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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Feds: Man Bought Guns for Gang

Article published by the Times on February 23, 2008

Hammond, IN | A 30-year-old Hobart man bought 13 handguns from a gun dealer in the region with the intention of providing the weapons to a gang member, federal authorities said.

The indictment, on file in Hammond federal court, alleges Antwon L. Vaughn lied on signed Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosive forms saying he would be the owner of the guns even though he intended to give the weapons to a person who was not legally able to buy or own guns.



Vaughn intended to give the guns to an unidentified member of the Gangster Disciples street gang, U.S. attorney's spokeswoman Mary Hatton said Friday.

Vaughn's attorney, Stephen Scheele, said he has not seen any evidence that guns Vaughn may have purchased were intended to go to gang members.

"He pleaded not guilty, and he has a presumption of innocence that I would ask ... the public to respect," Scheele said.

Vaughn was indicted Feb. 6, and the case was unsealed Feb. 13. The indictment alleges he visited the gun dealer six times between June 2006 and June 2007, buying at least two handguns on each occasion.

Federal law makes it illegal to declare on ATF Form 4473 that someone intends to buy a gun for his own use if the purchaser intends to give the weapon to someone else.

Vaughn's criminal trial is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. April 21 in U.S. District Court in Hammond.



Cops Unite to Fight Gangs

Article published by the Times

02/27/2008 Highland, IN | The Highland and Hammond police departments are forging forces to deal with gang activity they believe is infiltrating from Illinois. The Highland Town Council's unanimous vote Monday night finalized the joint agreement already endorsed by Hammond officials.

Highland Police Chief Peter Hojnicky said Chicago police have said the gangs they are chasing out of the city are running over the border into Indiana. The new entity, called the Indiana Gang Task Force, will share information gathered on the gangs, Hojnicky said. It will also form patrols to investigate the gangs and have the authority to make arrests, he said.



A statement issued by both communities says the task force will "reduce, respond to and prevent violent criminal acts attributable to street gangs and other criminal organizations." The combined forces will include members of Highland's existing Crime Impact Unit and its counterpart in Hammond.

The statement notes the task force will have an agreement with the Lake County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area to share information. The coordination of information between these entities will also help identify gang members and recognize their behavior, police believe.

Highland council Vice President Konnie Kuiper, Highland First Coalition-5th, described the pact as "a win for Highland ... because we want to keep them on the run." Hojnicky praised Hammond Police Chief Brian Miller on Tuesday, saying he was instrumental in facilitating the task force.

Source: The Times



Large Drug Rings Fall in the Region

Article published by the Times

02/17/2008 Merrillville, IN | Although the news is sometimes lost in the fast clip of region drug busts, federal drug-enforcement officials say they've broken up six major distribution operations in a little more than three years, preventing millions of doses of narcotics from hitting the streets.

Rough calculations show that the busts netted at least 1.79 million individual doses of cocaine and 228,000 doses of heroin in that time period, but experts say the actual number of doses probably is much higher because of a differential in drug purity.

In addition to the drugs, local U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration offices report that the six major drug distribution organizations brought down between 2005 and early 2008 by federal, state and local law enforcement translated into 46 arrests and \$1.75 million in seized assets. Those assets include cars, cash and real estate

From violent street gangs to a mail-order scheme run out of a prison in Thailand, the organizations varied widely in their modes of getting drugs onto the streets of Lake and Porter counties.

What the cases had in common, Wichern said, was resistance from the region's tightly interwoven network of drug-fighting officials that includes task forces of local, county and state police and agents from the FBI, DEA, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Indiana remains "an active drug transportation and distribution area," according to the DEA's 2008 fact sheet on the state, with the primary supplies of cocaine, marijuana and heroin coming from Mexican drug cartels, primarily by interstate highways.

In October 2007, six people were charged with taking part in a large-scale cocaine distribution ring involving members of the Northwest Indiana branch of the Latin Dragons street gang. In 2005, Vice Lord gang member Lee Dickens was charged along with three co-defendants with distributing marijuana and kilogram-quantities of cocaine.

Full Story: http://www.thetimesonline.com/articles/2008/02/17/news/top_news/docfd32d54b56a1e999862573f1007bdd76.txt

Brawls Put E.C. Central on Lockdown

Article published by the Times

02/23/2008 East Chicago, IN | An early morning fight Friday outside East Chicago Central High School later escalated into melees that led to a six-hour lockdown before students finally were dismissed for the day.



