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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Gang member Steve Bryant sentenced to 85 years for murder

Published by the Chicago Sun-Times on June 5, 2009.

CHICAGO, IL | Former Marine and aspiring Chicago Police Officer Ricardo "Ricky" Martinez Jr. was silenced when a gunshot pierced his body as he sat in a parked car after a Cubs game three years ago.

But Thursday, the man who now has his heart told a Cook County judge what to do when sentencing Martinez's killer.

"I truly know that the world will be a safer place if Steven Bryant is in prison until the day he dies," fellow Marine Brian Troy, 44, told Judge Bertina Lampkin.

While on the witness stand, Troy also heaped praise on the "honorable" Martinez for saving him from a deadly heart ailment.

"I have known who Ricky is to me since the day I woke up from my heart transplant," said Troy, one of three people who received Martinez's organs after the 23-year-old died. Troy and others in the packed courtroom burst into applause when Lampkin sentenced Bryant to 85 years in prison. While the pony-tailed gang member, 24, didn't get the maximum sentence prosecutors were seeking, the severe punishment provided "closure" for Martinez's family.

"Every day I cry tears of pain, but today I cry tears of justice," said his father, Ricardo Martinez Sr.



Brian Troy (center) with Ricardo "Ricky" Martinez Jr.'s parents, Ricardo Sr. and Adalila Cruz, after Ricky's killer was sentenced Thursday. Three people received Ricky's organs after he died.

Continued...

His son served two tours in Iraq before returning to Chicago in March 2006 to take his Chicago Police exam. The following month, he was shot on the Northwest Side by Bryant, who prosecutors said had mistaken Martinez's friend for a rival gang member.

"My son fought to protect the rights to freedom and democracy. . . . I will always hold my head up high because he is my son, hero and now guardian angel," said his father, who was wearing dog tags and a shirt with an image of the man "who made everyone laugh."

Through tears, Adalila Cruz recounted how she watched TV with her son hours before he was shot. The next time she saw him, he was fighting for his life.



Steven Bryant was sentenced to 85 years in prison in the fatal shooting of former Marine Ricardo "Ricky" Martinez Jr. following a Cubs game in April 2006.

"The pain with having to live the rest of your life without your child is an unbearable pain that makes you unable to breathe at times. It is hard to be strong for the family that needs you when you feel a hollow ache in your heart. In a way, his death was my own," Cruz said, her voice cracking.

"Everyone who knew Ricky had something die in them that day. There will be no more smiles on his birthday. There will only be memories of what was taken from us year after year, anniversary after anniversary."

Lampkin described Bryant as having a "malignant heart" and wouldn't buy his pleas of his innocence.

"I believe it is a lie from the pit of hell," she said, looking at Bryant.



Investigator: Gangs active, growing in city

Published by the Journal & Courier on June 26, 2009.

LAFAYETTE, IN| Before beginning a presentation Thursday on gang presence in Tippecanoe County, Rob Rush, a detective with the sheriff's department, gave a warning about the dozens of photos he planned to show. Nearly all were photographed locally -- from gang-related graffiti found in bathrooms at McCutcheon and Harrison high schools to tattoos of inmates at the Tippecanoe County Jail, apparently proud to flaunt their gang affiliation.

Several other images were found on social networking Web sites and the pages of Lafayette-area children and teenagers. Many flashed alleged gang signs, and some posed with firearms.

"You may see someone you know, and I apologize for that," Rush told a group of about 45 people gathered at the Fairfield Township trustee's office.

"You're going to be absolutely surprised by what these kids put out there."

Rush took on duties about four years ago as the sheriff department's gang liaison, tasked with tracking what was deemed as growing gang presence in Tippecanoe County.

He's been compiling information about gang-related crimes for the past 18 months to help identify where they're located. He said area investigators have noted about 25 different gangs in the community that, combined, have more than 200 members. A great deal of information has come from jail inmates.

Most of them are in their teens and early- to mid-20s, Rush said. But they've identified members as young as 12 years old.

Susan Parkinson, a caseworker in the Fairfield Township trustee's office, said the numbers were shocking to hear. She organized the presentation, which was open to area residents and service agencies.

"That was eye-opening," Parkinson said. "It seems to have happened here -- the number of gangs and gang members -- so quickly."

Rush attributed the increased gang presence to Lafayette's location between Chicago and Indianapolis. He said investigators learned that gangs have repeatedly sent women and their children to Tippecanoe County, where they've been able to get into subsidized housing. He said a few gang members will then join them here and try to recruit new members.



