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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Raid targets Mongols motorcycle gang

Dozens are arrested on federal racketeering charges after a multi-agency investigation. Federal agents also want to seize the Mongols' trademarked name: 'We're going after their very identity.'

Article published in Los Angeles Times on October 22, 2008

LOS ANGELES, CA| After the arrests of 61 members of the Mongols biker gang on federal racketeering charges Tuesday, U.S. Atty. Thomas P. O'Brien stood in front of two dozen gleaming motorcycles seized from the gang and vowed to go after more than just the Mongols' means of transportation.

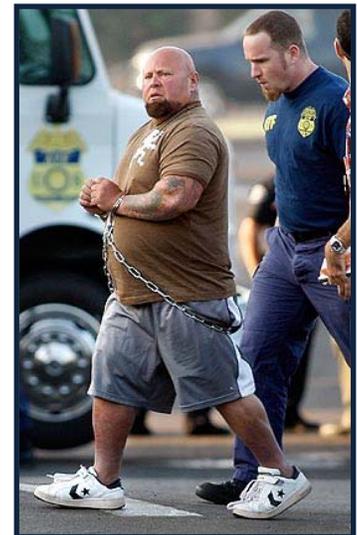
In what he called an unprecedented move, O'Brien said he would seek to take control of the Mongols' name, which the gang has trademarked, through a restraining order barring them from wearing it.

"We're going after their very identity," O'Brien said.

Tuesday's crackdown involved more than 1,000 federal agents and police in Southern California, Nevada, Oregon, Colorado, Washington and Ohio.

It capped a three-year undercover investigation in which federal agents infiltrated the gang, resulting in an 86-count indictment.

"We believe [the indictment] puts a stake in the heart of the Mongols," said Michael Sullivan, acting director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, who joined O'Brien and other law enforcement officials at a news conference in downtown Los Angeles.



Continued...

The 177-page indictment describes a mostly Latino gang, intolerant of African Americans, whose attacks were sometimes motivated by race.

In addition to racketeering, the Mongols are charged with committing violent crimes -- including murder -- drug trafficking, weapons offenses and money laundering. They used guns, knives, brass knuckles, lead pipes and steel-toed boots to impose their will, often on such rivals as the Hells Angels, but also on unsuspecting members of the public who happened to cross their paths.



The indictment, the first three pages of which list 79 gang member defendants with menacing monikers such as "Monster," "Danger" and "Violent Ed," is drawn largely from the observations of four undercover ATF agents who penetrated the gang and four current Mongols members who became paid informants for the government. Investigators also relied heavily on wiretapped telephone calls in which Mongols, usually speaking in coded language, discussed the gang's allegedly criminal operations.

On display at the news conference were the motorcycles, Mongols' leather jackets and a cache of weapons. Authorities also seized nearly 7 pounds of methamphetamines, five LAPD badges and at least \$153,000 in cash.

The key to the investigation -- dubbed Operation Black Rain -- was the work of the undercover agents who spent several years gaining the Mongols' trust, officials said. Before being admitted to the gang, they were checked out by a private investigator who had been hired by the Mongols and they were given polygraph exams.

The Mongols were formed in the 1970s by a small group of Latinos who reportedly had been rejected by the Hells Angels. The gang now has between 500 and 600 members, the vast majority of them in Southern California, according to law enforcement officials.

The gang has a constitution and bylaws and some of the trappings of more conventional organizations -- its members are provided cellphones, for example. Decisions regarding membership, dues collection and club policy are made by leaders known in the gang as the "Mother Chapter." They have a headquarters in West Covina that is stocked with assault rifles, shotguns and bulletproof vests, according to the indictment.

As with many organizations, patches are awarded to signify the status or achievements of its members, though the behavior celebrated by the Mongols differs from most. For instance, a skull and crossbones patch or one proclaiming "Respect Few, Fear None" is given to members who commit murder or other acts of violence on behalf of the gang, according to the indictment. One member was given permission to have the gang's insignia tattooed on his head for having shot two members of a rival street gang last year, the indictment alleges.

There also are patches associated with the gang's alleged sexual rituals. Members are awarded wings of varying colors for engaging in sex acts with women at prearranged "wing parties," the indictment states. For example, members who have sex with a woman with venereal disease are given green wings, according to the indictment.