A sophomore was taken by ambulance to St. Catherine Hospital, and a dozen teenagers were taken into custody after witnesses said a non-student attacked a basketball team member shortly before 7:30 a.m.

Police reportedly subdued both youths, but witnesses said the sophomore experienced what appeared to be a seizure while being handcuffed. Sources say the student bled while being restrained.

That apparently sparked anger among students waiting to start the day's classes and exploded into brawls between various school cliques, witnesses said. "It was like a riot," junior Alfred Collins II said.

The status of those taken into custody, and the condition of the basketball player taken to the hospital, were not available late Friday.

Shotgun-toting SWAT officers backed by anti-gang and canine units patrolled outside the school and in its hallways as bewildered parents -- notified of the lockdown by their children via cell phones -- gathered outside until the students were let out at 1:30 p.m.

A source familiar with the police response said fights had broken out in several parts of the school, and the tactical unit evacuated the school section by section. Police reportedly believe gangs may have been behind at least some of the fights.

Full Story: http://www.nwi.com/articles/2008/02/23/news/top_news/doc7f3d62c851e552a5862573f8001113ce.txt



Vandals Target Garages with Gang Graffiti

Article published by the News Dispatch

02/08/2008 Michigan City, IN | At least 16 residents in the 300, 400 and 500 blocks of South Porter, Jackson and Dickson streets found graffiti across the doors and siding of their garages. According to Michigan City police, the department received two calls from residents of the 300 block of South Porter Street around 7 p.m. Wednesday.

One of the victims told police that when she arrived home around 4:30 p.m. everything was normal with her garage. A neighbor later called to tell her someone had spray painted the east wall of her garage.



The owner discovered red letters "GD" and the numbers "7-4" to indicate the seventh and fourth letters of the alphabet. Although authorities would not confirm what the letters stood for, it is thought to be a reference to the street gang Gangster Disciples.

Lt. John Kintzele, assistant chief of service for the Michigan City police, confirmed the graffiti was of a gang nature. "Sadly, the young person was confused," Kintzele said.

"If they were trying to show their allegiance to the Gangster Disciples, they had the wrong color of paint."

Down the block, six-pointed stars and the letters "ESG" were painted on surfaces. It is thought those letters stand for East Side Gangsters. On Thursday morning, police discovered several more homes in the 300 block had been targeted by graffiti. Officers found the garages sharing the alley in the 300, 400 and 500 blocks of Porter and Jackson streets and the 500 block of Jackson and Dickson streets had been hit by the paint and symbols.

Kintzele admitted there is some gang activity in the city. "It is mostly kids just wanting and needing to feel they belong. None of it is criminal," Kintzele said. "These kids are not dealing in drugs, weapons or prostitution. They are more like social groups. These kids are just looking for a family of sorts," Kintzele said.

Full Story: <http://thenewsd Dispatch.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&ArticleID=9650&TM=38037.63>

Local, Federal Officials Arrest 38 Milwaukee Gang Suspects

Article published by the Associated Press

02/15/2008 Milwaukee, WI | Members of a drug-dealing gang blamed for terrorizing a Milwaukee neighborhood with gunfire were arrested Thursday by teams of local and federal law enforcement officers.

Authorities said 45 people were charged as part of the operation against the Nash Street Boys, or “1-9’s,” a gang that has been based around North 19th Street and West Nash Street. “This is a neighborhood that’s lived in fear too long,” Police Chief Ed Flynn said.

There were 38 arrests early Thursday. Authorities said officers executed 11 search warrants. U.S. Attorney Steven Biskupic told reporters the investigation started in March 2007. A federal grand jury indictment charges conspiracy to sell cocaine and distribution of the drugs over a two-year period, he said. Some defendants also are charged with weapons violations and using guns to protect drug activity.

Biskupic said state prosecutors linked the gang to two shootings at Milwaukee nightclubs and a shootout last month that damaged the home of a family not involved with the gang activity. Gang members also are accused of beating someone suspected of cooperating with authorities and then setting him on fire last May, Biskupic said. Thirty of the defendants face penalties of up to life in prison if convicted.

Flynn addressed concerns that other gangs now might try to move into the same neighborhood. He said police are determined to prevent that from happening. “If there’s going to be a fight over that neighborhood, you’re going to fight with us,” Flynn said.

Source: The Associated Press



Insane Deuces Face Federal Trial

Article published by the Beacon News

02/06/2008 Aurora, IL | Jury selection is scheduled to begin this morning for a major federal murder and drug conspiracy trial involving Aurora gang members. Seven men arrested in a 2005 sweep of the Insane Deuces street gang will be tried together in a racketeering case that could last three months.