Detective Rob Rush of the sheriff's office gives a presentation about gang presence in Tippecanoe County for city and county agencies Thursday.

Investigators have been able to combat the problem slightly by working with apartment management, who have allowed police officers to arrest nonresidents for trespassing.

"The problem is, it's a revolving door," Rush said. "There's no way to truly police it. ... We can't control it because it's federally funded housing."

He also noted that gangs are becoming increasingly violent toward each other over territory. Rush shared several photos of graffiti tagged by various gangs at the Village Pantry at Creasy Lane and Indiana 38. The convenience store and gas station is located between three large apartment complexes: Cambridge Estates, Brampton Apartments and Deerfield Commons.

Tom Rankin, safety and security director for Lafayette's parks department, attended Thursday's presentation. He said gang presence is a concern because of the number of children and teenagers who frequent city parks.

"What we get is a lot of rumors about different gangs planning to fight or meet somewhere in one of the parks," Rankin said. "Thankfully we're able to find out beforehand and make sure we're there before something breaks out."

He noted that graffiti went down after the city installed security cameras to deter criminal activity.



FBI to help city combat gangs

Published by the Journal-Gazette on May 28, 2009.

FORT WAYNE, IN | The FBI will lead an aggressive attack against gang violence in Fort Wayne – and a new task force will be the primary weapon.

With the creation of a Safe Streets Task Force, agency leaders hope to reinvigorate the local office and curb violent gang activity. The project has been in the works for about eight months. It includes officers from local and state law enforcement agencies and will be supervised by Special Agent Robert Ramsey, the FBI's acting supervisory agent in charge in Fort Wayne.



Michael Welch, special agent in charge, and Thomas Gancarz, assistant special agent in charge, from the bureau's Indianapolis division, discussed the new task force Wednesday. They expressed confidence that the efforts will succeed – success will be measured by federal prosecutions and convictions. The task force also should give the agency a bigger footprint in northeast Indiana, Welch said.

Started in 1992, the Safe Streets Violent Crime Initiative has led to 141 task forces throughout the country, putting local law enforcement alongside federal agents to deal with violent gangs by attacking their hierarchy, officials said. Indiana now has Safe Streets Task Forces in Merrillville, Evansville, Lafayette and Fort Wayne.

Talk of such a task force here was under way before nine homicides in one deadly week rocked the city in late March and early April last year. But shortly after the crimes, area community leaders concerned with gang violence and unsolved homicides met with the U.S. Attorney and the FBI about what could be done, Gancarz and Welch said. The task forces not only use street-level enforcement but also look at ways to take down an entire gang.



"We're looking for criminal enterprises that are hierarchical," Welch said. "The gangs we're pursuing have ties outside the city of Fort Wayne. ... The intelligence reflected we needed a response."



The federal criminal justice system, with no guarantee of pretrial release and potentially longer prison sentences, offers a way to keep violent offenders off the streets for longer periods of time, the agents said.

Locally, the task force will be made up of six police officers, assigned full time to the FBI's office – three from the Allen County Sheriff's Department, two from the state police and one from Fort Wayne. The officers are deputized to make federal arrests, as are local officers who participate in the FBI's bank robbery task force, Gancarz said. But the group can borrow other resources from the departments as needed, and already has, Welch said.

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives already has a task force geared toward getting guns off Fort Wayne's streets. Both agencies are working to make sure they don't step on each other's toes, the agents said. There is no time limit for the task force, which will be reviewed annually.



"I would hope our numbers of federal indictments and convictions increase over the next two years," Welch said. "We're committed to this project for the long term."



Four indicted on federal cocaine charges identified

Published by the NWI Times on June 19, 2009.

HAMMOND, IN| Michael Silvas Jr., a former East Chicago City Council candidate whose 7-year-old son, Angel, was fatally shot the day before the May 2007 primary, is one of four East Chicago men indicted on federal drug charges Thursday.

Silvas was arrested Thursday along with Richard Vasquez, Jose Almodovar and Nicholas Ortega on charges of conspiracy and/or dealing in cocaine.

The arrests were conducted by the local Gang Response Investigative Team task force known as GRIT, which could not be reached for comment Friday. East Chicago Police Chief Gus Flores said he would withhold comment on the arrests by the separate agency except to say his department welcomes all the assistance it can get.

The four men remained in federal custody Friday following an initial appearance Thursday before federal Magistrate Andrew Rodovich.

