said. When the two men crossed paths in the jail's booking area, Silvas pounced on Avila, knocking over Avila's wheelchair and briefly attacking him before guards broke up the fight, Higgins said.

Full Story: http://www.thetimesonline.com/articles/2007/05/22/news/top_news/docc54f9aa5543d1d7b862572e300005f09.txt



Gangs and Family Ties

Article published by the Times

05/20/2007 East Chicago, IN | Seven-year-old Angel Silvas (right) may have died from gang-related gunfire earlier this month, but officials say the boy was encircled by street gang influences long before his death.



Police and neighbors say the boy's father, former city council candidate Michael Silvas Jr., was widely known to belong to a gang called the Spanish Vice Lords, as was his grandfather, Michael Silvas Sr.

East Chicago native Leo Arreguin Jr., who directs the Lake County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area task force, said Angel Silvas was at risk for falling into the same lifestyle because of his environment -- before the boy became an innocent victim. "I think that's natural," Arreguin said. "It's extremely difficult for them not to join these gangs if they're living in these neighborhoods."

Many conventional gang-resistance efforts rely on strong family support, local experts say. But what about families in which young children look up to brothers or fathers who are gang members, especially in neighborhoods historically dominated by gangs?

Some law-enforcement officials say generational gang membership is becoming a larger but less widely addressed issue. One former prosecutor in East Chicago said it was an obvious factor in many cases. "It would be a revolving door of generation after generation," the former prosecutor said. "It's become like a family business almost."

Full Story: http://www.nwitimes.com/articles/2007/05/20/news/top_news/doc751430f8f1b6a168862572e0007eb013.txt



Slayings Prompt Anti-Gang Response

Article published by the Times

05/13/2007 Lake County, IN | Suspected street gang violence sent several bodies to the morgue last week, prompting city leaders to wonder if the deadly stint would set a trend for the entire summer. "I hope it's not a prelude, but it looks like it might be. That's why we're trying to get ahead of the problem now," Gary Police Deputy Chief Tom Papadakis said. "It's looking like it's going to be a long, hot summer."



All told, seven people were killed by gunfire in Gary and East Chicago last week, a Lake County Coroner's Office spokesman said. Since gang members don't typically announce who they're killing or why, officials said it was difficult to make an exact tally of which deaths were gang-related. But they're not waiting for explanations to take preventive action.

Gary police formed a special interdiction unit this week to combat gun- and gang-related crimes, while Hammond officials appropriated \$50,000 for enhanced after-school police patrols in areas with known gang presence. "The gang problem is real," Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott said. "You'll find periods of time when it gets worse, and it seems like we're entering a time when that's the case."

Gary and several other area cities have quietly joined with the Chicago Police Department's Fourth District to form a new group called the Illiana Regional Gang Taskforce. Chicago Police Tactical Lt. Maurice Richards, who is helping organize the new task force, said the group intends to fight the gang problem by sharing "intelligence" between departments. "The whole concept is to try to attack the problem regionally, because it's that type of problem that goes across municipal lines and state lines," Richards said.

Full Story: http://www.thetimesonline.com/articles/2007/05/13/news/top_news/doc5c8ee8b797d30d74862572d9007ffacf.txt

Suspect in Bus Shooting was on Gang Rivals' Hit List

Article published by the Chicago Sun Times

05/15/2007 Chicago, IL | Julian High student Blair Holt (right) was killed in a war zone -- 103rd and Halsted. That's where Blair, riding home from school on a CTA bus, got caught in a long-running battle between two factions of the Gangster Disciples -- gang-bangers who call themselves the "10-4s" and the "Goonies."



There have been tauntings, beatings and shots fired. The Goonies even had a list of people they wanted dead, teens with gang affiliations told a social worker.

Michael Pace -- the 16-year-old charged with killing Blair and wounding four others -- was on that list, according to Art Dunn, the social worker who tried to steer Pace away from gangs.

Dunn says he last saw Pace in April at the funeral of another Julian student who was shot. "Michael was high. He was hurting. He was scared. And he had two boys with him for protection." Last Wednesday, the Goonies showed up at a gas station at 103rd and Aberdeen to harass the 10-4s, sources said. Kevin Jones, said to be a 10-4 like Pace, allegedly fired at Goonies.