In September of 2005, the FBI and Aurora police brought charges against 16 men for their alleged involvement in a drug trafficking and murder conspiracy.

The defendants' cases were split and five Aurora men, one Sandwich resident and a Chicago man will face a trial with high stakes: each of them is eligible for a life sentence. The defendants in this first trial include: Bolivar Benabe, 40, of Chicago; Julian Salazar, 28, the alleged "governor" of the gang's Aurora faction; Juan Juarez, 30, of Sandwich, the gang's alleged overseer of suburban operations; and Fernando Delatorre, Harold Crowder, Christian Guzman and Steven Susinka, all of Aurora. Prosecutors have decided not to pursue the death penalty for any of the cases. (Delatorre and Guzman also have pending Kane County murder cases.)

According to the indictment filed in the case, the men are charged with being part of a conspiracy that committed at least four murders, five attempted murders and a drug trafficking ring that netted profits of more than \$1.25 million. Most of the allegations focus on a bloody 10-month period in Aurora, between February and November 2002.

Prosecutors say 17-year-old David Lazcano, 28-year-old Robert Perez, 23-year-old David Diego Morales-Garcia, and 15-year-old Erbell Valdez were all victims of the Insane Deuces gang. Lazcano and Morales-Garcia's murders are believed to be cases of mistaken identity.

Opening statements could begin as early as Friday. Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Pope is the lead prosecutor, with Assistant U.S. Attorneys Chris Hotaling and Megan Morrissey as co-chairs. The case will take place in the Dirksen Federal Building in downtown Chicago, where U.S. District Court Judge Ruben Castillo will preside.

Source: The Beacon News

Attorney General Wants \$200 Million to Bust Gangs

Article published by CNN

01/24/2008 Washington, DC | The Justice Department plans to propose \$200 million in grants to cities to help combat gang and gun violence, Attorney General Michael Mukasey announced Thursday. The funds -- which will be included in President Bush's budget proposal to be unveiled next month -- are primarily intended to help establish new task forces to target armed youths blamed for much of the nation's ongoing violence.

It would be a significant increase from the \$75 million awarded last year, when Justice officials established the program. Known as the Violent Crime Reduction Partnership, the federal money goes directly to cities that successfully compete for the funds and explain how they will be used to attack violence.

"This initiative will help communities address their specific violent crime challenges, especially where multiple jurisdictions are involved," Mukasey told the National Conference of Mayors in Washington. "We'll be able to send targeted resources where they are needed the most and where they show the most promise."

Several mayors who listened to the attorney general's address said they believe the establishment of local and regional task forces in which federal agents work with police from several neighboring jurisdictions has proven effective and eliminated duplication of law enforcement resources.



"Task forces and matching grant programs like Project Safe Neighborhoods, and Weed and Seed, and the COPS program really help," said Mayor Terry Bellamy, of Asheville, North Carolina. "Working in cooperation with federal partners has certainly helped," said Mayor Irvanna Wilks of Mount Prospect, Illinois, a Chicago suburb.

After two years of increases nationally in violent crime, the most recent [FBI](#) statistics show the number of violent crimes declined slightly during the first half of last year. Mukasey referred to "historically low [crime](#) levels nationally," but said such broad trends are of only limited value in dealing with a problem that has to be dealt with on a much smaller scale. "The nature of crime varies not only from one city to another but even from one block to the next," he said.

Full Story: <http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/01/24/mukasey.crime/index.html>



Bloods Using Young Teens as Gunman

Article published by the Baltimore Examiner

02/28/2008 Baltimore, MD | A prominent Baltimore defense attorney says the Bloods gang is using young teens as gunmen in order to avoid prosecution in adult criminal court. Warren Brown said Wednesday that two of his young clients were given guns by older members of the Bloods gang and told to kill, because the gang believes penalties for young killers will not be severe.

"They're young enough to be manipulated," Brown said outside a Baltimore County Circuit Court room, after his client, James "Lil' J" Smoot, 15, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for second-degree murder. "They tell them, 'You gotta be a good soldier.' They don't give them any time to think about it. They give them the gun. They shoot. It's not that difficult to pull a trigger."

Smoot, of Baltimore, was only 14 when Bloods gang members persuaded their newest recruit to commit a murder in Baltimore County. Armed with a handgun, the teen admitted to walking up to the home of Marquel Smith, 32, of Essex, who allegedly owed the gang money, and shooting him to death on Dec. 17, 2006.