Silvas, then 24, was running as a Democrat in the District 1 council primary at the time of his son's shooting. Family members said the boy was sitting in a car with his father when he was shot the afternoon before the election. Police believe the boy to have been a victim of a feud between the Latin Kings and the Spanish Vice Lords gang.

Prosecutors charged Francisco Jose Avila, 20, a Latin King, with the boy's murder while Silvas, reported to be member of the Vice Lords, was charged with three felony counts each of pointing a gun and criminal recklessness.

All charges were dismissed in April 2008.



Fed drug report: Double trouble for metro Chicago

Only area in the nation with two major illegal drug zones

Published by ABC7 News on June 10, 2009.

CHICAGO METRO AREA| It features not just one "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area," it has two, according to the National Drug Intelligence Center.



The agency on Wednesday identified Chicago and the suburbs as one High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and the Lake County, Indiana, environs as another. In all, the report, produced at the request of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, cites 32 regions in the U.S. as havens for illicit drug distribution. Metro Chicago is the only area with two of the drug trafficking zones.

The federal investigation of Chicago's drug trade in 2008 found that "gang-related murders in Chicago, often resulting from drug-related disputes, increased 36.3 percent from 2007 (168 murders) through 2008 (229 murders). Street gang drug distribution operations are concentrated in urban areas of Chicago; however, suburban law enforcement agencies, many of which lack

sufficient resources, report an increasing presence of Chicago gang members who distribute drugs in their jurisdictions. Officials attribute the movement of gang members from Chicago to suburban areas to several factors: the breakdown of traditional hierarchical gang structures, the razing of some large Chicago public housing projects, an abundance of wholesale illicit drug suppliers, and the expectation of high profits from new suburban drug operations."

According to the report, Chicago street gang members run a network of legitimate businesses and have engineered mortgage fraud schemes, both to launder drug proceeds. Cash-based businesses such as beauty salons, car washes and used car lots are to commingle drug proceeds with legitimate business revenue, say authorities. The mortgage fraud schemes are said to involve straw purchasers and unscrupulous mortgage brokers and appraisers to purchase property at a minimal cost and sell it at a higher value to a third party.

The Chicago drug region is composed of Cook, Grundy, Kendall and Will counties and comprises more than 6.1 million residents, nearly half of the population of Illinois. The Chicago metropolitan area is one of the nation's largest drug markets and a national-level distribution center for cocaine, heroin and marijuana available in the Midwest and the eastern United States. Cook County, which includes the city of Chicago, is second only to Los Angeles County, California, as the most populated county in the United States. According to U.S. Census estimates, Kendall County and Will County are two of the fastest-growing counties in the United States; those populations have grown 77.5 percent and 34.1 percent, respectively, from 2000 through 2007.

LAKE COUNTY AND NW INDIANA

Even as the economy collapses in the region, the federal reports states that in 2008 "twelfth-grade students in the region report higher rates of lifetime, annual, and monthly use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and MDMA than do their peers statewide. Drug use rates among adolescents in the Northwest region of Indiana (Lake, Jasper, Newton, Porter, Pulaski, and Starke Counties) are significantly higher than statewide rates. The reported lifetime, annual, and monthly rates of use for marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and MDMA among twelfth-grade students were higher in the Northwest region than were rates of use in any of the other seven regions in the state. IPRC survey data from 2006 to 2008 of lifetime drug use by twelfth-graders in the Northwest Region show that marijuana is the most widely abused drug among twelfth graders. For example, 42.0 percent of twelfth-grade students surveyed in the Northwest region in 2008 indicated that they have used marijuana in their lifetime, much higher than for cocaine (8.8 percent), MDMA (8.6 percent), or heroin (2.5 percent).



"The national economic downturn is affecting the retail-level illicit drug market in the Lake County HIDTA region. Law enforcement officials report that illicit drug abusers in economically depressed areas of the HIDTA region are increasingly abusing marijuana because it is relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain. Furthermore, some crack cocaine dealers in Hammond are packaging and selling smaller rocks of crack cocaine at a lower price that customers can afford. This marketing technique is most likely a response to weak economic conditions in the area."

Investigators have found that as the appetite for illicit drugs surges in Lake County and NW Indiana, "Chicago-based drug trafficking groups are expanding operations into Lake County. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and Chicago street gangs have strengthened their transportation and distribution networks in Lake County and other areas of northern Indiana. In 2008 the Lake County Combined Task Force seized Vietnamese indoor cannabis grow, indicating a possible expansion of Vietnamese marijuana production networks from Chicago to Lake County."