Regional 

On Thursday, Pace and Jones plotted to shoot a Goonie at the bus stop at 103rd and Halsted, prosecutors said. A Goonie was on a bus and flashed a gang sign at Pace and Jones, a witness told police.

Jones handed Pace a .40-caliber pistol and a hooded sweatshirt decorated with animals, prosecutors said. Pace pulled on the hoodie and jumped on the bus. Then he allegedly unleashed a volley of gunfire. The four bullets missed the rival, who was sitting in the middle of the bus. But they killed Blair and wounded four other Julian students, officials say.

Source: <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/385601,CST-NWS-the-case15.article>

Related Reporting : Chicago Police Detective Ronald Holt talks to the media about his son Blair. Blair's mother is a Chicago Fire Captain - Holt knows these streets as a Chicago Police gang investigator; now he knows them as a father of a young teen gunned down by a gang member in a brazen attack on a CTA bus.

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/385561,CST-NWS-dad15.article>

Related Reporting: When teen with gun opened fire, classmate 'pulled me out of the way' - As a teenager with a gun opened fire on the packed bus Thursday, Tiara says she tried to get up from her seat by the window, but Blair "pulled me out of the way." That move saved her life, Tiara, 16, said Monday, talking for the first time since the shooting. She sat in a wheelchair on the front porch of her family's Roseland home, her right calf set in a bright pink cast and resting on a pillow. Tiara's leg flew in the air when Holt pulled her back onto the seat. A bullet "went right through" her foot, said her mom, Janet Reed. "She has a bone fracture around the ankle, but that's it." A bullet struck and killed Blair, also 16. <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/385571,CST-NWS-tiara15.article>



FBI Indicts 10 in Cleveland Gang Investigation of Federal Narcotics Charges

Article published by AHN Media

05/05/2007 Cleveland, OH | A Federal Grand Jury Friday returned a 13-count indictment against 10 members of an alleged Cleveland gang with violations of the federal narcotics laws. Gregory A. White, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio said the indictment named Cleveland Ohio residents: Raynard Jefferson, aka Bay-Ray, 27; Clarence King, aka Pooh-Pooh, 23; Derrick Winnick, aka Jigga, 26; Rayshawn Freeman, 21; Darryl Woodall, aka D-Rock; Brandon Gaffney, 23; Damien Harris, aka Dame; Otis Morman, aka OJ, 30; Antonio Jordan, aka Tone, 32; and Stanley Grays, 36.



The indictment, following a two-year investigation by the Cleveland Division of the FBI, the DEA and the Cleveland Division of Police, charges all 10 defendants with conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute more than 50 grams of cocaine base ("crack"). The nearly two year-long alleged conspiracy, which ran from May of 2005 to April of 2007, operated brazenly from East 70th Street to East 79th Street between Superior and Saint Clair Avenues in Cleveland, Ohio, FBI officials said.

The conspiracy count also names 28 other individuals as un-indicted co-conspirators. Of the un-indicted co-conspirators, 26 of those individuals, along with 17 other co-defendants, were arrested on related conspiracy charges in January 2007 and have since pleaded guilty in federal court.

Matthew Manning, aka Fife, 22, and Eddie L. Cook, 23, both of Cleveland, Ohio, were shot and killed during the investigation. Their murders are still under investigation by the Cleveland Division of Police.

The investigation initially targeted the violent street gang known as the 7-Alls operating from East 70th Street to East 79th Street between Superior and Saint Clair Avenues in Cleveland. The FBI said the investigation ultimately revealed a large-scale drug conspiracy where Jefferson and un-indicted co-conspirators Willie Ausler, Jr., aka Puff, Demetrius Hines, aka Boo, Carl Drewery, Jeffrey C. Doss, Jr.; Donnie Stewart, aka Boom, Joseph

Sailes and Eric Belk, aka Little E, were supplying most of the 7-All area drug dealers, including gang members and non-gang members, with large amounts of crack cocaine and cocaine for resale.