Brown also represents Johnathan Cornish, 15, who is charged with murdering witness Carl Lackl Jr., 38, in front of his Rosedale home on July 2.

Brown said older Bloods gang members convinced Cornish to join the gang after Pop Warner Football season ended. "I asked him, 'Why did you join up with this gang?' and he told me football season was over," Brown said. "The opportunity to do something positive ended, and he joined something negative."

Cornish is alleged to have shot Lackl, a witness in a Baltimore City murder trial, at the behest of older suspects who have since been federally indicted. Brown said those older suspects are members of the Bloods gang.

In Maryland, juveniles 13 and younger cannot be tried as adults for murder though teens 14 and older are commonly tried in adult court and face up to life in prison for a first-degree murder charge. No juvenile under 18 is eligible for the death penalty. Any penalty imposed on teens tried in juvenile court, such as placement in a juvenile facility, ends at the suspect's 21st birthday.

"They think they'll be tried as juveniles and they know they're impressionable," Brown said. "These teens are being sold a false bill of goods."

Earlier this week, federal prosecutors announced indictments against 28 members of the TTP Bloods gang, which authorities said carried out murders, shootings and robberies, dealt drugs and intimidated witnesses in the Baltimore area. Among those charged with crimes were older members of the Bloods gang that Brown said ordered Smoot to kill to Marquel.

Baltimore County police say they have identified gang members in every precinct in the county. Baltimore City has about 2,600 known gang members, including 400 Bloods, police say.

Full Story: http://www.examiner.com/a-1247174~Lawyer_Bloods_using_minors_as_gunmen.html



Alleged Gang Member Charged in Bus Stop Attack

Article published by the Daily Breeze

03/03/2008 Los Angeles, CA | A gang member from Gardena who is accused of firing into a crowd and wounding five children and three adults near a bus stop in South Los Angeles, was charged Monday with 15 felony counts, including attempted murder and assault with a firearm.



Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner Henry J. Hall ordered Billy Ray Hines, 24, to remain jailed on \$2 million bail pending arraignment, which was postponed to March 18.

Hines faces eight counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm, two counts each of attempted murder and shooting at an occupied motor vehicle, and one count each of shooting at an inhabited dwelling, discharging a firearm in a school zone and possessing a firearm while on probation, along with gang and gun allegations.

Authorities allege that Hines fired at least 15 rounds from a 9 mm handgun into a group of people standing near the bus stop in front of a fast-food restaurant Wednesday afternoon, then ran off. The gunfire erupted shortly after classes let out at nearby George Washington Carver Middle School.

The five wounded children, ranging in age from 11 to 14, all attend the school. The most seriously hurt - a 12-year-old girl who was shot in the chest - is the only victim still hospitalized.

The shooting was not only witnessed by dozens of people, but also was captured by surveillance cameras, police said. LAPD gang officers who watched the tapes were able to identify Hines, as did several witnesses, according to Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton.

Police said it was unclear if the two intended victims - seen on the surveillance video weaving through pedestrians on the sidewalk during the shooting - are gang members, but they do not believe the attack was racially motivated.

Hines - who police said was on probation for a December burglary conviction - was arrested Thursday afternoon less than a half-mile from the shooting scene.

If convicted of all counts, Hines faces eight life prison sentences with a minimum parole eligibility date of 154 years, according to the District Attorney's Office.

Source: *The Daily Breeze*

Death Threats Lurk in Seemingly Basic Graffiti

Article published by the Wichita Eagle

02/28/2008 Wichita, KS | Numbers can get people killed. On a recent cold night, near 21st and Broadway, Sgt. Brian White pulled over his patrol car in an alley and pointed to a number spray-painted on a building wall: **187**.



That number, and other less-well-known nuances of gang script, have long made graffiti more than a problem of blight. Painting "187" on a wall could start a gunfight, or a series of drive-by shootings. For this reason, Wichita police are asking people to call them immediately when graffiti of any kind appears in their neighborhoods.

In California, 187 is the penal code number for the crime of murder. Gangs years ago adopted the number as shorthand; it's now used all over the country. When painted by a gang member in a rival gang's so-called territory, it can be interpreted as a lethal threat. White, when he found the number that night, pointed to other marks on the same wall. "Graffiti is kind of like newspapers for gangs," he said. "They send messages to each other."

Gang members tread on each other's territory, and sometimes cross out messages from a rival gang using paint that matches the color of their gangs. Some gangs wear red, others green, blue or black. Sometimes kids just "tag" a wall with a non-threatening message, like one message that White pointed to: "Learn how to tag if you're going to come around here." Many of the messages are so poorly painted or so obscure that most people can't interpret them. But gang detectives and street-level drug-and-gang enforcement cops like White can.