The report provides policymakers, resource planners and law enforcement officials with a focused discussion of key drug-related issues and developments. According to a Justice Dept. statement, the "NDIC Intelligence Analysts prepared these reports through detailed collection and analysis of statistical data, information from law enforcement and public health officials, and other information to highlight significant trends and law enforcement concerns related to the trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs" and has distributed the intelligence to all appropriate federal, state, and local government and law enforcement agencies, as well as intelligence organizations engaged in counternarcotics and drug control."

A list of the 32 DMAs are available on line with complete details at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/topics/dmas.htm>



Innocence of childhood shattered by violence

Published by the Chicago Tribune on June 26, 2009.

ENGLEWOOD, IL | They are ordinary events in the lives of children -- tying a sister's shoes, walking to the corner store for pop and candy, and celebrating a birthday.

But for children growing up in Chicago's impoverished neighborhoods, these innocent acts have proved deadly. The latest victim, Chastity Turner, 9, was washing the family's pit bull terriers with her dad Wednesday evening when she was gunned down in a suspected gang-related shooting in Englewood.

On Thursday, a makeshift memorial of angels and stuffed animals was built -- a sad but all-too-common tribute that the child's grandmother had hoped never to see for one of her own. "I've seen the pictures. I've seen the balloons [from memorials]. You wonder how anybody could cut down a 5-, 6-, 9-year-old," the grandmother, Tanya Turner, said Wednesday. "Little kids die every day. It's somebody's grandchild, every day."

More than three years ago, Siretha White, 10, was killed by a stray bullet during her birthday party at an Englewood home. On Thursday, Moses Phillips was sentenced to 75 years in prison for her murder. As a young teen, Phillips himself had been the innocent victim of gunfire.

**Read more about this story at: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-girl-shot-folojun26,0,4788963.story>
Or to read more about the sentencing of Moses Phillips visit: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-ap-il-girlshot,0,5005985.story>**



Two men charged with murder of Chicago cop held without bail

Two gang members retaliating for earlier shooting: police

Published by the Chicago Sun-Times on June 3, 2009.

ENGLEWOOD, IL | Gunshot residue and ballistics evidence linked two reputed gang members to Monday's fatal shooting of Chicago Police Officer Alejandro Valadez in the Englewood neighborhood, Cook County prosecutors said today in court.



Chicago Firefighters water down and clean blood stains off the sidewalk outside of the home in the 7400 block of South Stewart Ave. where 9-year-old Chastity Turner was shot and killed. Her father and two of his friends were also wounded in the shooting.



Kevin A. Walker (left) and Shawn D. Gaston (right) are charged with the murder of Chicago Police officer Alejandro Valadez.

Kevin Walker, 21, and Shawn Gaston, 20, appeared in Cook County court this morning, where they were ordered held without bail. Both have previous gun-related convictions, and each had been given two years' probation on the charges. Gaston, however, has been served with a violation of probation three times in the last year but was allowed to remain out on bond, according to court records. His next court date on the violations is scheduled for July.

Walker and Gaston now are accused of driving around Englewood early Monday morning with two handguns and a rifle looking for rival gang members to shoot, authorities said. Instead, they shot Valadez, who was in the 6000 block of South Hermitage investigating reports of shots fired and that a gun was hidden in a garage in the area, according to Cook County Assistant State's Attorney John Dillon.

Gaston and Walker could face the death penalty, Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez said. If Springfield had passed legislation that Alvarez proposed, she said, Gaston would have been behind bars for his gun conviction, a felony. Alvarez proposed that unlawful use of a weapon be a non-probational offense for gang members.

"A tragedy such as this shakes the foundation of the entire department and reminds us all of the unforeseen dangers that are always present in the daily work of the police officer," she said.

As Valadez stood conducting an interview with a resident about the shots -- in plainclothes but with his star and badge on -- Walker allegedly drove onto the block and slowed down as Gaston fired from the car, Dillon said. Valadez was struck in the head and leg and died 14 hours later.

The two allegedly had returned to avenge the very shooting that Valadez and his partner were investigating, authorities said. Rival gangs had been fighting in the neighborhood all day.