During the undercover portion of the investigation, the FBI alleges that approximately 1.5 kilograms of crack cocaine, two kilograms of cocaine, 32.80 grams of ecstasy and 30 grams of marijuana (with a combined street value in excess of \$100,000) were purchased or seized from the various conspiracy members in the targeted area. In addition, five illegal firearms, including an assault rifle, and \$176,884 in cash were recovered during the investigation.

Source: <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7007255398>



U.S. Attorney Seeks Good Rap Music

Article published by the Indianapolis Star

05/26/2007 Indianapolis, IN | An anti-gun, anti-gang initiative wants your best rap. Indiana Project Safe Neighborhoods, which is a program of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Southern Indiana District, and radio station WHHH-FM (96.3) are offering a rap music contest for ages 14 to 18.

Two rules: No profanity or disrespect towards others, and it must include anti-gun or anti-gang messages, according to a news release. Ten finalists will win studio time, have their songs played at Black Expo in July and perform publicly in August. The winning track will air on the radio station and be made into a music video.

Entry forms are at www.hot963.com; Radio One, 21 E. Saint Joseph St.; Christamore House, 502 N. Tremont St.; Reach for Youth, 3505 N. Washington Blvd.; John H. Boner Community Center, 2236 E. 10th St.; Forest Manor Multi-Service Center, 5603 E. 38th St.; and Community Alliance of the Far Eastside, 8902 E. 38th St. Contestants can also upload entries at the Web site. Deadline is June 19.

Source: <http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070526/LOCAL/705260540>



Cops: Bar Hosted Teen gang Party

Published by the Times Herald-Record

05/12/2007 Newburgh, NY | An infamous city bar was busted for hosting a teen birthday party – complete with alcohol, pot and crack cocaine – attended by gang members and their friends, one as young as 12 years old. City police, State Liquor Authority agents and state parole and probation officers scoped out the Casbah at 93 William St. Friday night as guests arrived.

Newburgh's criminal intelligence detective Chris Swenson had heard that the Ashy Bandits, an East End street gang, was to celebrate one member's "sweet 16" that night in the Casbah's back room. From a distance, Lt. William Rose and other officers watched as revelers in their early teens came and went.

Shortly before 1 a.m. Saturday, officers entered. In the back room they found as many as 50 to 60 party-goers. Few were older than 16, with several in their early teens and one just 12 years old. After police cleared the party room, "We found various substances back there," Rose said, "including alcohol, marijuana and crack."

There were two adults in the teen party, one of whom claimed to be the mother of a pair of partygoers, and the organizer of the event. The teens were asked to leave the bar, and none faces charges. The bar owner, Millicent Miller, 58, of New Windsor, was arrested, though, and charged with misdemeanor unlawful dealing with a minor. She was released on her own recognizance pending a later court date.

The youth of Friday night's party-goers reflects the membership of Ashy Bandits, police say. Something of a junior varsity squad for an older drug gang, ICU, Ashy Bandits have raised their profile recently. Members were arrested earlier this year for a series of break-ins into cars along Montgomery Street. Police ultimately planted a

bait car on the street, leaving a pocketbook on the front seat and setting up in hidden surveillance posts nearby. Within minutes, members of the young gang had smashed the window of the car. Several members in their early teens were arrested after a foot chase with police.

Full Story: <http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070512/NEWS/705120339>



Monitoring Fresno Gang Members with Global Positioning Systems

Article published by KFSN ABC 30 News

05/04/2007 Fresno, CA | Since last November, the Fresno police department has been on a mission to shut down the Fresno bulldog street gang. A few weeks ago the chief unveiled a plan to track habitual gang leaders with GPS monitors.



To reach his goal to track Fresno bulldog gang members with GPS monitors, he's going to have to broker a partnership with the Fresno county courts and it's probation department. Legally, he can't act on his own.

When Chief Jerry Dyer began his crackdown on Fresno bulldog gang members last year he vowed to use every tool he could to drive them out of Fresno or out of gangs. And he's determined to add a global positioning system or GPS to his tool box.