Sgt. Ed Brower, who heads the community policing efforts out of the Police Department's Patrol North substation, said the police, the Wichita school district and the city's Office of Central Inspection recently fine-tuned how they respond to graffiti. "For one thing, we all realized we all had separate databases, and that we could do a better job of sharing information and talking with each other," Brower said. "We're doing that now." Gang detectives lately have stepped up the training of other officers, sharing insight, showing images, "telling us what gangs are feuding with other gangs." It's part of a citywide effort to make neighborhoods safe and clean, he said.

Some graffiti is done by kids not affiliated with gangs. Some gang graffiti is harmless, he said, except for the defacing of property. "But we want people to call us immediately, not only to clean up graffiti but so we can quickly and accurately interpret the images," Brower said. Graffiti can quickly be documented by a patrol officer carrying a digital camera. That officer can e-mail images to gang detectives expert at its interpretation.

Gang unit and patrol officers have seen a lull lately in gang graffiti and other activity, Brower said. That will probably change when the weather turns warmer soon, he said, "And we want to be proactive and ready. "We want to get the word out to the public that we want to know about graffiti right away, so we can respond right away and stay ahead of the curve."

Source: The Wichita Eagle



Did You Know?

Indiana 31-37-19-17. Graffiti—Effect on Operator's License or Learner's Permit

(a) This section applies if a child is a delinquent child under IC 31-37-1 due to the commission of a delinquent act that, if committed by an adult, would be criminal mischief or institutional criminal mischief under IC 35-43-1-2 that involves the use of graffiti.

(b) The juvenile court may, in addition to any other order or decree the court makes under this chapter, order the bureau of motor vehicles to:

- (1) suspend the child's operator's license; or
 - (2) invalidate the child's learner's permit;
- for one (1) year beginning the date of the order.

Gangs Go High Tech

Article published by the News Virginian

02/10/2008 Waynesboro, VA | A death threat sent via text messaging could mean that local gangs have added a digital-age twist to the old brick-wall graffiti standby. Investigators with a regional gang task force believe a suspected Bloods member is behind the "Ima sirius just watch ima kil u" message that showed up on a teenage girl's cell phone last month. If true, it wouldn't be the first time gangbangers have turned high-tech to spread a message of drugs, violence and street ideology, experts say.

Jared L. Lewis, director of Wisconsin-based Know Gangs, ticked off several such instances:

- * Rival gangs on the U.S.-Mexican border have posted murders on YouTube in a brazen attempt to scare their enemies.
- * A Chicago gangster created a hit list of recently paroled rival gang members by downloading their names, pictures and addresses from a department of corrections Web site.
- * Locally, someone briefly posted a "Free Shanney" page on MySpace when police first arrested Bloods suspect Rashame "Shanney" Washington in connection with a 2006 Waynesboro gang shooting.



Street gangs nationwide have turned to the virtual world so often since the late 1990s that their appearances have garnered a new term - "Web banging."

"Gang members threatening or intimidating people on the Internet is a growing trend," Lewis wrote in an e-mail. "Much of the Internet activity involving gangs involves younger teens who may be a little less likely to engage in the same type of behavior in real life. But there is a growing number of hardened gang members using the Internet."

Full Story:

http://www.newsvirginian.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WNV%2FMGArticle%2FWNV_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1173354548694&path=!news!localnews



Pittsburgh 'Net-Bangers' Fly Their Colors Online

Article published by the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

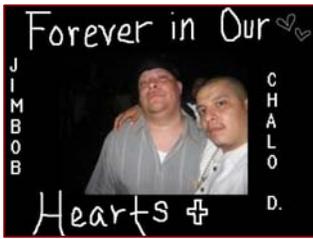
02/19/2008 Pittsburgh, PA | The average street gang member in Pittsburgh might be using the Internet instead of an assault rifle to fuel rivalries that simmer among the 41 groups operating in the city. A quick online search of known gang names in the area shows members increasingly are using MySpace and other social networking sites to "diss" or challenge each other, often posting homemade videos and photos depicting gang symbols, insignia and colors.

"It's called 'net-banging,'" said Pittsburgh police Sgt. Mona Wallace, who heads the crime analysis and intelligence unit. "It's becoming more and more common. They use technology to stir things up, and a lot of times that spills over onto the street."