The car Gaston and Walker were allegedly in was recovered by the department's Targeted Response Unit. Three guns — a .40-caliber handgun, a .357-caliber handgun and a 9mm rifle — were recovered, Dillon said. Dillon said ballistics testing showed that shell casings recovered from the car and the scene were fired from the same gun. Also, .40-caliber shell casings recovered at the scene matched the gun found in the car, Dillon said. And a bullet extracted from Valadez matched one of the guns recovered in the trunk. Gaston also tested positive for gunshot residue on his hand, he said. Both Gaston and Walker gave statements admitting their involvement in the crime, Dillon said.

Valadez, 27, had been on the police force three years. He worked in the busy Englewood District on a midnight team that targeted high-crime areas.

"At the moment he was struck down he was doing what he loved to do," Chicago Police Supt. Jody Weis said. "He was being a police officer. He gave his life serving the city."

Gaston and Walker were arrested on a porch in the 6200 block of South Paulina shortly after the shooting — which happened at 12:15 a.m. Monday.

Stop by State Police called key

A pivotal break in the case came from an Illinois State Police officer, who, by chance, had stopped Gaston and Walker the day before the shooting in the 2007 Pontiac detectives believed was used in the drive-by, several sources said.

The two were stopped for a seat belt violation, and the encounter was videotaped as a matter of routine practice, the sources said. It was key because it put Gaston and Walker inside the car together a day before the Valadez shooting. Detectives found the ticket and contacted the state to ask whether there was a tape, source said. It was turned over immediately.

Chicago Police respond, on average, 87 times a day to calls of shots fired, according to 2008 statistics. Valadez was the type of officer who wanted to answer such high-risk calls, his colleagues recalled.

"He came out every day and hit the street with something to accomplish," said Officer Melvin Oliver, a member of Valadez's team.

To read the full story as well as view video coverage of the press conference visit: <http://www.suntimes.com/news/24-7/1603777,charges-officer-valadez-shooting-060209.article>



Cleveland's Cudell neighborhood fights Madison Madhouse gang using cameras, tips to police

Published by Cleveland.com on June 6, 2009.

CLEVELAND, OH | Lynn Blatnica and her neighbors were tired of being targets. Tired of battling teens who called themselves Madison Madhouse, a gang that toted guns up and down their streets, robbing anyone with a dollar in his pocket, stealing cars, selling drugs.

Blatnica, who has lived on West 96th Street for 13 years, and her neighbors in the Cudell area were sick of feeling intimidated when 30 or 40 kids would swarm the street cussing and causing a ruckus.

"I don't like to feel unsafe," she said.

So they decided last year to battle back with their own arsenal -- cell phones, borrowed video cameras and a newly strengthened bond with police.

"We decided that if we were afraid and we tolerated the behavior, the neighborhood would go down the tubes," Blatnica said. "We decided to tell people, 'If you invite trouble to our neighborhood, we'll invite you to leave.'"

Cleveland police 1st District Commander Thomas McCartney said the effort could be a model for how citizens can work alongside police to wrest back control of their communities.



Richard Romero picks up trash from in front of a vacant house in the Cudell neighborhood of Cleveland while David Brown mows the grass during a street cleanup day on Saturday. Residents, who have struggled with gang violence for years, feel they are making headway to a safer neighborhood.

Many neighbors said they feel safer. And statistics for most kinds of crime have been lower for the first half of 2009. Last year, issues with Madison Madhouse were so hot that the mayor's office and police called a meeting with known members at the end of May.



West 96th Street residents Richard Romero, 10, (left) and Lynn Blatnica (right) walk down their street with Ward 15 Councilman Jay Westbrook (center) as they talk with neighbors during a street cleaning project June 6, 2009. The Cudell neighborhood has struggled with street gang violence for years and now feels they are making headway to a safer neighborhood.

"They were working full time on wreaking havoc," said City Councilman Jay Westbrook, who represents the area. "We responded with what I would call real community policing."

Officials handpicked a list of troublemakers and invited them to a "call-in." The idea was for the mayor, police and other public officials to deliver their message in person: If you want to stop gang-banging, we'll help you. If you continue to commit crimes, we are going to bust you down hard. Also at the meeting were people like a mother who had lost her son to the violence, to try to show teens the consequences of their actions.

Safety advocates in the area, part of Cleveland's Ward 18, said some teens took the message to heart, though some of the city's job and social-service programs were not polished enough yet to provide what had been promised.

Other teens who didn't take the help got the message and have lain low since the meeting. But a half-dozen of them did not heed the warning and are in jail or about to be sentenced, some as juveniles and some as adults. They were charged with a series of shootings and thefts and a riot on West 93rd Street last August.

That, residents say, has given some a measure of peace and control.