The Mongols fund their organization largely through the sale of methamphetamine, according to the indictment.

Undercover agents documented dozens of alleged drug deals ranging in quantity from a few grams to half a kilo.

Many of the alleged sales were made to undercover agents or confidential informants cooperating with authorities, the indictment states. But violence seemed to be at the heart of the Mongols' existence.

One undercover agent said he was told early in his effort to infiltrate the gang that he "must be willing to kill and die for the Mongols if he wanted to join the organization."

Much of the violence described in the indictment involved clashes between the Mongols and their longtime rivals, the Hells Angels.

Mongols are accused of tangling with the Hells Angels at a Laughlin, Nev., casino in 2002, at a Toys for Tots motorcycle run in 2005 and at a Chuck E. Cheese in San Diego last year. Two Hells Angels and one Mongol were killed in the Nevada casino incident, the indictment alleges.

But the violence was not limited to disputes between warring gangs; some were motivated by race, but others appeared to be random acts.



Two Mongols, known as "Villain" and "Danger," are accused of beating a man to death with a pool cue in a Lancaster nightclub on Valentine's Day last year because he had been bad-mouthing the gang.

Another member is accused of shooting patrons of a Riverside bar and then trying to run them over in the parking lot, also in 2007.

A Mongol known as "Dago Bull" told an undercover agent that he and two fellow Mongols tortured a man in 2006 by breaking his knuckles with pliers and one of his knees with a metal pipe.

Another member boasted of having beaten a man so badly that he knocked out a tooth, which he kept taped to his microwave as a souvenir.

A Mongol known as "Monster" and two other members are accused of beating a black man at a Hollywood bar in 2006 while shouting racial slurs, the indictment states.

Other members allegedly beat and repeatedly stabbed a Latina whom they saw in the company of a black man.



Some of the defendants face potential life sentences in federal prison if convicted.

Most made their initial court appearances Tuesday. Others were expected to appear before federal magistrates today.

O'Brien said the restraining order he is seeking would prohibit the Mongols from wearing anything with that name, which is typically accompanied by an insignia of a pony-tailed, Genghis Khan-like figure riding a chopper.

Anyone caught wearing Mongols apparel could have it seized by police on the spot, he said.

See related story at: <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5hrHOy4sPvBKCo0W7ItrIx-pmaE4gD9435LH00>

Operation Gotcha

Pasadena cops team up with federal agents to bring down alleged interstate drug and gun operation

Article published in Pasadena Weekly on October 10, 2008

PASADENA, CA | Convicted killer and drug dealer Elrader “Ray Ray” Browning led a reign of terror over portions of Pasadena for nearly a dozen years until his arrest in 1987.

Today, authorities believe brothers Franklin and Dwayne Thompson tried to pick up where Browning left off, running a gun- and drug-running operation that involved shipping contraband over state lines in a tractor-trailer and may have indirectly contributed to 12 gang-involved shooting deaths since summer 2007.

“The modern-day violence that has occurred, compared to the way Ray Ray did business, was different,” said Pasadena police Cmdr. Mike Korpak. “Ray Ray had specific targets. These gangs that wanted control over turf and drug sales were shooting at anybody.”



On Monday, authorities publicly displayed some of the booty seized during a nearly two-year investigation that saw Pasadena police working alongside agents from the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Homeland Security’s Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) division and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Coinciding with the federal probe dubbed Operation Hard Rock, local police were conducting Operation Safe Cities, which began in February 2007 and has since that time resulted in 89 arrests and 28 federal indictments on drug- and weapons-related charges.

Authorities have also seized drugs worth about \$500,000 and \$98,000 in cash, in addition to 36 weapons and \$20,000 in jewelry.

The Thompson brothers, authorities allege, ran an operation with branches in three states that used a big rig to transport drugs and weapons into Pasadena, where they were then sold to gang members. When the brothers were arrested in July 2007 — Franklin was taken into custody in Pasadena, Dwayne in Cincinnati — officials seized 10 kilos of cocaine, 18 weapons including shotguns, automatic rifles and handguns, \$50,000 in cash and four vehicles, including the tractor-trailer. The brothers — Franklin is 45, Dwayne is 43 — are in custody on the East Coast. They have been indicted by a federal grand jury in Pittsburgh on charges of conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than five kilos of cocaine and conspiring to launder money. If convicted, the charges carry life sentences and fines up to \$500,000. No trial date has been set.