Chief Dyer, Fresno Police Chief, says "money cannot be the thing that prevents us from doing what this, because it's the right thing to do." His plan is to put GPS monitors on twenty hardcore, violent bulldog gang members. Dyer says for 8 to 10 dollars a day a private company can track them round the clock. Fresno Police Department is talking to a Utah company, Secure Alert. It currently runs a GPS pilot program for the Oakland police department battling gangs.

Here in Fresno, the Police Department would work in concert with county probation, to use that information to solve crime, build cases, keep track of bad guys and lock them up when warranted.

Full Story: <http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=local&id=5273841>



Female Gang Members Busted

Article published by the KHTS AM 1200

05/29/2007 Santa Clara, CA | Five girls were arrested Monday night after a deputy spotted them in the parking lot of Canyon High School and reportedly watched as one of them spray painted a wall at the school.



Further investigation and the eventual detention of all the individuals reportedly resulted in the recovery of additional spray paint and three knives in the suspects vehicle.

Deputies also determined that the suspects had allegedly spray painted similar gang related markings on walls and buildings at Golden Valley High School.

The suspects were all self proclaimed members of a Los Angeles street gang, and were arrested and booked at the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station.

The twenty one year old driver, from Newhall, faces felony charges of Possession of a Weapon on School Grounds, Vandalism, Conspiracy to Commit a Gang Related Felony and misdemeanor charges of Participating in a Criminal Street Gang and Driving Without a License. She is being held in lieu of \$50,000 bail.

The second suspect, also twenty one and of Canyon Country, faces felony charges of Possession of a Weapon on School Grounds, Vandalism, Conspiracy to Commit a Gang Related Felony and a misdemeanor charge of Participating in a Criminal Street Gang. She is being held in lieu of \$50,000 bail.

The other three subjects were all local girls aged 17,16 and 13. They all each face felony charges of Possession of a Weapon on School Grounds, Vandalism, Conspiracy to Commit a Gang Related Felony and misdemeanor charges of Participating in a Criminal Street Gang. They were transported to Sylmar Juvenile Hall for housing pending future court proceedings.

Source: www.hometownstation.com



Kurdish Gang Activity Perturbs Community

Article published by the Tennessean

05/06/2007 Nashville, TN | The kids will tell you that the Kurdish Pride Gang got its start sometime after Sept. 11. First, it was just groups of students banding together for protection from bullies who taunted them and called them terrorists. Gradually, a few members of the group became a gang and the gang started making trouble. Then trouble turned to tragedy.

There was a shooting at a Nashville mall last year linked to Kurdish Pride. There was the brutal home invasion and rape of a pregnant woman in February that led to the arrest of several suspected gang members. One of them, 16-year-old Zana Noroly, hanged himself in detention last month, leaving the Kurdish community reeling in shock, grief and confusion.



Nashville police estimate that there are fewer than 20 hard-core members of Kurdish Pride — a gang that seems to exist only in Nashville. But the entire Kurdish community, between 6,000 and 8,000, finds itself tarred by the gang's actions.

Nashville is home to the nation's largest Kurdish population, most of whom arrived as refugees of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. It's a close-knit, hard-working, insular community whose elders aren't quite sure what to make of a new generation of Americanized teens who listen to hip-hop and post pictures of Tupac Shakur on their MySpace pages.

Full Story: <http://www.dicksonherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070506/NEWS03/705060390>



Boys Hit in Gang Rite Captured on Cell Phone Cameras

Article published by San Antonio Express-news

05/04/2007 New Braunfels, TX | A gang initiation in a school bathroom — filmed by two students with cell phone cameras — has led to suspensions for a group of middle school boys this week, with criminal charges pending, officials said. Eight Canyon Middle School students were disciplined by the Comal Independent School District and assault charges were being prepared Friday against four of them, district spokeswoman Kari Hutchison and Assistant Principal Bill Mikeska said.

The incident happened in a boy's restroom after school Wednesday. Two boys reportedly let four other boys repeatedly hit them as part of a gang initiation. Two other boys filmed the incident on their cell phones.

Mikeska said he was disturbed by what he saw on the video, but would not describe the incident because it is part of an ongoing investigation.