The trend toward using technology to recruit members, gain credibility and further a gang's criminal activity is on the rise nationwide, experts said. It shouldn't come as a surprise that gang members are technologically savvy, said Detroit police Lt. Charles Mahone. "These kids are growing up in an electronic age, where they have all the skills and knowledge to do this," Mahone said. "It's second nature to them. They do everything else online. Why not put their gang online?"

Locally, members of gangs citywide are making rap videos, with members posing with hand signs, colors and insignia, and posting blogs with insults and challenges tossed to other gangs. Many blogs and posts on social networking sites use code words, and some pages are security- and password-protected for members only, investigators said.

Gangs often create Web pages to memorialize fallen members, police said. "They're using all forms of technology to benefit the gang and their criminal activity, from cell phones to the Internet," Wallace said.



In Orlando, law enforcement officials are marking an increase in gang members utilizing the Internet to recruit members or sell drugs and pirated music and movies, officials there said. Pittsburgh law enforcement officials said they haven't seen evidence of local gangs doing the same.

In Houston, employees at the city's Anti-Gang Office troll the Internet daily, looking for evidence that gangs are communicating with each other or promoting themselves, said executive director Patricia Harrington. Harrington said her office discovered videos online showing gang members being beaten as part of initiation rituals.

The Internet allows gangs to glorify their image and spread messages "like wildfire," using YouTube and sites including www.streetgangs.com, which are "hardcore" sites dedicated to gang life, said Sgt. Ronnie Hampton of the New Jersey State Police Gang Task Force.

"It took 20 years for the West Coast Bloods and Crips to spread to the East Coast with their message and their colors," said Hampton, president of the New Jersey chapter of the East Coast Gang Investigators Association. "Now, gangs have discovered the Internet, and they're worldwide. It's increasing every day because, with the Internet, they're not confined to one corner or area. They're exploding."

Full Story: http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/s_553098.html



Gangs Target MySpace to Recruit Members

Article published by the Telegraph

02/09/2008 Los Angeles, CA | Gang leaders are increasingly turning to social networking sites such as MySpace to recruit new members, using stealth tactics to target children as young as 12, according to police in California. Young web surfers are often unaware they are being groomed as they download music or pictures that glorify criminal gangs, experts say. But what starts out as innocuous chat-room banter about the lyrics to rap songs can often escalate into real street violence.

Susan Manheimer, the San Mateo police chief near Redwood City, northern California, told local television news that gang leaders, often those just released from prison, were using sites such as MySpace and YouTube as a way to reach children. "We're seeing ... the resurgence of some of the gang members coming back from prison looking more and more to those middle schoolers and the younger kids to recruit them," said Ms Manheimer, who is also in charge of the San Mateo County gang taskforce.



Young people would download gang insignia on their mobile phones or music with lyrics that refer to gangs by name such as the Norteños, a coalition of Latino gangs in Northern California, she said.

Ms. Manheimer added that children would get into online discussions that sometimes escalated to vicious threats. "The type of profiling they're doing of themselves (by downloading gang-related content) makes them prey to predators and also at odds with and challenging other gangs," she told CBS 5 local news. "So, we'll see something start on the internet and actually turn into an assault or a gang fight that actually results out of internet profiling."

One 13-year old boy told CBS 5 that people who put up pages with gang images sometimes strike up conversations with him. "They just talk normal, like 'What you doing? What you been up to?'" he said. "They don't pressure me, though."

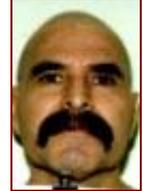
Source: *The Telegraph*

New Leadership, Constitution for Nuestra Familia

Article published by the Herald

02/25/2008 Monterey County, CA | Monterey County's deadliest gang has new leadership and a new constitution, forcing changes that law enforcement officers say is translating to increased violence in the streets. After several years of upheaval — stemming largely from the massive federal prosecution called Operation Black Widow — the top leadership of the Nuestra Familia is once again firmly established.

For the first time in decades, one man sits alone at the helm of the criminal organization that for more than 30 years has called the shots for thousands of Norteño gang members in the Salinas Valley. In 2004, when the prison gang's top five leaders were transferred from California to a federal supermaximum prison in Florence, Colo., a struggle for the gang's top positions brewed in Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, the Nuestra Familia's traditional headquarters.



In the aftermath, some of the gang's thousands of Norteño associates — street-level soldiers who answer to Nuestra Familia — stayed loyal to the exiled generals and captains, while others looked to Pelican Bay because the gang's written constitution said its leaders must reside there.