“They were the leaders in narcotics sales in Pasadena along with their lieutenants,” Deputy Police Chief Chris Vicino said of the Thompson brothers. “This is a drug organization that had a far-reaching impact, all the way back to Detroit, Pittsburgh and Indiana. The drugs left Pasadena to all these different cities and the money returned. What also returned with those monies were different weapons. Caches of weapons were found in different homes in Pasadena. They were using those to uphold their narcotics empire.”

Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melekian said the drug organization “extended all the way across the United States.” The joint investigation, he said, “involved tracking both people and packages, setting up undercover operations in neighborhoods and purchasing weapons and narcotics.”

Operation Safe Cities involved swarming some of the city's most crime-stricken areas, which led to police conducting 1,215 field interviews and making 1,045 traffic stops. Of the 627 citations issued, 118 vehicles were impounded and 540 arrests were made.

Some in the black and Latino communities criticized police for being what they called overly aggressive and disrupting the lives of ordinary citizens, forcing officials to focus more on major players involved in violence and other illegal activities linked to Franklin Thompson. Soon after the brothers were arrested, local gangs began feuding over control of the narcotics trade, leading to the 12 gang-related shooting deaths, which some erroneously attributed to rising racial tensions between Latinos and African-Americans.

“[Two gangs] were feuding and Franklin was the supplier of most of the narcotics to the gangs,” said Korpala. “With his arrest came a great deal of confusion over the ability to control the drug trafficking. The violence was starting to ramp up, so we continued to develop Operation Safe Cities.” Police credited the program for a sharp reduction in crime, especially murder, which this year totaled two — neither of them gang-related.

“All 12 [of the murders in 2007] at the core had something to do with narcotics and gangs and sometimes both,” Vicino said.

At the height of the violence in Pasadena, police partnered with the US Attorney’s Office, which deployed ATF, DEA and ICE agents to Pasadena. Those agents worked undercover and tracked the operations in Pasadena’s drug trade, leading to additional arrests.

“We took a scalpel to the cancer that was in the neighborhoods, that was selling cocaine, and issuing violence around the city of Pasadena,” Vicino said.



Heroin Use is on the Rise

Article published by the Crescenta Valley Sun on October 31, 2008

LA CRESCENTA, CA Many times law enforcement will hear rumors of a problem concerning teenagers before it becomes known to the general public. This can include high school kids talking about an upcoming party that will involve drinking and drugs or a fight that will take place after school. The trained officers know what is a threat and what is just talk. On the front line of this teen rumor mill are the school resource officers at Rosemont Middle School and Crescenta Valley High School. They see students every day, and to some, have become close confidants and adult mentors.



The officers use all the tools available to them to track trends, and the new drug trend that has emerged has them worried. “We are alarmed about what we are hearing,” said Deputy Steve Toley, Rosemont Middle School’s SRO. “I am worried we are inches from a [drug] tragedy.” Toley has been monitoring many of the threats to teens, from drugs to cyber-bullying. He said that he and Deputy Scott Shinagawa, SRO at CVHS, have not noticed an increase in arrests but an increase in parents sending their children to drug rehabilitation. There’s also an increase in “chatter” about heroin.

“Heroin seems to be the [young drug users’] new drug of choice,” Shinagawa said. Both deputies said there is a general misconception of how heroin is used and who deals it. The image of a “strung-out” heroin user with

tracks on his or her arms may still play in Hollywood but the reality is much more frightening. “Kids are smoking heroin,” Toley said. Those who use the drug are no longer filling syringes but are heating it up and inhaling it.

“And some parents may have a misconception of what the ‘drug pusher’ looks like,” Toley added. The pusher may be anyone — from a person who just doesn’t look like he or she belongs in the area to a familiar neighborhood kid.

The misconception is not only from the parents’ viewpoint but from the teens’ as well. Many kids think that heroin is not addictive if it is smoked. At a drug information meeting last year at the high school, several students were surprised when Crescenta Valley Sheriff’s Station narcotics detectives informed them that smoking heroin could be as addictive as injecting it. Drugs do not just affect those who use them, but the community in general.