Information leads to arrests, insights

Key to the effort was funneling information about Madison Madhouse's activity through Birgit Hilliard, a community safety coordinator in Ward 18. Hilliard kept track of it and handed it over to Cleveland police Detective Todd Staimpel and Patrolman Robert Miles. They worked to turn the information into cases and arrests.

With the neighborhood's help they were able to identify about 100 people affiliated with the gang. They shored up that work by documenting gang graffiti in photos and on social-networking sites, like MySpace. They found many of the worst offenders were parts of several families and that victims of crime were often offenders, and offenders were often victims.

In addition, Hilliard, who works for Cudell Improvement Inc., mined city and community grants to set up programs in which residents could borrow cameras to capture drug deals and vandalism for evidence. They got motion-detecting lights for back yards so offenders' paths would be lighted up when police chased them, and front-lawn street lamps to light areas where the gang members congregated so they knew they were being watched.

The group made an effort to send a representative to court appearances so judges could hear how the crimes affected the neighborhood. The neighbors' block clubs met and formed phone chains to share concerns and groups to spot criminal activity.

"We figured that the nitty-gritty of it was that everybody who wanted to live here had to have a role, no matter if it is an observer, an actor, a confronter," Blatnica said.

Even some concerned parents of potential gang recruits helped in the effort. One mother began secretly calling police and giving them information after she found a gun hidden in her garage. The mother said she felt as if she was losing the battle to save her teenage son because so many of the gang members' parents allowed or even encouraged their sons to carry guns or sell drugs to bring in money.

"I've tried talking to him about this gang is bad for him, how they are using him and are only going to land him in jail," the mother said. "But they tell him they've got his back and they'll be there for him. If he needs a dollar, they give it to him. Even if he wanted to get away, I think he'd be scared to speak up."

See the full story at: http://www.cleveland.com/crime/index.ssf/2009/06/clevelands_cudell_neighborhood.html



42 indicted on racketeering, drug charges

Published by the San Francisco Chronicle on May 28, 2009.

BALTIMORE, MD | A federal grand jury indicted 23 alleged gang members on racketeering charges and another 19 associates and others on drug charges, the U.S. Attorney's Office said Thursday.

The indictments allege that 23 members of the Pasadena Denver Lanes Bloods gang conspired to engage in crimes including attempted murder, assault, robbery and drug trafficking, from at least January 2008.

Prosecutors said PDL Bloods is a violent gang with members operating in Baltimore and other parts of Maryland. Gang members had to go through an initiation that sometimes involved "missions" that included robberies, assaults or carjackings. Members were also required to commit acts of violence to maintain membership and advance in gang leadership.

The indictments were returned Tuesday and unsealed Thursday. Authorities executed 50 state and federal search warrants; all but six of the suspects had been arrested by

Thursday afternoon.

Cell phone conversations between PDL members in and out of jail were monitored by law enforcement agencies. Prosecutors say PDL members were overheard discussing plans to kill others in retaliation for robbery, for not following the rules of the PDL organization, for failure to pay PDL dues, or for joining a rival gang.

According to the indictment, a member was warned by a Bloods leader from California that PDL members were being tracked on MySpace and that they should stay off the Internet.

The indictment also says drugs were shipped from Bloods members in California to Maryland for distribution and that a member sent money to California PDL leaders as payment of gang membership dues.



U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein (left) held a news conference with Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy (right) and other officials to announce the indictment of dozens of alleged gang members on federal racketeering and drug conspiracy charges.
Source: Baltimore Sun

Prosecutors say the defendants had many conversations about distributing cocaine, cocaine base, heroin and marijuana; getting guns to use in killings and drug distributions; and committing robberies to pay PDL dues.



Indictment says LA street gang killed infant

Published by WSBT.com on June 17, 2009.



18th Street graffiti.
Source: GangsOrUs.com

LOS ANGELES, CA | A federal indictment alleges Los Angeles gang members killed a 3-week-old baby in a stroller while trying to shoot a street vendor who refused to pay the gang.

The racketeering indictment unsealed Tuesday says a clique of the 18th Street gang terrorized a neighborhood around MacArthur Park for years. Members allegedly 'taxed' drug dealers and street vendors in the gang's territory and took retribution against those who refused.

Many of the 38 people indicted have been arrested or were already in custody.

Those indicted for the baby's murder in 2007 and for a 2001 killing of a man mistaken for a rival gang member could face the death penalty if convicted. The others could face a maximum of life imprisonment.



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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