Hutchison said school officials got hold of the video and called New Braunfels police. "We were able to find out about it quickly and get to the bottom of it," Hutchison said. "We have zero tolerance for this type of behavior. We will take disciplinary action and criminal charges will be filed in cases like this."

The two boys who filmed the assault were given in-school suspension, Hutchison said. The two who were assaulted and the four boys who hit them were sent to the Comal Discipline Center, the district's alternative school. She said police told her the four boys who hit the other two would be charged with assault.

New Braunfels Police Lt. Mike Rust said no report had been filed as of Friday afternoon, but based on a description of the incident said he was not sure assault charges would be proper, since the two victims apparently gave their permission to be hit.

Rust said charges of coercing, soliciting or inducing gang membership, which can be a state jail felony or third-degree felony depending on the specifics, may be more appropriate. All area schools have gang problems, he said, though the students are "not hardcore gang members." "Are they real gangs or wannabes?" Rust asked. "They hear it. They see it. They want to be it, and someday they probably will be, unless they grow out of it. You do have to take it seriously."

Full Story: http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/metro/stories/MYSA050507.01B.gang_rites.34b46fb.html

Related Story: Video of School Gang Beating Gets Four Jefferson Boys in Trouble

Four Jefferson High School students are facing assault charges after being videotaped while beating another student in one of the school's bathrooms.

The video, originally posted at www.youtube.com, shows a group of teenage boys taking turns slugging another boy. It has since been removed from the Web site but can be viewed at www.kgw.com.

Article published by the Oregonian at www.oregonlive.com/news/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/news/1178776503142470.xml&coll=7



School Detectives Patrol Neighborhoods, Search Internet to Prevent Gang Crime

Article published by the Palm Beach Post

05/06/2007 Lake Worth, FL | When three Lake Worth High students were shot blocks from the school after dismissal in March, school police suspected it was gang related. Since 2004, when a Lake Worth Middle student and Making Life Crazy member was gunned down by rival gang Sur 13, the department's gang unit has been keeping a watchful eye on student gang members. Those efforts have helped school police officers seize 75 weapons, including four guns this year.

School detectives have searched the Web, patrolled neighborhoods and visited schools in an effort to identify and document gang members and prevent gang-related crime. This year, police have documented about 200 middle- and high-school gang members throughout the sprawling 170,000-student district. But they suspect there are many more they don't know about.

"For every one we document, there's probably 10 that we missed," said Detective Kevin Kuschel, who has headed the department's gang unit since 2001. "When I first started working gangs, I was amazed how much there was, and now it's just evolved and it's becoming popular, like fashion, and everyone wants to be a gang member."

Detectives also rely on teachers who see gang signs scribbled in notebooks or other red flags. Recently, police have beefed up their gang education, visiting schools to teach educators and administrators how to spot gang members and gang activity. Getting educators to understand the significance of gangs had been difficult in the past, but the violence has prompted police to deliver a blunter message.



During the day, Kuschel and other investigators talk to student gang members, gathering intelligence about rival gangs; students refuse to talk about their own gangs. From the conversations, they develop a list of gang members, their

leadership and their involvement in criminal activity. At night and on the weekends, school police patrol the neighborhoods where student gang members live and where crimes have occurred. Despite the efforts of school police, only two gang members have sought police help in getting out of gangs. When they have, it's usually after they've been arrested.

The surge in gang violence surprised Kuschel and everyone else in law enforcement, he said. Now, agencies are sharing more information so when violence breaks out, law enforcement isn't caught off guard. "They tell us who they stop in the street, and we tell them who we identify in the school," Kuschel said. "Two years ago, we had no idea what was going on in the street. We knew nothing. Now we are able to prevent things from happening."

Whether it's the efforts of gang investigators or an unspoken rule, gang violence has not spilled into the schools, police said. It has come close. The highest-profile example was the March shooting near Lake Worth High. It followed an argument between a suspected gang member and another teenager, both of whom were shot. A 17-year-old girl was caught in the crossfire.

"I don't know if it's an unspoken rule or what," Kuschel said. "They represent their gangs at the school, and they give each other dirty looks, but we don't have big gang brawls, and we don't have - knock on wood - gang shootings in the school."