“Many who do deal [drugs] will come from outside our area,” Shinagawa said. And many of those people are affiliated with a gang. Shinagawa and Toley made it clear that they are not seeing drugs being brought onto either school campus. “The kids are doing this outside of school,” Shinagawa said. Both deputies stress that parents need to know where their children are going and who they are going with. They need to know their friends. “A child that has an older sibling is influenced by [him or her],” Toley said. You need to know not only the younger child’s friends but the older child’s as well, he added.



Convicted killer threatens senator from death row

Published by the Associated Press on October 21, 2008

HOUSTON, TX | The nation's second-largest prison system is enforcing a lockdown after authorities learned a condemned killer had made threatening calls to a Texas state senator from a cell phone smuggled into death row. Gov. Rick Perry on Monday ordered the lockdown of the state's 111 prisons and a system-wide search for contraband.

The condemned inmate's 60-year-old mother was arrested and accused of buying minutes for the phone, and investigators said more arrests were expected. Perry's office said the phone was smuggled into prison by a bribed corrections officer.



Authorities learned about the phone after inmate Richard Tabler called Sen. John Whitmire and told him he knew the names of the legislator's daughters and where they lived, said John Moriarty, the prison system's inspector general.

Tabler shared the phone with nine inmates on his cell block, and prison officials said about 2,800 calls were made on it during the past 30 days.

"Let there be no doubt about how seriously we take this security breach," Perry said, directing prison officials to impose the lockdown that will keep the state's 155,000 inmates from receiving visits and tighten security checks for all prison employees.

Whitmire, chairman of the state Senate Criminal Justice Committee, summoned prison administrators to Austin for an emergency meeting Tuesday of his criminal justice panel to address what he called "a lax attitude on contraband."

"I want to know how an inmate on death row gets a cell phone in the first place, and then how they and other inmates can make thousands of calls in a month without getting caught," Whitmire told the Austin American-Statesman newspaper.

Richard Tabler's call to Whitmire on Oct. 7 prompted the investigation. The prisoner's calls continued intermittently, the latest coming Sunday, according to investigators. In the calls, Tabler told Whitmire he knew the lawmaker's daughters, their ages and their addresses.

Tabler has been on death row since last year for a shooting spree in which two men and two teenage girls were killed in central Texas during Thanksgiving weekend 2004. The four victims had ties to a strip club there. Early this month, Tabler was in court telling a judge he wanted to end appeals and volunteer for execution. Perry's office said a bribed corrections officer was believed to be the source of the phone. The officer's name and whether he or she had been apprehended were not disclosed.

The prison system's inspector general said each of the 2,800 calls from the phone would be investigated. The phone has been confiscated.

Lorraine Tabler was apprehended Monday at Austin's airport as she arrived for a scheduled visit with her son. She was held on felony charges of providing a prohibited item to an inmate. It was not immediately known if she had an attorney. Messages left at a phone number for her in Blackshear, Ga., were not immediately returned.

A total of 44 calls were made on the phone to Lorraine Tabler's home number, according to the arrest warrant affidavit. The same phone was used to call Whitmire.

The investigation determined calls were coming to the phone as well as going out. Investigators said the phone had been purchased in Waco in September 2007 and that Lorraine Tabler had been buying time for the phone, including a purchase on Oct. 7 at a Wal-Mart store in Waycross, Ga. Detectives obtained a store video showing her making the purchase.

Moriarty said the phone apparently was being passed among the other nine inmates in Tabler's immediate cellblock area. Like Tabler, they also face possible criminal charges or disciplinary actions.

Illegal cell phone use is a continuing problem in prisons where the phones are considered a security breach and of particular value to gang members.

Moriarty said since Jan. 1, his investigators have closed or are working on 19 cases of prohibited phones or phone components on death row. He said about 700 reports of prohibited phones were investigated system-wide this year, including one in which officials have an X-ray of an inmate with a phone and charger inside the prisoner's body.



Lorraine Tabler, 60

Hells Angels slaying suspect surrenders in Okla.

Published by the Associated Press on October 8, 2008

BARTLESVILLE, OK| A suspect in the slaying of the leader of the San Francisco Hells Angels motorcycle gang a month ago surprised police in this small city in Oklahoma by turning himself in.

Christopher Ablett buzzed for assistance Sunday afternoon at police headquarters and said he wanted to surrender, Bartlesville Police Chief Tom Holland said.