Three leaders soon emerged at Pelican Bay, filling the ranks of the gang's mesa, or board of directors: David "DC" Cervantes of Chino, Jose "Huerito" Gonzalez and James "Conejo" Perez. But in a coup d'etat of sorts, Gonzalez and Perez have been "demoted" to "Category 1," the lowest level of the Nuestra Familia, investigators say. That leaves Cervantes, who has always kept a keen eye on Salinas affairs, in control as the organization's only general.

Nuestra Familia is organized in a military-like hierarchy, with generals running the gang from inside prison and paroled regiment captains running the streets outside. Last year, a newly revised constitution for the gang was distributed through underground channels, allowing for change in the mesa's structure, said Santa Cruz County sheriff's Sgt. Roy Morales. But copies were intercepted in Pelican Bay, giving investigators a heads-up about the leadership changes.

Like other major prison gangs, including the Aryan Brotherhood and the Mexican Mafia, Nuestra Familia issues orders from its power base in the Security Housing Unit of Pelican Bay. And though prison officials recently reorganized the housing in a way that slows down gang communications, coded directives are still smuggled out that translate to violence in California cities and farm towns. One such order last year told Norteños across Northern California to clean the streets of Sureños. Police surmise that the order was responsible for many of the shootings in Salinas in 2007, which increased by 50 percent over 2006 levels.

Full Story: http://www.montereyherald.com/ci_8350955



U.S., Riverside County Team to Target Gang Members Who've been Deported Once Already

Article published by the Press-Enterprise

02/27/2008 Riverside County, CA | Riverside County authorities announced Tuesday an alliance with the U.S. attorney to prosecute international gang members who have already been convicted of a violent crime and deported and have returned illegally to the United States. Riverside County District Attorney Rod Pacheco said about 250 such gang members are believed to be in Riverside County and pose a unique threat.

"A local gang, in one sense, is a little easier to deal with. You know them," Pacheco said. "An international gang takes on a completely different flavor ... they have a reach across borders. These particular gangs know no limits ... these are very, very deadly and dangerous gangs."

Pacheco said Riverside County now has elements of the gangs Mara Salvatrucha, 18th Street and Wah Ching 23. Mara Salvatrucha, also know as MS-13, formed in Los Angeles but is chiefly composed of Salvadoran and other Central American immigrants, while 18th Street is a longtime Los Angeles gang that expanded when it began recruiting immigrants. Wah Ching 23 is a cell of an Asian gang in San Francisco with ties to Hong Kong.

The one-year pact was announced at a news conference that included Pacheco; U.S. Attorney Thomas P. O'Brien, who oversees California's Central District; and Riverside County Sheriff Stan Sniff. O'Brien emphasized that the program is aimed specifically at "criminal aliens -- gang members."



Under the plan, a deputy district attorney from Pacheco's office will be trained and sworn in as a special assistant U.S. attorney with the power to investigate and prosecute violators of the federal law against re-entry into the country by foreigners who have been convicted of state crimes and deported. The pact will use only existing resources, Pacheco said.

For someone who fits the profile, O'Brien explained, "Right now, a deputy sheriff will drive by, see him on the street corner, and there's nothing the deputy can do because he's not in violation of state law. But it is a violation of federal law, and hopefully, this new liaison will help us identify those people."

Among the possibilities for supporting local authorities are federal Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents riding along with deputies, O'Brien said. Sniff said the Sheriff's Department has long coordinated with ICE officers to identify criminal in the country illegally who are being held in Riverside County jails.

The prison term for violators who were deported after conviction of an aggravated felony is 20 years, although many are offered shorter terms.

O'Brien said his office, which has jurisdiction from San Luis Obispo through Orange County, made between 500 and 600 such prosecutions last year, including 90 in the Inland Empire. One included a man found serving time in a Norco prison who had been deported 10 times between 1990 and 2006, O'Brien said.

Full Story: http://www.pe.com/localnews/inland/stories/PE_News_Local_H_da27.431f395.html



Oregon Teens Suspended for Wearing Crucifixes

Article published by KTVZ News Channel 21

02/08/2008 Albany, OR | A pair of Albany teenagers were suspended from high school for a few days recently because they were wearing crucifixes that school officials called "gang-related behavior."

Fourteen-year-old Jaime Salazar and his friend, 16-year-old Marco Castro, say their mothers gave them the crucifixes - and they deny they're involved with any gangs.

But South Albany High School Principal Chris Equinoa is clear about the school district's position. He says religious items are not banned. But he reserves the right to ask a student to remove, or cover up, any item he feels could indicate gang affiliation - even a crucifix.