Full Story: http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/content/local_news/epaper/2007/05/06/m12a_GANG_SKUL_0506.html



Three Salvadoran Nationals Indicted on Racketeering Charges for Participation in Violent International Gang: *Indictment Alleges Two MS-13 Leaders Ordered Gang Murders in United States from Inside Prison Cells in El Salvador*

Press Release Issued by United States Department of Justice

WASHINGTON – A federal grand jury in Greenbelt, Md., has charged leaders of the violent street gang known as MS-13 with federal racketeering crimes, including two men who allegedly ordered murders inside the United States from their prison cells in El Salvador, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales announced today.

The 30-count superseding indictment returned June 4, 2007, alleges that the three defendants—Dany Fredy Ramos Mejia, aka “Sisco,” Saul Antonios Turcio Angel, aka “Trece,” and Rigoberto Del Transito Mejia Regaldo, aka “Ski”—conspired to participate in a racketeering enterprise in the United States and El Salvador that involved murder, robbery, obstruction of justice, and witness tampering through their participation in La Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13. Two of the defendants allegedly communicated with MS-13 gang members from prison in El Salvador to commit a variety of crimes, including one instance which resulted in the murders of two persons in the United States.

Specifically, the indictment alleges that the three defendants and at least 13 others in the United States conspired from at least 2001 to March 2007 to operate an MS-13 enterprise in the United States and El Salvador through a pattern of racketeering activity, including: eight murders in Maryland and one in Virginia; the use of deadly weapons including firearms, baseball bats, machetes, bottles or knives in the commission of murders, attempted murders, and assaults on juvenile females, rival gang members, and an MS-13 gang member from El Salvador; kidnapping; robbery; obstruction of justice; and witness tampering.

“Today's announcement results, in part, from a series of comprehensive anti-gang initiatives undertaken by the Department to target and pursue America's most violent and dangerous gangs,” said Attorney General Gonzales. “I also want to acknowledge the cooperation provided by officials in the government of El Salvador who have strongly demonstrated their commitment to combating MS-13 and other violent gangs that operate in El Salvador, and elsewhere in Central America, Mexico and the United States.”

Among other things, the indictment alleges that in or about September or October 2004, Mejia and Angel produced a videotape of themselves and fellow MS-13 gang members in El Salvador, in which they communicated to MS-13 gang members in Maryland regarding the activities of MS-13 in El Salvador. The indictment also alleges that on or about Oct. 9, 2005, Angel communicated with members of the Teclas Locos Salvatruchos clique in Maryland via cell phone from inside prison in El Salvador regarding acts of violence, including murder, against rival gang members, and that later that same day, other gang members in Maryland killed two people and wounded a juvenile.

The indictment also alleges that on or about Aug. 21, 2005, Regaldo participated in the premeditated murder of Anber Juarez Sanchez in Howard County, Md. The indictment further alleges that on or about May 27, 2006, Regaldo and others participated in the armed robbery of a grocery store in Reisterstown, Md.

All three defendants are currently incarcerated in El Salvador on charges for crimes allegedly committed in that country. If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence in the United States of life in prison for conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise. All defendants are presumed innocent under the law until and unless convicted.

“This indictment is an example of the strategic approach that the Department of Justice has taken to combating the international and multi-jurisdictional problem of violent gangs,” said Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division. “We have marshaled our resources to ultimately target the leadership of these gangs, whether on the streets of our neighborhoods or in cities abroad.”

“Federal, state and local law enforcement authorities are united with our international partners in pursuing gang leaders who direct criminal activity as well as members who carry it out,” said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein of the District of Maryland. “If you join a gang that commits crimes, you can be held accountable for all criminal activity committed by other gang members.”

“MS-13 is a criminal organization that has terrorized our nation’s neighborhoods and jeopardized community safety for far too long,” said Acting Director Michael J. Sullivan, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. “This indictment sends a strong signal that anyone who joins the gang and participates in violent acts on its behalf will continue to be brought to justice, no matter where they may hide.”