"He was extremely cooperative; just as polite as could be," Holland said. "You had a hard time believing he was a guy who might have murdered someone."



Ablett, 37, of Modesto, Calif., is at the center of an investigation that made international news. Hells Angels' San Francisco President Mark Guardado, 45, was shot and killed Sept. 2. Motorcyclists from around the world came to San Francisco to pay their respects. Police in California had identified Ablett as a suspect in the case partly based on witness reports that tied someone fitting his description to the scene of the shooting. Police searched his Modesto home, seizing a motorcycle and other evidence.

Ablett is said to be a member of the Mongols Motor Club, a rival of the Hells Angels. Recent reports in California have linked assaults, shootings and pipe bomb explosions to tension between the groups.

When officials ran Ablett's name and fingerprints through their system, they found nothing tying him to any Oklahoma case. Ablett then suggested that they expand their search nationally. As the California warrant for his arrest popped onto the screen with a \$5 million bond attached, Ablett told the officers, "That would be me," Holland said.

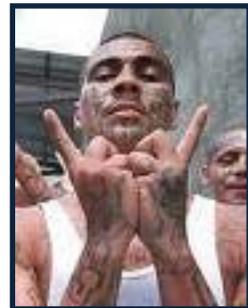


29 Individuals Indicted in Racketeering Probe Targeting MS-13 Gang

Article published by Market Watch on October 23, 2008

SAN FRANCISCO, CA| Twenty-two individuals in the San Francisco Bay Area were indicted on federal racketeering and other charges arising from their participation in La Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang, the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today. Seven additional individuals were also charged with non-racketeering offenses ranging from narcotics trafficking to firearms trafficking, and attempted exportation of stolen vehicles.

At a news conference in San Francisco, the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California Joseph P. Russoniello and ICE's Director of Investigations Marcy M. Forman outlined details of the undercover investigation, dubbed "Operation Devil Horns," in reference to MS-13's gang sign. The investigation culminated today with the unsealing of the 52-count indictment following the arrest yesterday of 26 of the indicted suspects. In addition, two other individuals linked to the case were arrested yesterday based upon charges contained in a criminal complaint. Finally, agents



involved in the take down also took custody of two suspects wanted on outstanding murder warrants by the San Francisco Police Department.

The indictment alleges that 22 of the defendants are members of MS-13 based in San Francisco's Mission District and Richmond, Calif., who agreed to conduct the affairs of the gang by engaging in a variety of criminal offenses, including murder, attempted murder, assault, robbery, extortion, witness tampering, narcotics trafficking and the interstate transportation of stolen vehicles. According to the indictment, the investigation linked the defendants to various acts of violence committed in San Francisco and elsewhere, including murder and attempted murder. In addition to filing charges under the RICO Act (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations), seven of the defendants in the case are also accused of committing seventeen specific violent crimes in aid of racketeering (VICAR), including one count involving murder.



"There can be no doubt that the greatest threat to the peace and well-being of so many of our communities in this district and throughout the country, for that matter, is the lethal cocktail of drugs, gangs and guns. And among the gangs we in law enforcement are determined to bring to heel, none is more vicious, dangerous and indifferent to the rule of law than MS-13. They may see themselves as heroes, may try to recruit members by emphasizing their 'machismo' and terrorize the community by engaging in acts of wanton violence, but they are neither invisible nor invincible," said U.S. Attorney Russoniello.

"This coordinated effort by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies is but one more steady step in the process of taking back our communities and giving young people the chance to make meaningful good long-life choices . . . alternatives to the often short-term gratification that membership in a gang at best, offers.

While we are committed, we are not naive. Some may try to fill the vacuum this takedown creates. For them, I suspect they will face the same fate as these defendants do, though they may not have to wait as long to be brought to justice. To any who still view these gangsters as heroes, I suggest they acquaint themselves with the location of and visitor schedules for federal prisons. They'll likely be spending a lot of their time there in the next several years."

"This investigation and the ensuing arrests have dealt a serious blow to what is arguably one of the most ruthless gang cliques currently operating in the Bay Area," said Marcy M. Forman, director of the ICE office of investigations. "As this case shows, transnational gangs like MS-13 thrive on violence, violence that is often fueled by profits from their illegal activities. Left unchecked, these activities threaten the welfare and safety of our communities. Our goal in targeting these dangerous street gangs is to disrupt their criminal activities and ultimately to dismantle the entire organization."