A spokesman for the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Portland says the archdiocese has no reports of gangs using crucifixes to identify themselves in Western Oregon.

But Albany police say fellow officers in Salem and Hillsboro have been contending with crucifixes and rosaries as gang markers for the past several years.

Source: KTVZ News Channel 21

Mitchell, Hamilton Struggle with Increasing Classroom Violence

Article published by Commercial Appeal

02/17/2008 Memphis, TN | Fists flew and blood spilled. Police who responded that afternoon last August described a virtual riot, a melee of rival gangs on the campus of Hamilton High School. One of those arrested, a diminutive 10th-grader named Deangelo Key, got a ride that day to juvenile lockup in the back of a Memphis Police Department cruiser. When the charges didn't stick, Key, listed in arrest records as a member of the Vice Lords street gang, was back at Hamilton -- and in trouble.

Earlier this month in a heated classroom argument over rap lyrics, Key, 16, allegedly whipped out a .380-caliber handgun, its serial number filed off to conceal its transfer of ownership, and blew a bullet through the leg of a rival. The shooting was one of three since September inside Memphis public schools. The unprecedented outbreak of violence prompted Mayor Willie Herenton to announce last week that he would place metal detectors in every city middle and high school and beef up police presence as well.

Officials expressed shock at what some have labeled an anomaly, yet records and interviews show educators received numerous warnings of growing violence and gang activity at Hamilton and Mitchell high schools, the scenes of the two most recent shootings. "It's a challenge, but we're in it to win it," said Hamilton principal Ike White, who believes the school is turning the corner on violence with a variety of measures including random searches, perimeter patrols and metal scans of everyone, even parents.

The Hamilton shooting was followed by another just last week at Mitchell High, demonstrating just how difficult and complex the struggle with guns and violence may be for city and school officials. There, too, there were plenty of warnings.

Full Story: <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/feb/17/2-schools-tilt-toward-chaos/>



Schools Trying to Save Gang Members One by One

Article published by the News Dispatch

02/11/2008 Pittsburgh, PA | With a \$1.1 million federal grant, the Pittsburgh Public Schools and a handful of partners are trying to save East End gang members -- one at a time. Outreach worker Anthony "Tone" Walls may start his work day at a school, the county courthouse, a juvenile detention center, or on the streets of Homewood or Garfield, wherever gang members need him.

He keeps a bead on gang activity and counsels gang members about a better life. He said one high school dropout took the message to heart, returned to school and graduated on time. He recalled guiding other lost men into welding school, so they'd have a chance at decent jobs. "You can't save everybody," Mr. Walls said. "But if you can save one or two, you're doing your job."

The U.S. Justice Department awarded the school district one of four grants nationwide for a Gang-Free Schools and Communities program, which began operation in 2003.

After analyzing gang activity citywide, organizers decided to concentrate resources in the East End, project director Errika Fearbry Jones said. Grant funding will expire in December, and Ms. Jones is devising a plan to keep the program going.

Since the program's inception, there's been a drop in the percentage of gang-related killings in eastern neighborhoods, while the rate of other gang-related crimes has held steady, she said. Supporters said the initiative -- involving city police, probation officers, social service caseworkers and the Homewood-Brushton YMCA -- has yielded a more complete picture of gang activity and given gang members repeated opportunities to start anew.

"It's kind of unprecedented," Sgt. Mona Wallace of the city police intelligence unit said.

Full Story: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08042/856554-53.stm>

School Adopt Anti-Gang Policy

Article published by the Sun News

02/06/2008 Georgetown County, SC | In response to police reports of increased gang activity, the Georgetown County School Board passed a new anti-gang policy Tuesday that prohibits the use of gang-related paraphernalia or activity on school grounds. Students who violate the policy are subject to expulsion, suspension and may be referred to local law enforcement.

The following are prohibited:

- Wearing, possessing, using, displaying or selling clothing, jewelry or emblems that indicate membership or affiliation with gangs.
- Engaging in acts either verbal or nonverbal but not limited to gestures or handshakes that indicate gang membership.
- Soliciting membership to a gang, soliciting to pay for protection, or soliciting any person to engage in physical violence.

Over the past few months, the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office has been visiting every school, giving presentations to teachers and other school staff on how to identify gangs or gang-related activity with photos and clips of particular handshakes and symbols.

Full Story: <http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/story/340477.html>

From the Editors



Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.
We are always trying to improve the quality and effectiveness of our products

If you have any comments, suggestions or articles that can be used in the "G.A.I.N." Newsletter, please send them to:

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