“This indictment should send a message to MS-13 and other gangs that their violence will not be tolerated in our streets and our neighborhoods, and we will not permit gang leaders to seek refuge outside of our borders to commit crimes within the United States,” said Assistant Director Kenneth W. Kaiser, FBI Criminal Investigative Division. “The FBI’s MS-13 National Gang Task Force, in partnership with local, state, federal and international law enforcement, is working diligently to dismantle MS-13 and eradicate the threat it poses around the world.”

Attorney General Gonzales announced in San Salvador on Feb. 5, 2007, a far-reaching set of anti-gang initiatives in cooperation with El Salvador, Mexico, and neighboring countries. The February announcement included the establishment of a new Transnational Anti-Gang Center (TAG), including up to a dozen investigators from the Civilian National Police (PNC) in El Salvador, embedded prosecutors from the El Salvador Attorney General’s office, special FBI teams assigned to El Salvador, and State Department support. The effort to stand up the TAG center is underway, and PNC investigators who are part of the new center assisted in the investigation in this case.



In matters related to this case to date, 42 MS-13 gang members have been charged with various federal offenses, with 30 defendants charged in this RICO conspiracy case. Jose Hipolito Cruz Diaz, a/k/a “Pirana,” Omar Vasquez, a/k/a “Duke,” and Henry Zelaya, a/k/a “Homeboy,” were convicted at trial by a federal jury on April 27, 2007, of the racketeering conspiracy and face a maximum sentence of life in prison. Edgar Alberto Ayala, a/k/a

“Pony,” and Oscar Ramos Velasquez, a/k/a “Casper,” were convicted at trial by a federal jury in November 2006 of racketeering conspiracies. Ayala was sentenced on June 1, 2007, to 35 years in prison, and Velasquez faces a maximum sentence of life at his sentencing scheduled for July 23, 2007. Nine defendants, all of Maryland, have pleaded guilty, including: Walter Barahona, who was sentenced on April 16, 2007, to 14 years in prison; Franklin Mejia Molina, who was sentenced on Dec. 4, 2006, to more than nine years in prison; and Juan Lopez, who was sentenced on Oct. 16, 2006, to 87 months in prison. Jose Pena Aguilar was sentenced to 10 years in prison on Nov. 6, 2006, for using a firearm in furtherance of a racketeering conspiracy, to be served consecutive to a 20-year sentence received in the Circuit Court of Prince George’s County for attempted murder.

The charges span three states, three federal districts, and two countries. In addition to the murders in Maryland and Virginia, and the conduct in El Salvador, the indictment also alleges a relationship to alleged MS-13 gang members and activity charged recently by a federal grand jury in Nashville. That indictment charges 14 defendants with RICO and gun charges and is being prosecuted by the Criminal Division’s Gang Squad and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Tennessee.

The charges stem from a long-term investigation initiated by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Maryland, conducted jointly with the Gang Squad of the Criminal Division at the U.S. Department of Justice and a task force headed by the ATF. The Regional Area Gang Enforcement (RAGE) Task Force is comprised of agents and officers from the ATF; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Department of Homeland Security; the Maryland National Capital Park Police; the Prince George’s County, Howard County and Montgomery County Police Departments; as well as the Maryland State Police. Both the FBI’s MS-13 National Gang Task Force and the PNC in El Salvador assisted the Task Force with investigating the international defendants in El Salvador.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys James Trusty and Chan Park from the District of Maryland and Trial Attorney David Jaffe from the Justice Department’s Gang Squad are prosecuting this case.

Ms. Fisher and Mr. Rosenstein thanked Prince George’s County State’s Attorney Glenn F. Ivey, Montgomery County States Attorney John McCarthy, and Fairfax, Va., Commonwealth’s Attorney Robert F. Horan Jr. for the assistance that they and their offices provided.

From the Editors



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L.E.C.C. Program
C/O U.S. Attorney’s Office
5400 Federal Plaza, Suite 1500
Hammond, IN 46320
Phone: (219) 937-5666
Fax: (219) 937-5537

E-mail: jesse.rodgers@sbcglobal.net or
ryan.holmes@usdoj.gov