As part of the investigation, ICE set up an undercover storefront in Richmond disguised as an export warehouse. From that location, an undercover officer, posing as a corrupt car exporter, purchased 16 vehicles which had been allegedly stolen by MS-13 members and their associates from California residents. In addition, an undercover officer also purchased several firearms from one of the defendants between 2006 and 2007.

During the course of three years, the investigation led to the seizure of more than 20 weapons, including three high-powered assault rifles, two machine pistols and three shotguns. One of those shotguns was equipped with a high capacity "magazine drum," allowing the weapon to be loaded with more than 20 rounds of ammunition at a time. In addition, agents involved in the case made nine separate narcotics seizures involving cocaine and methamphetamine.

In a large-scale, targeted enforcement action carried out yesterday in San Francisco and in the Reno, Nev., area, federal, state and local agents and officers executed nearly two dozen search warrants and 20 arrest warrants

related to the case. In addition, agents served search and arrest warrants at eight correctional facilities in California where 15 of the defendants named in the indictment were already incarcerated on other charges.

Officers and agents from numerous federal, state and local law enforcement agencies provided substantial support during yesterday's enforcement action, including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); the California Highway Patrol; the California Department of Justice; the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement; the San Mateo County Gang Task Force; and the Richmond, San Francisco and South San Francisco police departments. ICE received assistance with the investigation itself from the DEA; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the FBI; the California Highway Patrol; the San Francisco Police Department; and other local law enforcement agencies. In addition, the El Salvadoran National Police and ICE's Attache Office in El Salvador aided with the case by conducting searches and interviews of MS-13 associates in El Salvador.

In addition to yesterday's criminal arrests, ICE agents also took 11 gang members and gang associates into custody on administrative immigration violations. Those individuals will be held by ICE pending a deportation hearing before an immigration judge.

The arrests announced today are not the first stemming from the ongoing investigation. During the course of the probe, 17 gang members have been taken into custody on criminal charges, including firearms violations and re-entry after deportation. Some of those individuals are among those named in the new RICO indictment.



The investigation leading to yesterday's arrests is part of Operation Community Shield, a comprehensive initiative launched by ICE in 2005 to disrupt and dismantle transnational street gangs. Under Operation Community Shield, ICE partners with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to target these violent organizations and their members for arrest, prosecution, and, where applicable, deportation. Since 2005, ICE has arrested more than 11,100 gang members and associates from 890 different gangs as part of Operation Community Shield. Of those arrested, 145 were gang leaders. To date, 3,997 have been charged criminally, and 7,109 have been charged with immigration violations and processed for removal.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Wai Shun Wilson Leung of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California and Trial Attorney Laura Gwinn of the Criminal Division's Gang Squad. An indictment contains only allegations against an individual and, as with all defendants, these defendants must be presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.



Girl, 5, shot in Queens as family walks by gangs

Published in NewsDay.com on October 22, 2008

NEW YORK, NY| A 5-year-old girl shrieked, "I can't breathe!" as a bullet tore through her back and collapsed her lung in front of her parents Monday night in Queens, New York police said.

Frantic, the parents of Jakelyne Delgado lifted up her jacket to see what was wrong. Once they realized what had happened, her father, Rodolfo Delgado, scooped up Jakelyne in his arms and ran three blocks to Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, one witness said.

After a worrisome night, Maria and Rodolfo Delgado learned from doctors yesterday that Jakelyne is expected to survive. She was transferred to Cornell Medical Center in Manhattan in stable condition, while police pressed their search for the shooter.

Police said the shooting appears to be the latest chapter in tensions between the Bloods street gang and the Trinitarios, a Dominican gang.

Monday, about 9:20 p.m., some 10 members of the Trinitarios were hanging out on Himrod Street, near Cypress Avenue, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said. Jakelyne and her parents were walking by, passing in front of a group of 10 Bloods, Kelly said.

When a Trinitario pulled out a machete, the father realized what was about to happen and "started to run with his family," Kelly said



Cops Sweep Area for Gang



Published by The Times on October 11, 2008

EAST CHICAGO | Gang and Narcotics Division officers fanned out across the city's south side late Friday night, seeking seven reputed gang members charged with a laundry list of felonies on Thursday.



Drugs, guns and ammunition were reportedly found during a Sept. 6 police raid on a suspected gang club house in the 900 block of West 151st Street, and led to the filing of 18 counts against the men, ages 19 to 24. Two of the men also face felony intimidation charges for allegedly visiting the home of gang task force detective on Sept. 10 and threatening him over his role in serving the search warrant on the house.

"We're trying to bust these gangs up," Police Chief Angelo Machuca Jr. said Friday. "We want to send a clear message that these sorts of activities will not be tolerated."

Officers raiding the house in September reported finding nearly a quarter-pound of marijuana, much of it packaged in small plastic bags for street sales, police said. Also found was a 12-gauge pistol grip shotgun, an AK-47 assault rifle fully loaded with a 30-round magazine, a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun reported stolen in South Bend in 1996, and a .357-caliber revolver reported stolen in Mishawaka in 2000. Police also reported finding hundreds of rounds of live ammunition for various firearms which were not found at the house, called "The Trap" by members of the All Imperial Gangster Nation organization, better known as Imperial Gangsters, police said. Three brothers who live at the West 151st Street address are self-professed Imperial Gangsters, according to police, and were among those sought Friday night.



The house was decorated in a gang style, police said, mostly spray-painted taunts against other groups with whom the Imperial Gangsters compete for neighborhood control and drug sales.

East Chicago police enlisted the aid of the U.S. Attorney's Office, the state Parole Board and Lake County sheriff's police in the ongoing initiative against street gang activity in the city, said Lt. John Nava, of the criminal investigations division. "We're hitting them from every direction," Nava said. Machuca said all possible charges will be pursued to the fullest extent of the law, especially against those who threaten police officers. The manhunt was reportedly still ongoing, and no further information was available regarding any arrests late Friday.

Cocaine Plotter Given 10 Years

Published by The Journal Gazette on October 10, 2008

FORT WAYNE| A 25-year-old Illinois man was sentenced Thursday to 10 years in federal prison for his role in a 2006 plot to hijack a shipment of cocaine bound for Fort Wayne.

Vernell A. Brown pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to conspiracy to distribute cocaine, admitting to working with a number of known gang members to hijack what they believed was a shipment of cocaine in the spring of 2006.

The group, which came to town in 2005, was headed by Marlyn Barnes, 23, of Gary - a known member of the Vice Lords gang. Others included Melvin Taylor, 25, of Gary; Theodis Armstead, 21, of Gary; Herbert Hightower, 24, of Gary; and Michael D. Alexander, 29, of Fort Wayne. They were arrested by Fort Wayne police after an investigation by an undercover agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

U.S. District Judge Theresa Springmann sentenced Armstead in June to more than seven years in federal prison and five years on supervised release. Alexander was sentenced in April to 6 1/2 years in prison for his role in the plot. The remaining defendants have yet to be sentenced.

Brown's case will be sent to the U.S. Court of Appeals at his request. For months, he has been trying unsuccessfully to renege on his guilty plea, according to court documents.



Man recovering after shooting

Published in The Journal Gazette on October 3, 2008

FORT WAYNE, IN| Fort Wayne police suspect gang-related activity sparked a Wednesday shooting.

Andrea L. Terrell, 32, was shot in the stomach about 2:30 p.m. near Yorkshire Drive and East Maple Grove Avenue, a report said. Several 9 mm shell casings were found in the street. Police believe "The D Boys" gang might be involved.

Terrell was alert and in fair condition after being shot, police said.



2 CeaseFire workers caught in gang sweep, officials say

Published in the Chicago Tribune on October 16, 2008

CHICAGO, IL| Two men involved in the anti-violence group CeaseFire were among those charged Wednesday in a federal gang takedown on Chicago's Northwest Side.

The FBI arrested 25 people suspected of being members of the Spanish Cobras gang in an undercover probe code-named Operation Snake Charmer. Two of those charged—Juan Johnson and Harold Martinez—had ties to CeaseFire, which employs numerous former gang members to work in neighborhoods plagued by gang violence.

A total of 31 people were charged in federal and county court on drug or weapons offenses, said the FBI, which teamed up with Chicago police. Authorities said the investigation included the use of undercover informants as well as electronic surveillance.

One criminal complaint details how the FBI was watching as Johnson, Martinez and the witness met on the street to discuss selling crack cocaine. Johnson typed a text message into a cell phone and showed it to Martinez because he did not want to speak out loud about the sale, authorities alleged.

Tio Hardiman, director of mediation services for CeaseFire, said Johnson and Martinez were "violence interrupters," specially trained to intervene in gang disputes.

"This comes as a total surprise," Hardiman said.



Superintendent Proposes New Gang Unit

Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis says he's moving around staff in an effort to target gangs and violent crime.

Published by WBEZ.org, Chicago Public Radio on October 25, 2008

CHICAGO, IL | It's not a new idea, but Weis is calling his version the Mobile Strike Force. Speaking before aldermen at a budget hearing, Weis says the Strike Force is designed to get specially trained officers on patrol in neighborhoods with a high gang presence.

WEIS: I have no doubt that this mission-oriented, highly-trained, and well-supervised unit will make a difference in fighting crime.



But some aldermen gave Weis a hard time for not doing more sooner to combat the city's high number of murders. Alderman Anthony Beale represents the ninth ward on the South Side.



BEALE: And if you look at the data at where the murders are coming from, they're not coming from the communities that have the same amount of police as other communities. So we need to do that beat realignment, like, yesterday.

City officials are up against a rising rate in violent crime this year.

See related stories at: <http://www.wrex.com/Global/story.asp?S=9237452> and

<http://www.chicagobreakingnews.com/2008/10/aldermen-bemoan-crime-but-give-weis-a-pass.html>



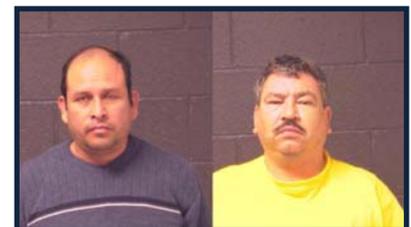
Two charged in Chicago drug bust

Chicago Police arrested and charged two men from Northlake in connection with delivering narcotics.

Article published by ABC 7 News on October 27, 2008

CHICAGO, IL | Forty-two-year-old Sebastian Araujo and 50-year-old Moises Solano were charged with possession of a controlled substance.

Area 5 Spanish Gang Task Force officers received information that a vehicle was transporting a large quantity of narcotics from Texas to Chicago. The drop off point was to be a North Side gas station.



Officers say they set up surveillance and observed the vehicle approach the location. While Araujo and Solano were being detained, a narcotics-trained dog was brought in to check the vehicle, police say.

Authorities say that upon removing the panels, numerous cellophane-wrapped, brick-like objects were found. They were tested and found to be a total of 25 kilograms of cocaine. The estimated street value is more than \$2.5 million, police say.

Special Feature

Film on Gun Violence Features T.I., Andrew Young

Published by the Associated Press on October 27, 2008

ATLANTA, GA | Former United Nations ambassador Andrew Young, an advocate for peace around the world, is now taking aim at gun violence in the U.S. through a new TV documentary that focuses on the rapper T.I. — a young man making amends for federal firearms offenses.

Young premiered the hour-long film, "Walking With Guns," on Sunday in Atlanta. It includes extensive footage of the Grammy-winning artist visiting a rehabilitation hospital in New York to meet patients paralyzed by gang violence. The film also shows T.I. and Young telling young people how to avoid violence, and follows a former gang member who is now a social activist.



The film, part of a series called "Andrew Young Presents," is expected to begin airing Nov. 2 on TV stations around the country.

"Violence would still be around without guns," T.I. said to over 400 attendees during a question-and-answer session after the screening. "But there would be an increased value of life."

The 76-year-old Young — a veteran civil rights activist who went on to become a Georgia congressman, President Carter's ambassador to the U.N. and Atlanta's mayor — began filming this year shortly after he began to mentor T.I., 28. The rapper, whose real name is Clifford Harris, pleaded guilty to several charges last

March and was sentenced to prison time, community service and supervised home detention. His community service includes warning young people about the pitfalls of guns, gangs and drugs.

"Some of my colleagues are disappointed with me taking this young man in," Young said of T.I. "But sometimes us old folks have to shut up and listen to the young folks to understand where they are coming from."

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 newsletters and information.

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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